



Poetics of Psalm-Creation in Jonah

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABS	Archaeology and Biblical Studies
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AJBI	Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute
ANEM	Ancient Near East Monographs
ATDan	Acta Theologica Danica
ATM	Altes Testament und Moderne
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
HeBAI	Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel
BCOT	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHQ	Biblia Hebraica Quinta
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BIOSCS	Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies
BLS	Bible and Literature Series
BN	Biblische Notizen
BOSHNP	Berit Olam Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry
CurBR	Currents in Biblical Research
CurBS	Currents in Research: Biblical Studies
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin

BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CC	Continental Commentaries
DCLS	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DSD	Dead Sea Discoveries
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
HAR	Hebrew Annual Review
HBT	Horizons in Biblical Theology
HThKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ISBL	Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature
JANES	Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JBQ	Jewish Bible Quarterly

JHebS	Journal of Hebrew Scriptures
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
JRitSt	Journal of Ritual Studies
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSP	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LSAWS	Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
OTE	Old Testament Essays
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
PRE	Pirke De-Rabbi Eliezer
PTR	Princeton Theological Review

RSBW	Routledge Studies in the Biblical World
SBB	Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SPOT	Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament
SSLL	Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SubBi	Subsidia Biblica
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
VT	Vetus Testamentum
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZTK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

Short Abstract

Jonah's prayer presents significant historical-critical and hermeneutical challenges, particularly due to its placement within the book's narrative and its striking resemblance to several Psalms. Its position within the story raises questions about its function and coherence, while its heavy reliance on psalmic language complicates attempts to determine its originality. Scholars have often approached this passage in two divergent ways: either atomizing the text with critical tools that fragment its meaning or flattening it through overly literary analyses that overlook its compositional complexity.

This thesis proposes a way forward by offering an intertextual reading that integrates philological analysis, literary features, and compositional techniques evident in wider Second Temple literature. It adopts a forward-looking, generative hermeneutical approach that prioritizes understanding the creative and interpretive trajectories of texts while cautiously exploring literary dependence.

The primary contribution of this thesis is its intertextual reading of Jonah 2, presented in chapter two. This analysis demonstrates that Jonah (the author through the character) strategically incorporates psalmic language to craft an original composition, portraying his descent into the sea as an exile-like experience and casting himself as an innocent sufferer. This reading is supported by a close examination of specific Psalms that feature prominently in Jonah's prayer.

Ultimately, this study argues that these psalms reflect a broader interpretive tradition in which suffering in watery chaos is frequently associated with the experience of exile as an innocent sufferer. By tracing these intertextual connections, the thesis demonstrates how Jonah's psalm subtly yet profoundly appeals to God's justice, linking his prayer with traditions found in Lamentations 3, Isaiah 53, and Job. This approach not only deepens our understanding of Jonah 2 but also sheds light on the dynamic ways biblical texts were creatively reinterpreted in later Jewish thought.

Long Abstract

Scholarly debate abounds regarding the originality of Jonah's psalm within the book of Jonah and its role in the narrative. Its resemblance to the Psalms of the Hebrew Bible has prompted discussion on whether it depends on specific psalms or merely employs conventional phraseology. Regardless, most scholars agree that the psalm appears out of place within the book, leading to theories that it was either inserted later in the editorial process or serves as an ironic exaggeration of Jonah's plight—a pious-sounding prayer placed in his mouth, or both.

This thesis engages both the message of Jonah's psalm and the methodology of intertextual reading. First, it argues that rather than being an anomalous addition, the psalm is central to the book's interpretation, as it constitutes Jonah's (the character's) longest speech and provides insight into his psychological state. Through traditional psalmic language, Jonah (the character) presents a calculated appeal to God, interpreting his descent into the sea as analogous to Israel's exile among the nations. He is cast in the role of an innocent sufferer—akin to Job, Joseph, Jeremiah, Daniel, and the figures in Lamentations 3 and Isaiah 53—yearning for restoration in a second exodus culminating in the Jerusalem temple and reinstatement to Israel's exclusive covenantal relationship with Yahweh with a hint of judgement upon Nineveh. A close reading of Jonah's psalm in light of specific Psalms it alludes to, borrows from, and reworks brings out these key theological elements.

The second contribution of this thesis lies in its intertextual approach. It begins by analyzing each poetic line of Jonah's psalm in its Masoretic Text (MT) context while also considering the Old Greek (OG), Targum, Old Latin (OL), and extant textual witnesses like the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q82), Wadi Murabbat (Mur88), and the Nahal Hever Greek text (8HevXII gr). This comparative method challenges the tendency to privilege the MT as the sole literary

foundation but also reveals the remarkable stability of Jonah's psalm, with no significant textual variants since at least the third century BCE. If anything, the Nahal Hever Greek text consistently corrects the OG to the MT, suggesting that by the first century BCE, the proto-MT of Jonah had already gained prestige and wide availability. Notably, the Greek traditions of Jonah's psalm introduce scribal modifications that reflect intertextual connections with specific psalms, further confirmed through established indicators of literary dependence.

Beyond textual traditions, this thesis employs philological and literary analysis, integrating historical linguistics, Hebrew poetry, redaction history, and literary phenomena such as metalepsis, irony, and inversion. This careful exegetical approach allows for a nuanced understanding of Jonah's psalm within both its historical and literary contexts. Furthermore, it advocates for a dual use of intertextuality: both diachronically, by identifying specific source texts, and synchronically, by reading texts together to generate new interpretative insights (though the synchronic reading is from the perspective of Hellenistic readers of Jonah who would've had other Second Temple texts available to them for comparison). Six indicators of literary dependence guide the analysis of Jonah's psalm, while a broader intertextual reading practice extends to texts with less concrete but still meaningful thematic resonance. This process is tempered by prominent critiques of intertextuality, especially by scholars like David Carr. Along the same lines, aligning closely with scholars like Cynthia Edenburg and Ehud Ben-Zvi, this thesis treats Jonah as primarily a product of literary genius rather than oral folktale, further strengthening the textual approach highlighted by intertextuality.

A key contribution of this approach is the interaction with the Qumran scrolls, especially Hodayot and scrolls like 4Q174, 4Q177, 4Q380, and 4Q381, which reflect language from Jonah's psalm or its related Psalms, as well as later rabbinic traditions that offer imaginative yet textually

sensitive readings of Jonah. Intertextuality in the Qumran scrolls finds much continuity in Jonah's psalm, particularly in the way they engage the broader context of the biblical texts. Fascinatingly, another key piece of continuity lies in how liturgy is used prophetically in Qumran's exegetical works. This potentially explains the oddity of Jonah's psalm, in which he thanks God for a deliverance yet to come. Jonah's prophetic voice co-opts Israel's liturgical traditions to effect his own deliverance, a presumption based on his sense of innocence and righteousness (cf. Ps 18:21–28).

In chapter one, I introduce the problems associated with Jonah's psalm in scholarship and briefly survey how scholars have tried to solve it. I propose an intertextual reading of Jonah's psalm to better understand its complexity and relation to both the narrative and the Psalms. I then discuss intertextuality in literary theory and its reception in biblical studies. Intertextuality, as used in this thesis, refers to the interconnected nature of texts which can be an amiable combination of both diachronic and synchronic elements. The former involves indicators of literary dependence and the latter involves a forward-moving, generative reading practice. I also discuss how my reading of Jonah 2 contributes to the message of the book of Jonah as a metaprophetic book.

Chapter two presents the thesis' main contribution: a detailed, line-by-line analysis of Jonah's psalm, revealing its complex intertextual layers which evidence a rich and dynamic engagement with the Psalms. The first line of Jonah's psalm (Jonah 2:3a) is shown to be reworking Psalm 120:1 while also engaging with its overall thematic content of exile, temple, innocent suffering, collective identity, perception of the other, and retributive justice.

Jonah 2:3b is largely an original composition but exhibits both verbal and conceptual influence from Psalm 18—a connection evident in the way the Greek translator renders this verse. Psalm 18 portrays the psalmist as drowning in chaotic waters, even descending to Sheol (Ps 18:5–

6, 16–17), which, I argue, metaphorically represents the psalmist’s enemies (Ps 18:17–18). Notably, Psalm 18:21–28 contains a striking declaration of the psalmist’s innocence, reinforcing my thesis that Jonah’s psalm carries a strong undercurrent of innocent suffering through its intertextual engagement with the Psalms. Fascinatingly, *Hodayot* 11 and 4Q381 use Psalm 18’s language to express communal identity and righteousness, shedding light on Jonah’s use of the same psalm.

Like the previous verse, Jonah 2:4a is also an original composition but freely incorporates stock mythological and sea-related imagery found throughout the Hebrew Bible. I propose reading this verse intertextually with Exodus 15 (via 4Q158, which links Jonah 2:4a with Exodus 15:5, 8), as well as Ezekiel 27–28 and Psalm 102, due to their allusive language. Jonah’s situation is the inverse of Israel’s deliverance from the Red Sea—whereas Israel was rescued from the waters, Jonah is cast into them. His descent mirrors the fate of Egypt in the Exodus and Tyre in Ezekiel 27–28. Taking a cue from the *Masora Magna*, I argue that the verbatim verbal form in Psalm 102:11 justifies an intertextual reading with Jonah’s psalm. This connection enriches the interpretation of Jonah’s descent, linking God’s action in hurling him into the sea with the actions of the sailors in Jonah 1:12.

Jonah 2:4b, in contrast to the previous line, is an exact quotation from Psalm 42:8. This connection is strengthened by multiple verbal links between the two texts beyond the direct quotation and further reinforced by the broader thematic concerns of Psalms 42–43: exile, perception of the Other, innocent suffering, and collective identity. Psalm 42:8 serves as a theological statement about divine sovereignty over the nations, metaphorized as the primeval waters engulfing the psalmist. Jonah’s own sojourn in the sea is best understood through this lens, as Psalm 42:8 frames watery distress as symbolic of divine judgment upon Israel in exile.

Significantly, *Hodayot* 11 and 14 employ language from Psalms 42, 107, and Jonah 2 to compose new psalms negotiating similar theological themes—raging seas as exile, second exodus imagery, and innocent suffering. This further strengthens my argument that Jonah’s psalm is intertextually engaged with Psalm 42.

Jonah 2:5a contains another prominent psalmic quotation (Ps 31:23), which is adapted to fit Jonah’s context more explicitly than the previous line. The prophet’s words are framed in terms of the psalmist’s speech in Psalm 31, aligning their experiences in ways that highlight sustained connections between Jonah 2 and Psalm 31. These links extend across multiple thematic dimensions, including exile, temple, innocent suffering, perception of the Other, and divine justice. I further argue that variations in the phrasing of Jonah 2:5a in Psalm 31:23 and Lamentations 3:54 highlight Jonah’s suffering as both exilic and innocent. Notably, *Hodayot* 12:36 alludes to Psalm 31:23 in a penitential reflection on suffering and guilt—characteristic of later penitential prayers found in Daniel and Ezra-Nehemiah—yet retains an innocent self-perception akin to the suffering servant of Isaiah 53.

Jonah 2:5b introduces the theme of gazing toward the holy temple, adapting traditional psalmic formulae to Jonah’s particular circumstance. The explicit mention of the temple in this line is striking, as the temple does not appear in the surrounding narrative, making its presence in the psalm all the more prominent. Psalms 5, 11, 79, and 138 illuminate this verse, sharing an exact phrase referring to the temple and exhibiting other thematic commonalities such as temple worship, moral contrast, divine justice, and exile and return. Jonah’s hope of seeing the temple is, therefore, more than a mere aspiration; it functions as a declaration of his innocence and righteousness, which he believes qualify him for divine favor while implicitly disqualifying the wicked nations. Furthermore, his confident thanksgiving reflects the sentiment of Psalm 138, in

which Israel praises Yahweh for deliverance from exile and the temple's restoration in an international context. This intertextual engagement even resonates with Isaiah 40–55, reinforcing the idea that Jonah is a *meta-prophetic* book.

Jonah 2:6 extends the description of the prophet's distress, employing language drawn from Psalms 18, 116, 69, and other texts. Psalm 116 shares several thematic concerns with Jonah, emphasizing exile, death, restoration at the temple, and innocent suffering. Jonah 2:6 also quotes Psalm 69:2, thereby inviting an intertextual engagement with the entire psalm. Psalm 69 metaphorically portrays the psalmist's suffering as drowning in primeval waters, linking it to exile. Additional parallels emerge in the psalmist's zeal for the temple, his presumption of innocence, his perception of the Other, his petition for retributive justice, and his sense of collective identity—all themes that converge with and enrich the interpretation of Jonah's psalm. The remainder of the verse employs archaic poetic language from Exodus 15:5 and Psalm 18:5–6, elevating Jonah's (the character's) diction to that of the literary characters of Moses and David with their legendary abilities to compose scripture while subverting his status by associating him with the Egyptians who drowned in the Red Sea.

Jonah 2:7a continues Jonah's descent to the bottom of the cosmic mountains, evoking ancient cosmological imagery in which the temple mount stands at the earth's center, its foundations extending into the underworld. The verb ירד (“to descend”) explicitly connects the psalm with the broader narrative. Jonah 2:7b describes the prophet as enclosed within the netherworld, its bars shutting him in forever. The language of the netherworld evokes the promised land, which Jonah forfeits through his disobedience—an idea that extends to Israel's exile as a forfeiture of their inheritance. *Hodayot* 11 again proves instructive, as it describes the wicked as shipwrecked, sinking to the bottom of the sea, and being enclosed by the underworld's bars. Yet

in Jonah 2:7c, this descent is reversed, as God lifts the prophet from the pit. This imagery aligns with the broader biblical motif of God delivering Israel from Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon, reinforcing the connection between Jonah's rescue and Israel's restoration from exile. Individual instances of divine rescue, such as Joseph's deliverance from the pit (Gen 37:28) and Jeremiah's rescue from the cistern (Jer 38:10, 13), provide further intertextual depth. The theme of innocent suffering, central to the psalms Jonah invokes, is once again reinforced by his self-identification with these figures. Psalms 16, 30, 40, 71, and 103 all describe the lifting of the psalmist from the pit, framing this imagery within a theological understanding of innocent suffering.

Jonah 2:8a recalls the prophet's distress, emphasizing his own agency in remembering Yahweh and effecting his salvation. In constructing this verse, the poet appears to draw on Psalms 142 and 77, demonstrating an awareness of their broader theological contexts. Psalm 142, traditionally linked to David's time in the cave, expresses a cry for deliverance that is framed in terms of the Exodus, reinforcing the theme of innocent suffering. *Hodayot* 16 similarly weaves together language from Psalm 107, Isaiah 53, and Jonah 2 to articulate a theological vision of innocent suffering, further supporting the intertextual links between these texts. Psalm 77 likely informs the latter part of Jonah 2:8a with its distinctive emphasis on remembering God himself rather than merely his deeds.

Jonah 2:8b transforms the modest hope expressed in various psalms that their prayers will reach God (cf. Pss 88:3; 102:2) into a confident assertion that his plea has already been heard in the heavenly temple. The theological weight of this claim is underscored by the intertextual relationship with Psalm 88, which laments the psalmist's near-death experience in chaotic waters. Psalm 88 engages in a broader dialogue with Job and Lamentations in its presumption of innocence, making it a fitting intertextual foundation for Jonah's psalm.

Jonah 2:9 closely mirrors Psalm 31:7, reinforcing a sustained intertextual engagement between Jonah 2 and Psalm 31, first introduced in Jonah 2:5a, which quotes Psalm 31:23. This verse presents several interpretive challenges within Jonah's psalm, most of which can be resolved by reading it through the lens of Psalm 31.

In Jonah 2:10a, the prophet declares his intention to offer thanksgiving sacrifices and fulfill his vows, employing language drawn directly from the Psalms, particularly Psalm 116:17. This connection highlights the temple as the climactic site of deliverance, where proper worship delineates those who uphold true Yahwistic religion from those who do not. The concept of thanksgiving sacrifices, as outlined in Leviticus 7 and 22, further reinforces the theological distinction between Israel and the nations concerning their covenantal relationship with God. Additionally, these offerings allude to the eschatological expectation of a final feast with Yahweh, where Leviathan serves as the meal (cf. Ps 74:13–14; Ezek 29:3–5; 32:2–5; Jer 51:42).

The psalm concludes with a two-word maxim affirming that salvation belongs to Yahweh, directly reusing the closing line of Psalm 3:9. This final declaration is theologically dense, carrying profound implications when read within the broader context of Psalm 3. On one hand, it reiterates some of the themes previously highlighted in Jonah's psalm. On the other hand, it foregrounds Israel's exclusive covenantal relationship with Yahweh, reinforcing a key tension in the book of Jonah: the prophet's assumption that divine salvation properly belongs to Israel alone, rather than extending to the nations.

Finally, in chapter three, this thesis explores the broader implications of Jonah's psalm for interpreting the book as a whole. Themes of exile, temple, covenant, and innocent suffering—deeply embedded in the psalm through its intertextual engagement with the Psalms—enrich the book's narrative, positioning Jonah as a meta-prophetic and even meta-canonical work that offers

a cross-sectional view of major theological concerns within the prophetic corpus and the Hebrew Bible.

1. READING JONAH'S PSALM: ISSUES AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Introduction

While it may read like a simple story, the book of Jonah is a unique work of scribal genius that continues to stimulate scholarly works.¹ The book's simplicity belies its sophistication and invites literary expeditions to finding deep meaning. Even within the Hebrew Bible, the story of Jonah is exceptional in its portrayal of an Israelite prophet on the sea, let alone under the sea. Given that the Hebrew prophets are never sent to foreign nations in other prophetic books, Jonah traverses uncharted waters as he sets sail on a ship—another feature unique to the book of Jonah in the Hebrew Bible since Israel was never a seafaring nation despite having a shoreline. Even more distinctively, a psalm is put in the mouth of the prophet as he struggles to breathe underwater, prompting many scholars over the years to alleviate him of the suffering by treating the psalm as a secondary addition to the story. However, this thesis argues that it is in the “heart of the seas” (בלבב ימים [Jonah 2:4a]) that we find the true depth of the book of Jonah's message, providing clarity amidst the muddled waters of scholarship on Jonah 2. In Jonah 2:3–10, the character of

¹ Jonathan Magonet, “Jonah, Book Of,” in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman et al. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:936. Sharp attests to the sophistication with which narratives in the Hebrew Bible were written, with the book of Jonah being one of the four attestations to the literary genius of the ancient biblical writers:

Many narratives in the Hebrew Scriptures have been written with a degree of literary skill that goes underappreciated. Even brief stories show hallmarks of scribal sophistication: attention to salient details of character, subtly revealed; freighted silences in which the reader is meant to connect seemingly disparate pieces of information; gradual unfolding of the particular significance of matters through dialogue between characters; and more. In the Hebrew Scriptures, we find several longer prose pieces that have been crafted with exquisite artfulness. The authors responsible for these exemplars of ancient scribal genius show an unusual depth of insight into human character, exceptional skill at designing plot elements and suspenseful pacing, and a gift for chiseled yet revelatory dialogue that can leave a contemporary literary critic agape in admiration. These gem-like longer pieces include the Joseph material in Genesis 37–50, the books of Ruth and Esther, and the prophetic book of Jonah.

Jonah frames his plight through Israel's treasured tradition of the Psalms, depicting his descent into the sea as an exile among the nations—an innocent sufferer longing for restoration. He envisions a second exodus, culminating in the Jerusalem temple, where he can once again partake in the exclusive covenantal bond with Yahweh through cultic rituals—a privilege reserved for Israel, while the nations remain under His judgment.

This re-reading of Jonah's psalm as an invitation to dialogue with the broader prophetic and psalmic corpus accords well with the way the book ends in chapter 4. The last verse seems to end with a question, inviting further reflections and questions rather than serving as a definitive end to the story. Is the verse communicating that God wants Jonah, the character, to understand his pity on Nineveh in light of Jonah's own concern for the qiqayon? Or is it a declarative statement that God had decided to not have pity on Nineveh just like he didn't have pity on Jerusalem (from the point of view of the readers who would have known the eventual destruction of both cities), stunning Jonah into silence? Or is it meant to remain ambiguous for later readers to reflect upon? Ben Zvi's conclusion on this verse is enlightening:²

The double reading at the end of the book leads not merely to a localized case of multiple meanings, which in itself is a very common feature in the authoritative repertoire of the Yehudite literate (including all prophetic literature), but in this case to a double ending of the book. Since the question of whether YHWH destroys, or does not destroy, Nineveh is central to the plot of the book, this double ending is tantamount to a double reading of the prophetic book, one in which Nineveh is destroyed and another in which it is not.

² Ehud Ben Zvi, "Jonah 4:11 and the Metaphoric Character of the Book of Jonah," *JHebS* 9 (2009): 13. Tiemeyer lends credence to Ben Zvi's view, noting that the double ending of the book of Jonah leaves it open to the readers to continue the dialogue as Jonah never acquiesces to God like Job does. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, *Jonah Through the Centuries*, Wiley Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2022), 232–36. This is not a new view of the book of Jonah as evidenced in the work of Thomas Bolin who wrote in 1997, "But in spite of the best efforts of scholars ancient and modern, the hanging end of Jonah and the precarious nature of human existence which it metaphorically represents remain a haunting biblical witness to a theology that defies easy expression or analysis." Thomas M. Bolin, *Freedom Beyond Forgiveness: The Book of Jonah Re-Examined*, JSOTSup 236 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 178.

The ever-abounding literature with its different takes on the ending of the book is itself a testament to the polyvalent nature of the book of Jonah, warranting a second look at chapter 2 with its own set of hermeneutical issues, whether it is the character of Jonah's pious prayer of repentance or if it is a comedic exaggeration of his piety or better yet, a calculated case made out of an intertextual dialogue with traditional psalmody.³ Whether it is a question or not, Jonah 4:11 raises more questions than answers, demonstrating the book's potential to be read and re-read in light of a deep network of prophetic and psalmic traditions. The prophet's silence in chapter 4 should be reconsidered in light of his extensive speech in chapter 2, where he makes his most compelling case intertextually.

1.1.1 *The Problem of the Psalm in Jonah*

In his book, *Psalm and Story*, published in 1992, Watts observed, "The relation between the narrative and psalm in the book of Jonah has been studied and discussed more than any other psalm in a narrative context."⁴ Despite the abundance of scholarly attention to this psalm, he went on to say that there is little agreement on the psalm's purpose or composition. That was true in 1992, and it remains to be true in the present. And that is to be expected considering the numerous interpretive possibilities and historical-critical speculations that the psalm elicits. It is indeed

³ There is no clear grammatical indication in the Hebrew text that Jonah 4:11 is a question, but most scholars read it as a rhetorical question based on the sequence of qatal and yiqtol with a vav and the broader context. Cf. Albert H. Kamp, *Inner Worlds: A Cognitive-Linguistic Approach to the Book of Jonah*, trans. David Orton, Biblical Interpretation Series 68 (Boston: Brill, 2004), 109, n39. Ben Zvi's defense of reading Jonah 4:11 as a question is noteworthy. Ben Zvi, "Jonah 4:11 and the Metaphorical Character of the Book of Jonah." For a different take on the verse, see Alan Cooper, "In Praise of Divine Caprice: The Significance of the Book of Jonah," in *Among the Prophets: Language, Image and Structure in the Prophetic Writings*, ed. Philip R. Davies and David J.A. Clines, JSOTSup 144 (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1993), 144–63. But Cooper himself reads the ending of Jonah intertextually in dialogue with the prophets, so my point stands even if one does not read Jonah 4:11 as a question. See also Amy Erickson whose more recent work reads the last verse of Jonah as an assertion of God's pitilessness rather than a rhetorical question. Amy Erickson, *Jonah: Introduction and Commentary*, Illuminations (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 413.

⁴ James W. Watts, *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative*, JSOTSup 139 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 132.

riddled with historical-critical and hermeneutical problems by virtue of its placement in the narrative of the book and its resemblance to the Psalms.

Since the time of DeWette, scholars have noted the differences between the psalm and the story of Jonah, leading them to postulate the theory that the psalm was composed independently of the book of Jonah and was only later inserted into the book.⁵ Bolin summarizes the major arguments to view the psalm as independent to the prose section of the book: 1. The thanksgiving prayer was seemingly offered from the belly of the fish, which does not fit the occasion; 2. Jonah's prayer is described with the *hithpael* of פָּלַל (to pray) which typically refers to a lament and not a thanksgiving; 3. Jonah's piety in the psalm does not match his characterization in the prose; 4. Aramaisms abound in the prose section, but none are found in the poem; 5. Key words from the prose are not repeated in the poetry. Synonyms are used instead; 6. The narrative flows without the poem.⁶ The psalm certainly seems to give a different voice to the prophet than his consistent opposition to the extension of God's mercy to the Ninevites in the prose (Jonah 4:2).⁷ It adds a layer of prophetic piety to the otherwise two-dimensional character of Jonah, casting him as a thankful, pious sufferer who has been transformed to carry out the divine command. But does that

⁵ DeWette says the borrowing of this psalm is „unpassend“ (inappropriate). Wilhelm Martin Leberecht DeWette, “Die Einleitung in das A.T. und in die Bibelsammlung überhaupt enthaltend,” in *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in die Bibel Alten und Neuen Testaments*, ed. Eberhard Schrader (De Gruyter, 1869), 1:464. Discussing the scholarly consensus on the book of Jonah, Childs says, “The secondary nature of the psalm in ch. 2 has been widely accepted.” Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2011), 419. For example, see Hermann Gunkel, *Ausgewählte Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911), 295. Gerhard von Rad, *God at Work in Israel*, trans. J.H. Marks (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 70. Jorg Jeremias, “Der Psalm des Jona (Jona 2,3-10),” in *Was ist der Mensch, dass du seiner gedenkst? (Psalm 8,5): Aspekte einer theologischen Anthropologie; Festschrift für Bernd Janowski zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Michaela Bauks, Kathrin Liess, and Peter Riede (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008), 203–4.

⁶ Bolin, *Freedom Beyond Forgiveness*, 99. See also Peter Weimar, “Jonapsalm und Jonaerzählung,” *BZ* 28, no. 1 (1984): 46–49.

⁷ Nogalski notes this “softening” of Jonah's characterization and argues that this insertion of prayers in narratives was the practice of scribes in late Persian and Hellenistic periods to make the characters look more pious. James Nogalski, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, and Jonah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023), 355–56.

necessarily entail that the psalm is a rather “clumsy” work of a later redactor?⁸ Bewer goes as far as to say that “it cannot be maintained that the psalm was composed by the author of the story. If it had been composed by him, he would have fitted it more closely into the situation. As it is, it does not fit very well.”⁹

1.1.2 Potential Solution: Reading Jonah’s Psalm Ironically

However, there has been a shift away from a purely historical-critical approach to the book of Jonah towards treating the psalm as integral to the book, which has proven to be insightful.¹⁰ Opgen-Rhein, for instance, has shown that the psalm is central to the whole book.¹¹ More recently, Kaplan has argued that the psalm and the story of Jonah come from the same hand.¹² Reading the psalm as complementing the story involves holding space for the possibility that there may be a level of irony (or at least momentary transformation) in the psalm, for the Jonah of the psalm, who proclaims that salvation belongs to Yahweh in his psalm, does not seem to believe that anymore

⁸ John Day, “Problems in the Interpretation of the Book of Jonah,” in *In Quest of the Past: Studies in Israelite Religion, Literature and Prophetism*, ed. A. S. Van der Woude, OtSt 26 (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 41.

⁹ Julius A. Bewer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jonah*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), 22.

¹⁰ While admitting that the prayer may have been written by someone other than the author of Jonah, Landes defended the psalm’s place in the book by showing that the prayer is not wholly inconsistent with the characterization of Jonah in the rest of the book. George M. Landes, “The Kerygma of the Book of Jonah: The Contextual Interpretation of the Jonah Psalm,” *Interpretation* 21, no. 1 (1967): 3–31. Watts takes a similar approach. Watts, *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative*. Citing Magonet and Lacoque, Brenner notes this break from the historical critical approach. Athalya Brenner, “Jonah’s Poem Out of and Within Its Context,” in *Among the Prophets: Language, Image and Structure in the Prophetic Writings*, ed. David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies, JSOTSup 144 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 182, nlebk. Arguing against a different authorship of Jonah’s psalm, Friedemann W. Golka, “Divine Repentance: A Commentary on the Book of Jonah,” in *A Commentary on the Books of The Song of Songs and Jonah*, International Theological Commentary (Eerdmans, 1988), 90–94.

¹¹ Hermann J. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm und Jonabuch: Sprachgestalt, Entstehungsgeschichte und Kontextbedeutung von Jona 2*, SBB 38 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH, 1997), 105–6. See also Bühner who makes a case for the unity of the book of Jonah, including chapter 2. Walter Bühner, “Untersuchungen zur literarischen Gestaltung des Jona-Buches,” *BN* 166 (2015): 29–50.

¹² Jonathan Kaplan, “Pastiche, Hyperbole, and the Composition of Jonah’s Prayer,” in *Petitioners, Penitents, and Poets: On Prayer and Praying in Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Timothy J. Sandoval and Ariel Feldman (De Gruyter, 2020), 27–42.

in Jonah 3–4.¹³ To make sense of this incoherence, Holbert argues that the psalm is “another inappropriate, hypocritical, pious-sounding affirmation like 1.9 before it and 4.2 after it. By it, Jonah shows the reader more clearly his true colors. His phrases sound good and right, but in the event they turn out to be empty.”¹⁴ Likewise, picking up on the dissonant message of the psalm, Ackerman observes that the thanksgiving notes do not match the dangerous death-like abode of the belly of the fish: “Based on a false sense of security, it is a hollow song sung in a hollow place...The point is forced upon us further as we hear Jonah, from the innards of the female fish, sing a misguided song of thanks for deliverance from the ‘womb of Sheol.’”¹⁵ To Ackerman, the dissonance points to satire. Similarly, Sharp supports an ironic reading of Jonah’s psalm by pointing to the fact that Yahweh’s response to the psalm was reflected in the fish vomiting him out, “the fish, hearing pieties from a character who is so transparently unreliable and manipulative, regurgitates him onto the shore in a paroxysm of disgust (2:10).”¹⁶ While Holbert, Ackerman, and Sharp very point out the irony in Jonah’s psalm, they nevertheless do not make much of intertextual links to the Psalms which help paint a fuller picture. Such purely literary readings of Jonah,

¹³ Jonathan Magonet, *Form and Meaning: Studies in Literary Techniques in the Book of Jonah*, 2nd ed., BLS 8 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1983), 54; Golka, “Divine Repentance,” 92–93.

¹⁴ John C. Holbert, “‘Deliverance Belongs to Yahweh’: Satire in the Book of Jonah,” *JSOT* 6, no. 21 (1981): 74.

¹⁵ James S. Ackerman, “Satire and Symbolism in the Song of Jonah,” in *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith*, ed. Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 235.

¹⁶ Sharp, *The Prophetic Literature*, 196. Similarly, Phyllis Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah*, GBS (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 172. Holbert, “‘Deliverance Belongs to Yahweh,’” 74. In its basic sense, irony is “saying something other than what is understood” to typically undermine a convention or a norm. This is considered rhetorical irony as opposed to dramatic, tragic, comic, romantic, or postmodern ironies. Claire Colebrook, “Irony,” in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th ed, ed. Roland Greene and Stephen Cushman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2012), 731–33. Satire, on the other, is a kind of communication that utilizes different literary forms including irony to ridicule folly. William R. Jones, “Satire,” in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th ed, ed. Roland Greene and Stephen Cushman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2012), 1255. Even parody, which is “that breed of satire in which the standardized behavior to be exposed is literary,” has been suggested as playing a role in the book of Jonah. John A. Miles Jr., “Laughing at the Bible: Jonah as Parody,” *JQR* 65, no. 3 (1975): 168.

highlighting irony and satire, tend to dismiss the psalm just like the purely historical-critical approaches. For instance, Handy says this poetic section should be seen as an “archaistic parody of liturgical hymns” allowing him to flatten the psalm as only serving to characterize Jonah.¹⁷ The same can be said of Miles’ reading of Jonah’s psalm as being “bombastic” and “slapstick,” depriving it of any deep meaning.¹⁸

1.1.3 *Promising Solution: Reading Jonah’s Psalm Intertextually*

In contrast to these somewhat reductionist approaches, I propose that Jonah’s psalm be read intertextually. This is not to say that there is no irony in Jonah’s psalm when seen from the level of the author. On the contrary, the disjunction between the story and the psalm is so great that there must be an ironic element in portraying Jonah (the character) as speaking this psalm. As Opgen-Rhein insightfully notes, when confronted with unusual circumstances, Jonah ironically finds security in his religious experience by using traditional language from the Psalms.¹⁹ At the same time, this seemingly out of place psalm effects Jonah’s salvation rather than merely serve to highlight his failure, complicating the psalm more than the purely ironic readings can explain.²⁰

¹⁷ Lowell K. Handy, *Jonah’s World: Social Science and the Reading of Prophetic Story* (London: Routledge, 2007), 54.

¹⁸ Miles Jr., “Laughing at the Bible: Jonah as Parody,” 173–75. Similarly, Brenner follows Miles in seeing the psalm as exaggerating psalmic language for the sake of humor. Brenner, “Jonah’s Poem Out of and Within Its Context,” 189. Similarly, Kaplan’s view of Jonah’s psalm as a pastiche is that it imitates rather inappropriately strung phrases from older psalms. Kaplan, “Pastiche, Hyperbole, and the Composition of Jonah’s Prayer,” 40. On the development of these views, their relationship to genre, and critique, see Aron Tillema, “The Book of Jonah in Recent Research,” *CurBR* 21, no. 2 (2023): 151–53. Craig’s criticism of this is also worth noting. Kenneth M. Craig, *A Poetics of Jonah: Art in the Service of Ideology*, 2nd ed. (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999), 158.

¹⁹ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 115.

²⁰ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 116. This perhaps speaks to the power of calling upon God, which is met with salvation both for Jonah and Nineveh. Jonah becomes an unwilling vessel for something bigger than himself, even at the expense of his dignity that the irony highlights.

The resemblance of the psalm to the Psalms does more than create irony in the book of Jonah; it invites the reader to read the psalm with the Psalms.²¹ Opgen-Rhein pays meticulous attention to the broader and more general ideologies reflected in the language of the psalm, with occasional comments on allusive language in it. Particularly helpful are his comments on what he considers quotations in the psalm from Psalms 31, 42/43, and 120. In the same vein, Magonet shows that the intertextual connections to the Psalms in Jonah's prayer deepen its exegetical potential. He teases out numerous intertextual references to the Psalms and argues that Jonah's prayer makes careful use of the psalms, emending their language to fit the agenda of the prayer.²² Weimar can also be counted among the scholars who pay special attention to the intertextuality of Jonah's psalm, emphasizing the prophet's characterization as someone who is deeply acquainted with the traditions of Israel.²³

Hugh Pyper's intertextual work deserves mention here, as he argues that the psalm inspired the composition of the narrative, overturning the common assumption that the prose takes priority over the poetry in the book.²⁴ Pyper offers many excellent insights into how the psalm's metaphors

²¹ Here, I am pushing back against the notion advanced by Kaplan that "the lack of interpretive import for the purported quotations from the psalter gives Jonah's prayer the character of a pastiche." Kaplan, "Pastiche, Hyperbole, and the Composition of Jonah's Prayer," 37.

²² Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 39–54. In the same vein as Magonet, Alistair Hunter analyzes the prayer of Jonah intertextually and shows how texts like Psalm 55, 69, 107, Exodus 15, and Nehemiah 9, etc. have textual and conceptual resonances with the psalm. Alastair G. Hunter, *The Judgement of Jonah: Yahweh, Jerusalem and Nineveh*, LHBOTS 642 (New York: Bloomsbury, 2022), 152–74. His focus is on the exodus language in the psalm, demonstrating how a unique formulation of the exodus in Jonah 2 might have resulted in the composition of the Jonah narrative. While Hunter's analysis is fascinating and pioneering, it does not seek to be comprehensive. Moreover, Hunter does not detect any sign of irony in the psalm nor in its use of other texts.

²³ Peter Weimar, *Jona*, ed. Ulrich Berges, Christoph Dohmen, and Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger, HThKAT (Freiburg: Herder, 2017), 219–20. Although Weimar thinks that the psalm is secondary to the book and went through an editorial process that took an older lament form and transformed it into a thanksgiving psalm, he nevertheless does not dismiss the psalm's contribution to the narrative. Thus, his analysis of the psalm's relation to the Psalms is valuable.

²⁴ Hugh S. Pyper, "Swallowed By a Song: Jonah and the Jonah-Psalm Through the Looking-Glass," in *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld*, ed. A. Graeme Auld et al., VTSup 113 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 337–58.

may have emerged as literal objects and events in the narrative. However, one problem with this view is that Jonah's psalm has appeared as part of the book since its earliest attestations—in Hebrew from the second century CE (Wadi Muraba'at) and even earlier in the Greek versions—giving no indication of independent existence apart from the rest of the book of Jonah.²⁵ Moreover, there is no evidence of its inclusion in the Psalter throughout reception history, rendering a key assumption of Pyper's argument merely conjectural. Pyper himself concedes this but hypothesizes that the psalm might have been excluded from the Psalter once the book of Jonah adapted it to the narrative.²⁶ Again, however, no textual evidence supports this.

The second issue is that Pyper's reading seems to overlook the common phenomenon elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible of narrative inset poetry, where a poetic composition is placed in a character's mouth within the surrounding prose. Examples include the Song of Moses in Exodus 15:1–21 (recounting the events of Exodus 14), as well as Deuteronomy 32:1–43, Judges 5, 1 Samuel 2:1–10, 2 Samuel 22, Isaiah 38:9–20, Daniel 2:20–23, and 1 Chronicles 16:8–36—all of which militate against Pyper's novel idea. In my opinion, establishing that Jonah's psalm stands apart from these texts would require extraordinary evidence. Furthermore, even if the psalm did precede the book, Pyper's essay does not sufficiently explain its intertextual relations with other psalms in the Psalter (or *vice versa*). Instead, he dismisses these resonances by noting the difficulty of establishing the direction of dependence.²⁷

This thesis extends the approaches of Opgen-Rhein, Magonet, and Weimar, along with a few other scholars who discuss intertextuality in other parts of the Hebrew Bible and offers a

²⁵ Uriel Simon, *Jonah: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, trans. Lenn J. Schramm, JPS Bible Commentary (Philadelphia: JPS, 1999), xlii.

²⁶ Pyper, "Swallowed By a Song: Jonah and the Jonah-Psalm Through the Looking-Glass," 354–55.

²⁷ Pyper, "Swallowed By a Song," 340.

detailed reading of the prayer in relation to the Psalms. A closer analysis of the intertextual use of the book of Psalms in Jonah 2:3–10 has the potential to yield a deeper, more complex meaning, complicating the character of Jonah just like Job.²⁸ This thesis aims to unlock that potential by exploring the nature of transfer and transformation of meaning between Jonah's psalm and the Psalms.

On one hand, this thesis questions sentiments like that expressed by Levine when he says that the psalm is “culled entirely from the Book of Psalms” so as to mitigate its originality and integration into the book.²⁹ This was the view of critical scholarship as far back as DeWette who remarked, “jedoch ist das Lied II, 3 —10, [das zudem von Anfang bis zu Ende aus Psalmstellen zusammengestückt ist)], irgendwoher unpassend entlehnt)” (However, the song II, 3–10 [which, moreover, is pieced together from psalm verses from beginning to end], is inappropriately borrowed from somewhere).³⁰ According to DeWette, then, the psalm is not only borrowed entirely from the Psalms but also inappropriately, without concern for their meaning and context.³¹ Kaplan's comments on the pastiche nature of Jonah's psalm echo this perspective, but with the key difference that the reuse of earlier psalmic traditions is a sign of originality for him.³² On the

²⁸ Philip P. Jenson, “Interpreting Jonah's God: Canon and Criticism,” in *The God of Israel*, ed. Robert P. Gordon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 232–33. Jenson goes on to say very insightfully, “The irony of Jonah is not biting or dehumanizing, but forgiving and merciful. There are indeed elements of humour conveyed through irony and exaggeration, but they are secondary to the grave issues being explored...the theological issues being disputed are substantial and serious ones, heightened and not trivialized by the ironies that are present.”

²⁹ Etan Levine, “Jonah as a Philosophical Book,” *ZAW* 96, no. 2 (1984): 239. Similarly, Robert B. Salters, *Jonah and Lamentations*, OTG (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 31, nlebk.

³⁰ DeWette, “Die Einleitung,” 464. He gives verse 9 as the example which, in his view, does not fit the book of Jonah at all.

³¹ Informing this opinion is the late dating of the book of Jonah at which point the originality of the classical psalms of the exilic and pre-exilic period was assumed to be largely absent because of the growing rewriting of older traditions in post-exilic times. Robert Dick Wilson, “The Authenticity of Jonah,” *PTR* 16, no. 2 (1918): 431.

³² Kaplan, “Pastiche, Hyperbole, and the Composition of Jonah's Prayer,” 38.

other hand, this thesis also pushes back against the notion that we cannot investigate intertextuality between texts in the Hebrew Bible owing to textual pluriformity and the complexities of textual composition and transmission. Instead, sensitivity to the dynamics of textual production serves to enrich our reading practices.

Adjacent to these views and sidestepping the entire issue of any direct relationship between Jonah's psalm and the Psalms is the idea that the similarity between them owes itself to the common liturgical situation in which these psalms were composed and transmitted. As Bolin says, "what is at work in Jonah's song is not a direct dependence or borrowing of a text or texts by another, but evidence of an established method of literary composition in which certain motifs occur in the same clusters within the larger, differing contexts of several Hebrew poems."³³ While being open to this, I employ signs of intertextuality to investigate the relationship further.

1.2 Intertextuality

The concept of intertextuality first arose in literary theory and was later adopted by biblical scholars to mean something very different. Naturally, the use of the concept in biblical studies has come under criticism. In what follows, I will chart a way forward that acknowledges the limitations of intertextuality in biblical studies while at the same time highlighting its promise for reading biblical texts generatively.

1.2.1 *Defining Intertextuality: An Elusive Concept*

There are as many theories and practices of intertextuality as there are its practitioners, making it challenging to define intertextuality. However, we can trace the term back to Julia Kristeva, a French literary theorist, who coined the word "intertextuality" in response to

³³ Bolin, *Freedom Beyond Forgiveness*, 116.

structuralism. According to Kristeva, intertextuality refers to the way texts dialogue with each other.³⁴ But meaning cannot be limited to the text by its very nature.³⁵ Infinite meaning exists somewhere between the interconnected texts that are in constant dialogue with each other. Subsequently, Roland Barthes declared the “death” of the author.³⁶ Consequently, reader-response criticism legitimized reader’s response to the text *as* determining the meaning of the text.³⁷ However, intertextuality has been co-opted by other humanities to the extent that it has lost its original meaning, perhaps as a logical entailment of its original conception. Allen sums up why this is the case, “Each theorist comes to intertextuality hoping it will provide an informing tool or model for interpretation, but each theorist soon realizes that, as a concept, intertextuality plunges one into a series of oppositions and questions.”³⁸ Therefore, intertextuality does not facilitate an interpretation but infinite interpretations. This notion of intertextuality, while fruitful in literary studies, poses challenges when applied to biblical texts, which are often studied for their historical and compositional development.

³⁴ Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University, 1980), 66.

³⁵ Timothy K. Beal, “Ideology and Intertextuality: Surplus of Meaning and Controlling the Means of Production,” in *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Donna Nolan Fewell (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 30.

³⁶ Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *The Death and Resurrection of the Author?*, ed. William Irwin, Contributions in Philosophy 83 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 3–8.

³⁷ Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1980), 3.

³⁸ Graham Allen, *Intertextuality, The New Critical Idiom*, ed. John Drakkis (London: Routledge, 2000), 59–60.

1.2.2 Intertextuality in Biblical Studies

In biblical scholarship, intertextuality has evolved into two broad schools of thought: reader-oriented synchronic approach and text-based diachronic approach.³⁹ The former aligns with its original theorists mentioned above. But the latter, somewhat ironically, goes beyond their authorial intent and anchors itself to the text in finding source texts.⁴⁰ This is obviously contrary to how the original theorists of intertextuality, Kristeva and Barthes, envisioned it. Both of them eschewed the idea of locating source texts and tracing their influence upon later texts. Kristeva writes, “but since this term [intertextuality] has often been understood in the banal sense of ‘study of sources,’ we prefer the term transposition because it specifies that the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation of the thetic—of enunciative and denotative positionality.”⁴¹ So, the reuse of texts essentially creates a new network of texts which transforms its original meaning. The signifiers, rather than signifying a signified as in Saussurean

³⁹ G. D. Miller, “Intertextuality in Old Testament Research,” *CurBR* 9, no. 3 (2010): 285–88.

⁴⁰ Tull points out the irony in this second approach. Patricia Tull, “Intertextuality and the Hebrew Scriptures,” *CurBS* 8 (2000): 72. See also David M. Carr, “The Many Uses of Intertextuality in Biblical Studies: Actual and Potential,” in *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010*, ed. Martti Nissinen, VTSup 148 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 515. For a good summary of how a diachronic method works, see Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, *Zechariah’s Vision Report and Its Earliest Interpreters: A Redaction-Critical Study of Zechariah 1–8* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 27–42.

⁴¹ Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 60. Similarly, Barthes says that an ideal text “is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend *as far as the eye can reach*, they are indeterminable (meaning here is never subject to a principle of determination, unless by throwing dice).” (Emphasis original). Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 5–6. Barthes says more explicitly that “The intertextual in which every text is held, it itself being the text-between of another text, is not to be confused with some origin of the text: to try to find the ‘sources’, the ‘influences’ of a work, is to fall in with the myth of filiation; the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet *already read*: they are quotations without inverted commas.” Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 160. There is no possibility of anachronism in this model because texts are ahistorical. Summing up the post-structuralist view of intertextuality, Allen writes, “To say that the text is constructed from a mosaic of quotations does not mean we can find the text’s intertexts and then view them as the signified of the text’s signifiers. The inter-texts, other works of literature, other kinds of texts, are themselves intertextual constructs, are themselves able to offer us nothing more than signifiers. . . . Meaning occurs because of the play of signifiers, not because a signified can be found to stabilize a signifier; the signified is always, as it were, over the horizon.” Allen, *Intertextuality*, 73–74.

thought, signify other signifiers, creating a vicious circle of signifiers. This makes a diachronic study of texts irrelevant if not impossible. However, this discussion, by citing Kristeva, Barthes, and Allen, shows that referring to specific texts is both possible and profitable.

The synchronic, post-structuralist approach did carry over to biblical studies, which is why Sommers distinguishes between intertextuality on the one hand and influence and allusion on the other, preserving its historical meaning—something that intertextuality in that sense would object to.⁴²

Following the second approach, biblical scholars like Hays use intertextuality to refer to scriptural reuse of texts where the text remains somewhat in control.⁴³ Fishbane proposed a diachronic approach which analyzes how the biblical authors interpreted and reused previous texts as evidence of inner-biblical exegesis.⁴⁴ Barton calls this a “soft” understanding of intertextuality.⁴⁵ This approach is porous since scholars in this camp sometimes do not follow a strict diachronic reading in their use of intertextuality.⁴⁶ This is not without precedence outside of biblical studies, as literary critics like Jonathan Culler, Laurent Jenny, Peter Rabinowitz, et al. understand intertextuality to encompass, to one extent or another, literary borrowing and

⁴² Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 6–8.

⁴³ Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University, 1989), 14.

⁴⁴ Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 7.

⁴⁵ John Barton, “Déjà Lu: Intertextuality, Method or Theory?,” in *Reading Job Intertextually*, ed. Katharine Dell and Will Kynes, LHBOTS 574 (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 9.

⁴⁶ Schultz argues that a mix of diachronic and synchronic elements can be fruitful in exegesis. Richard L. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation: Verbal Parallels in the Prophets*, JSOTSup 180 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 238.

dependence.⁴⁷ Jenny even likens intertextuality to source criticism, “Intertextuality in the strict sense is not unrelated to source criticism: it designates not a confused, mysterious accumulation of influences, but the work of transformation and assimilation of various texts that is accomplished by a focal text which keeps control over the meaning.”⁴⁸ So, it is not entirely extraordinary to use intertextuality to refer to diachronic connections between texts where such a relationship is plausible.

1.2.3 *Intertextuality in this Thesis*

My use of intertextuality combines both synchronic analysis and diachronic study where such an endeavor is possible.⁴⁹ Thus intertextuality, as it is used in this thesis, simply refers to the interconnected nature of texts. It explains how texts inform each other, which is characteristic of the exegetical and compositional phenomena of texts in ancient Israel not only in post exilic community under Ezra but also before the exile, which Sarna first called “inner-biblical exegesis.”⁵⁰ As Fishbane elaborates, “intertextuality is the core of the canonical imagination; that

⁴⁷ Jonathan D. Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); Laurent Jenny, “The Strategy of Form,” in *French Literary Theory Today: A Reader*, ed. Tzvetan Todorov (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 34–63; Peter J. Rabinowitz, “‘What’s Hecuba to Us?’ The Audience’s Experience of Literary Borrowing,” in *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation*, ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman and Inge Crosman, Princeton Legacy Library 617 (Princeton University Press, 1980).

⁴⁸ Jenny, “The Strategy of Form,” 39–40.

⁴⁹ Both forms of analyses are included under the term “intertextuality” in this thesis, and both are recognized to be profitable for studying ancient texts. Stead calls this combination “contextual intertextuality.” Michael R. Stead, *The Intertextuality of Zechariah 1–8*, LHBOTS 506 (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 16, 18. Will Kynes also defends Stead’s approach. Will Kynes, *My Psalm Has Turned into Weeping: Job’s Dialogue with the Psalms*, BZAW 437 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 18–59. Afterall, a mix of synchronic and diachronic approaches is not foreign to Biblical Studies as John Barton notes, biblical criticism consists of a “constant crisscrossing of synchronic and diachronic dimensions.” John Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 188.

⁵⁰ Nahum M. Sarna, “Psalm 89: A Study in Inner Biblical Exegesis,” in *Biblical and Other Studies*, ed. Alexander Altmann (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1963), 29–46. For a very helpful history of scholarship on inner-biblical exegesis, see Bernard M. Levinson, *Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2008), 95–175.

is, it is the core of the creative imagination that lives within a self-reflexive culture shaped by an authoritative collection of texts.”⁵¹ In other words, intertextuality in this sense is not a new concept. De Moor explains this more forcefully, “To the Bible scholar, intertextuality is nothing new. The way in which Jewish works of the Second Temple period and the New Testament used the Old Testament forced exegetes to address the issue of intertextuality long before this postmodern shibboleth was created.”⁵² His observation underscores that intertextual engagement was not merely a theoretical construct but a lived reality within ancient scribal culture, thus making intertextuality a relevant feature of my thesis.

Granted, Sarna and Fishbane are operating under a later canonical concept of biblical texts, but we can expand their thesis to a broader range of texts in Second Temple period that defy rigid definitions of canon. For this reason, Zahn prefers altering the language to reflect greater sensitivity to the scribal practices of Second Temple Judaism. She proposes using the language of revision and reuse to speak of genres of rewriting rather than rewritten Bible or innerbiblical exegesis.⁵³ Intertextuality, however, does not necessarily carry with it later notions of canon, nor does it have to preclude thinking about textual production and composition more broadly beyond textuality. It merely helps narrow the focus of scholarly inquiry on textual elements of revision and reuse while not reducing scribal practices to flattened concepts of textuality.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Michael Fishbane, “Types of Biblical Intertextuality,” in *Congress Volume Oslo 1998*, ed. A. Lemaire and M. Sæbø, VTSup (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 80:39. For a critique of this view on intertextuality, see Carr, “The Many Uses of Intertextuality.” Carr opts rather for “influence” to describe specific relationships between texts while using intertextuality to mean the connection to lost and unknown background of biblical texts (523).

⁵² Johannes C. de Moor, “Introduction,” in *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel*, OtSt 40 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), ix.

⁵³ Molly M. Zahn, *Genres of Rewriting in Second Temple Judaism: Scribal Composition and Transmission* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2020), 7.

⁵⁴ Focusing narrowly on different elements of ancient Israelite traditions is characteristic of academic discussions. For example, an investigation into long imperative form of a certain verb in the Hebrew Bible does not

Through intertextual analysis, one can locate source texts and observe, to whatever extent the texts lend themselves to such a diachronic enterprise, the transfer and transformation of meaning between texts. This involves exploring how to identify intertextual allusions using various markers or signs of intertexts in a text. The process of identifying literary dependence is a fruitful exercise in biblical criticism as it anchors the process to the textual and historical data, yielding nuanced details about the relationship between two (or more) texts. The combination of diachronic with a synchronic view should in no way undercut the importance of establishing literary dependence between texts; this thesis is not a departure from the diachronic method, but rather an exercise in expanding it to include forward reading intertextual practices. Moreover, the careful examination required to assess potential direction of dependence—regardless of whether it yields certainty—compels close attention to the fine-grained linguistic and thematic layers of the texts, thereby enriching the overall interpretation.

Before going into the specifics of the methodology in identifying intertexts and allusions in this thesis, two clarifications regarding synchronic intertextuality and textual pluriformity are in order.

1.2.3.1 What is Meant by Synchronic Intertextuality in This Thesis

Having discussed the two streams of intertextuality—diachronic and synchronic—in Biblical Studies and proposing to combine them in my thesis, I must clarify that I do not intend to follow a reader-response type of synchronic reading in which any texts from any period, without formal connections, can be read together. Rather, my adoption of a synchronic approach is quite

necessarily reduce the text to merely a source of grammatical information. In the same way, an intertextual reading of a text by its nature is interested in the way locutions are sourced and transformed. To claim that such a reading is exhaustive is as untenable as rejecting the entire enterprise of biblical criticism.

narrow and arises from a sensed inadequacy in the diachronic model to date texts accurately and with certainty relative to one another, especially the individual Psalms.

The synchronic reading employed here is limited to the timeframe of the first few generations of readers of the book of Jonah in the late Persian and Hellenistic periods, who would have had access to many texts that would become biblical and canonical texts. At times, I draw on later apocryphal and Qumran texts to illustrate how subsequent readers and authors developed the same interpretive patterns evident in the composition of Jonah's psalm, sometimes extending its theological reasoning further—particularly in the Hodayot. Beyond that period, I occasionally refer to rabbinic traditions that echo relevant ideas, but this does not extend the synchronic reading into the medieval era. Overall, the synchronic reading allows me to explore how Jonah's psalm can be read alongside the abundance of Second Temple period texts, most of which would be excluded under a strictly diachronic method.

Another way to clarify my method is to note that diachronic intertextuality highlights how Jonah 2 may have been *composed* under the influence of a network of earlier texts, whereas synchronic readings with later works (or with earlier works whose priority cannot be diachronically proven) illuminate how subsequent readers *interpreted* Jonah's psalm through an expanded or parallel network of texts. The combination of the two methods is ultimately governed by the available evidence for literary dependence: where indicators allow a text to be confidently antedated to Jonah's psalm, I propose a diachronic relationship; where that is untenable, I still read the texts intertextually to show how a later Hellenistic reader might plausibly have understood them together.

1.2.3.2 Textual Pluriformity and Intertextuality

In this thesis, I offer textually and philologically informed literary readings of Jonah's prayer without necessarily assuming the fixity or stability of the texts in question. Rather, I explore hypothetical yet plausible moments in the history of textual transmission, where the Psalms and Jonah became entangled.

While the diversity of textual forms and the complexities involved in their creation make arguments for direct literary dependence challenging, a balanced approach that combines literary dependence with intertextuality provides a promising way forward. This approach allows for hypothetical intertextual connections between texts that do not necessarily require literary dependence, enabling them to be read in light of one another. To ensure intertextuality remains meaningful for a biblical critic, however, it must be anchored in specific texts to avoid an endless network of vague connections. In this thesis, I will make a case for diachronic intertextuality based on the following methodology *when the evidence allows for it*, while maintaining a cautious stance by situating these connections within a broader synchronic intertextual framework, although limiting myself to how readers from the Hellenistic period would have read Jonah's psalm (see discussion in the previous section).

Literary dependence looks backward, tracing origins and influences, while intertextuality looks forward, enabling texts to interact in fresh, generative ways. By combining both approaches, I aim to provide a nuanced understanding of the relationship between Jonah's psalm and the Psalms, highlighting both textual influence and the potential for new interpretive insights that emerge from their interaction.

Sensitive to the issue of textual pluriformity, I start every section of my analysis of each poetic line of Jonah's psalm in the next chapter with textual criticism, which is foundational for

interpretations that are historically and philologically informed. Doing so contextualizes the Masoretic Text rather than concretizing it.

1.2.3.3 Indicators of Intertextuality⁵⁵

To diachronically establish an intertextual connection between two texts, this study will employ key indicators of intertextuality as discussed primarily by Lyons and Tooman, including verbal correspondence, availability, modification, partial integration, multiplicity, and thematic correspondence.⁵⁶ These are also indicators seen more clearly in the production of new psalms in the Dead Sea Scrolls as Berlin, Chazon, and Hughes have shown.⁵⁷ In chapter two, my analysis of Jonah's psalm depends on these indicators whenever there is a possible intertext.

Setting criteria on ancient texts could endanger the freedom with which they were composed even as they were transmitted. MacDonald has advised caution in identifying innerbiblical allusions by pointing out that it is difficult to pinpoint literary dependence because

⁵⁵ For a recent work that tries to compile a comprehensive list of criteria used to detect allusion and direction of dependence, see Cooper Smith, "Inner-Biblical Allusion and the Direction of Dependence: Toward a Comprehensive List of Criteria," *JHebS* 22 (2023): 1–26.

⁵⁶ Michael A. Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy: Ezekiel's Use of the Holiness Code*, LHBOTS 507 (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 61–66; William A. Tooman, *Gog of Magog: Reuse of Scripture and Compositional Technique in Ezekiel 38–39*, FAT 2 52 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 27–35.

⁵⁷ Adele Berlin, "Qumran Laments and the Study of Lament Literature," in *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 19–23, January, 2000*, ed. Esther G. Chazon, STDJ 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 1–18; Esther Chazon, "The Use of the Bible as a Key to Meaning in Psalms from Qumran," ed. Shalom Paul et al., VTSup 94 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 85–96; Julie A. Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions and Exegesis in the Hodayot*, STDJ 59 (Leiden: Brill, 2006). On the relevance of compositional techniques of later Second Temple texts to earlier biblical texts, see the works of Carr and Zahn who determine the direction of dependence using insights from Qumran scrolls that rework Pentateuchal texts. Carr, Method & Zahn reexamining, 36–55. David M. Carr, "Method in Determination of Direction of Dependence: An Empirical Test of Criteria Applied to Exodus 34, 11–26 and its Parallels," in *Gottes Volk am Sinai: Untersuchungen zu Ex 32–34 und Dtn 9–10*, ed. Matthias Köckert and Erhard Blum, Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie 18 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2001), 107–40; Molly M. Zahn, "Reexamining Empirical Models: The Case of Exodus 13," in *Das Deuteronomium zwischen Pentateuch und Deuteronomistischem Geschichtswerk*, ed. Eckart Otto and Reinhard Achenbach, FRLANT 206 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 36–55.

of the way biblical texts were written and rewritten without necessarily preserving a “fixed” text.⁵⁸ So, another way to construe the criteria is to rid ourselves of the notion altogether and think of some common ways texts tend to display intertextuality linguistically and conceptually while also being sensitive to the complex history of composition. This means, of course, that texts can also interact with each other in ways that are not commonly recognized or studied. So, this discussion of most frequent ways intertextuality can be recognized in biblical texts is only a starting point and by no means a limit to the method. These indicators serve as guidelines for identifying allusions, rather than strict criteria. Not every indicator will be present in each allusion, as will be shown in the next chapter. However, the more indicators that appear, the stronger the likelihood of a literary connection.

❖ 1.2.3.2.1 Verbal Resonance

Verbal similarity between two texts is the starting point of my intertextual investigation. Depending on the uniqueness of the words, perhaps even one or two words shared by two texts can trigger an intertextual connection.⁵⁹ A larger concentration of common words constructed a certain way can also form intertextual links, as I will demonstrate in Jonah 2:3a in relation to Psalm 120:1.⁶⁰ In essence, verbal resonance strengthened by the volume of words in common between two or more texts (often times with morphological and syntactical resemblance) is a frequent

⁵⁸ Nathan MacDonald, *Priestly Rule: Polemic and Biblical Interpretation in Ezekiel 44*, BZAW 476 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 11–14.

⁵⁹ For example, Hepner shows the many intertextual links created by the rare roots עבר and שלה, demonstrating how even one key word can connect two or more texts together. Gershon Hepner, “Verbal Resonance in the Bible and Intertextuality,” *JSOT* 96 (2001): 4, 6–8; Fishbane, “Types of Biblical Intertextuality,” 44. Chazon observes that the uniqueness of words and expressions is a qualitative indicator of intertextual allusion in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Chazon, *The Use of the Bible as a Key to Meaning in Psalms from Qumran*, 95.

⁶⁰ Armin Lange and Matthias Weigold used a range of three to six common words between texts (varying the number depending on the genre) as the criteria for compiling a list of all biblical quotations and allusions in the Second Temple Jewish literature. Armin Lange and Matthias Weigold, *Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Jewish Literature*, *Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements* 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 18, 25.

indicator of intertexts.⁶¹ By itself, this is admittedly a weak argument for literary dependence, as it assumes later canonical boundaries and overlooks the vast body of literature that did not survive.⁶² However, this precludes neither a cautious case for literary dependence nor the possibility of reading two canonical texts together in a productive and illuminating manner. This underscores the importance of my approach, which balances arguments for literary dependence with broader intertextual readings.

❖ 1.2.3.2.2 *Availability*

When verbal similarities occur, the relative dating of the texts can help establish whether one text was available to the author of the other, thereby aiding in determining the direction of dependence.⁶³ Compared to the study of New Testament's use of the Hebrew scriptures, this step is difficult to follow within the Hebrew scriptures and especially in the present case because dating the individual psalms relative to Jonah's psalm is difficult and sometimes impossible. Lyons' advice in those instances is reasonable: "where there is material common to two texts, one must be able to provide evidence to demonstrate that the common material is secondary and derivative in one text, but not in the other."⁶⁴ Lyons also provides four ways in which one can provide such evidence: modifications in the borrowed material, partial integration in the borrowing text,

⁶¹ Jeffery M. Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case," *JBL* 127, no. 2 (2008): 246.

⁶² Carr, "The Many Uses of Intertextuality."

⁶³ Hays lists this at the top of his list of seven tests for determining echoes. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 29–30. Sarna, in his analysis of the inner biblical exegesis of Psalm 89, dedicates a major section of his article discussing the "anteriority" of Nathan's oracle to Psalm 89. Sarna, "Psalm 89: A Study in Inner Biblical Exegesis," 39. This step is akin to the historical-critical process of dating and reconstructing sources but the difference being that the source texts in intertextual analysis are typically limited to the final form of the received texts rather than going beyond them.

⁶⁴ Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy*, 60.

conceptual dependence of the borrowing text on the source text, and expansions that interpret the source material, which I slightly adjusted to fit the investigation of Jonah and the Psalms.⁶⁵

❖ 1.2.3.2.3 *Modification*

Typically, the target text modifies language from the source text to fit its own context while keeping the reference recognizable.⁶⁶ In Jonah's psalm, there is only one verbatim reference to the Psalms (cf. Jonah 2:4b; Psalm 42:8). Every other intertext is modified to one extent or another, sometimes revealing contextual scribal exegesis of the source texts in reusing it purposefully in the new context.

❖ 1.2.3.2.4 *Partial Integration*

Modification of intertexts—or sometimes lack of it—may create slight incoherence, as the intertext is only partially integrated into the target text.⁶⁷ As Tooman says, in the partially integrated intertexts “poetic images may appear without identifiable referent.”⁶⁸ In Jonah 2:3–10, there are many incongruities that make the psalm almost foreign to the book:

1. Verse 3 mentions Jonah's descent into the abode of the dead—Sheol—but there is no mention of Jonah's death in the narrative outside of the psalm.
2. Verse 4 attributes the hurling of Jonah into the sea to God whereas the narrative goes to great lengths to show that the sailors hurled Jonah into the sea (1:12, 15).

⁶⁵ Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy*, 61–66.

⁶⁶ Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy*, 61–62.

⁶⁷ Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy*, 62–64. See also Kynes, *My Psalm Has Turned into Weeping*, 52. One must be cautious as to not use this category to negatively characterize the later text which is using an earlier text, as a poor and incongruous imitation of the earlier text. Carr points out this tacit assumption in Pentateuchal studies when determining the direction of dependence. Carr, “Method in Determination of Direction of Dependence,” 113. However, I am using this indicator not to denigrate the later text as inferior but rather to highlight its literary genius in drawing attention to an intertext, ultimately enriching the reading experience.

⁶⁸ Tooman, *Gog of Magog*, 33.

3. Verses 5 and 8 mention the temple, which is nowhere to be found in the narrative. In the same vein, verse 10 speaks of Jonah's vows to offer sacrifices presumably at the temple, which again is not recorded in the narrative.
4. Verse 5 says that God cast Jonah away from his sight, but the narrative makes it explicit that Jonah himself fled from the presence of God (1:3, 10).
5. Verses 7 and 8 introduce mythological elements (foundations of the mountains, the underworld, bars) which do not cohere with the narrative.
6. Not only does the psalm have foreign elements, but it also has blatant contradictions with the prose. Verse 9 is a polemic against those who worship vain idols; they abandon חסד (loyalty). The only other characters in the prose before the psalm are the sailors who contradict Jonah's characterization of them and offer sacrifices to God like Jonah promises he would do in verse 10 (1:16).

This brief survey of the psalm shows that there is incongruity in almost every verse, which I argue is generated by partially integrated intertexts. If partially integrated intertexts create incongruity in the borrowing text, then a probable place they might find congruence is in the context of the borrowed text. Each foreign element in Jonah's psalm, if it can be linked back to its source text, would be more comprehensible in its previous context, strengthening the chance of an intertextual connection.⁶⁹ The larger literary context of the Psalms is tentatively what the MT

⁶⁹ Edenburg elaborates on this marker of intertextuality which she specifies as allusion here, "The marker is an element that is 'borrowed' from another context where it is at home, and then planted in a new, foreign context. The foreignness of the marker hampers superficial comprehension of the text's overt significance, and intimates that full comprehension of the text will be attained only after identifying the function and significance of the marker in its original textual context." Cynthia Edenburg, "Intertextuality, Literary Competence and the Question of Readership: Some Preliminary Observations," *JSOT* 35, no. 2 (2010): 144.

reflects. Of course, I will discuss the textual state of the Psalms where there is evidence of redactional layers.

❖ 1.2.3.2.5 *Multiplicity*

Another indicator is multiplicity, which occurs when there are multiple points of verbal contact between the texts, beyond the primary intertext. Tooman notes,⁷⁰

Often, several elements of an antecedent source appear in close proximity in the evoking text, making the source easy to identify. Multiplicity of the shared elements is a strong indicator of deliberate reuse...Even if a particular shared element is not unique to an antecedent text, it might be used with an unusual meaning or in an unexpected way that is common to the source text and the evoking text.

This is evident even at surface level in Jonah's psalm where the language of Psalms 18 (cf. Jonah 2:3a, 3b, 6), 31 (Jonah 2:3b, 5a, 9), and 116 (Jonah 2:6, 10) pervade the psalm.

In addition to noting expansive verbal similarities in the broader contexts of two texts, I expand the notion of multiplicity in the first line of Jonah 2:3a to refer to positional correspondence of the lines at the beginning of the poetic units both in Jonah 2 and in Psalm 120. The same can be said of the end of Jonah's psalm and Psalm 3:9.

❖ 1.2.3.2.6 *Thematic Correspondence*

Finally, thematic correspondence arises when the source text's themes expand upon or enhance those of the target text.⁷¹ In the next chapter, I use this step not only as a marker of literary dependence but more so as a demonstration of intertextual readings between two texts, considering

⁷⁰ Tooman, *Gog of Magog*, 28–29. Tooman also uses uniqueness, multiplicity, and thematic correspondence as signs of literary borrowing in his striking analysis of Hodayot 11:6–19. William A. Tooman, “Between Imitation and Interpretation: Reuse of Scripture and Composition in Hodayot (1QHa) 11:6–19,” *DSD* 18 (2011): 54–73. See also, Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions*, 52–54.

⁷¹ Tooman, *Gog of Magog*, 29–30. See also Chazon's discussion of degree of similarity between texts in terms of their continuity and discontinuity. Chazon, *The Use of the Bible as a Key to Meaning in Psalms from Qumran*, 96.

how the broader conceptual topography of each text may inform and interact with that of the other. In this regard, the literary concept of metalepsis is useful.

❖ 1.2.3.2.6.1 Metalepsis: Extending meaning beyond textual boundaries

While much of the preceding discussion has focused on tracing texts backward to their possible sources, intertextual readings must also look forward. Limiting intertextual analysis to uncovering previous literary settings risks reducing the process to a backward-looking exercise. For this reason, intertextuality has been criticized for merely working backwards and dividing texts just like source criticism.⁷² Instead, working backwards should facilitate the study of the forward-moving nature of texts, moving away from the banality of tracing source texts to an appreciation of the generative lives of texts.

As opposed to echoes, intertextual allusions extend beyond the dimensions of the borrowed words—an idea encapsulated by metalepsis.⁷³ Metalepsis occurs when an allusion not only recalls another text but also evokes the broader context in which that text originally appeared. As Schultz explains,⁷⁴

...one must carefully examine both the immediate and larger contexts of the verbal parallels, since, from a synchronic perspective, the ultimate context of quotation is the entire prophetic book. The larger context may contain clues that will explain the editorial intentionality of the quotation as well as other verbal or thematic links between the two passages. Both differences and similarities between the contexts should be noted, as they will help to assess the impact of the decontextualizing and

⁷² Professor Hindy Najman has mentioned this critique in some of her lectures and presentations and has also graciously alerted me to it in personal conversations. She has also articulated this critique in Hindy Najman, “Textual Unities and Poetic Processes in Ancient Judaism,” in *Congress Volume Aberdeen 2019*, ed. Grant Macaskill, Christl M. Maier, and Joachim Schaper, VTSup 192 (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 271.

⁷³ An echo is generally considered to be a verbal parallel borrowed to make the target text more interesting without any transfer of meaning from the source text. In other words, the reader can understand the target text without ever locating the source text. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66*, 15–17.

⁷⁴ Schultz, *The Search for Quotation*, 235. Similarly, Sommer argues that the “marked not only affects the reading of the marker but establishes a nexus between two texts, which may allow many elements of the evoked text to alter one’s understanding of the alluding text as a whole.” Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66*, 13.

recontextualizing of the text. Even if verbal agreement is maintained, the change in context can affect its meaning radically.

The clue to the meaning of an allusion lies in the contrasting or similar contexts of both source and target texts.⁷⁵

Metalepsis involves “transition from one trope to another, where compressions of meaning are released along an associative string.”⁷⁶ McFadden goes on to say that “its metaphorical compression has been used to offer a heightened state of allusion.”⁷⁷ Berlin, in her study of laments in Qumran scrolls, further illustrates how metaleptic transference of meaning operates in Hebrew poetry:⁷⁸

In poetry, as in midrash, allusive words do not lose their contexts or their connotations. Like all poems, these Qumran texts speak in metaphors—metaphors created through the transference that goes on in the allusions and conflations...These allusions act somewhat like a vehicle and a tenor, to use the literary terminology, pulling meaning from one context and inserting it into another.

Berlin’s observations support the earlier work of Hays, who made successful use of metalepsis in studying Paul’s use of the Jewish Scriptures. He refers to metalepsis as a literary device in which “one text alludes to an earlier text in a way that evokes resonances of the earlier text *beyond those explicitly cited*. The result is that the interpretation of a metalepsis requires the reader to recover

⁷⁵ In discussing intertextuality in the book of Ben Sira, Beentjes suggests that the readers look for “contextual clues” to find allusions. However, he limits the wider context of the allusion to only those instances in which both contexts are similar rather than different. Pancratius Cornelis Beentjes, “*Happy the One Who Meditates on Wisdom*” (Sir. 14,20): *Collected Essays on the Book of Ben Sira*, CBET 43 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 175. I am arguing here that the contexts do not necessarily have to be similar for an allusion to work. The difference in contexts alerts the reader to a different use of allusion.

⁷⁶ Kevin McFadden, “Metalepsis or Transumption,” in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th ed, ed. Roland Greene and Stephen Cushman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2012), 862.

⁷⁷ McFadden, “Metalepsis or Transumption,” 862.

⁷⁸ Berlin, “Qumran Laments and the Study of Lament Literature,” 17. Chazon applies the same methodology to the Tehillah of the Man of God in 4Q381 and the Hymn to the Creator in 11 QPs^a in Chazon, *The Use of the Bible as a Key to Meaning in Psalms from Qumran*.

unstated or suppressed correspondences between the two texts” (emphasis original).⁷⁹ Meaning goes beyond the intertext wherein the intertext merely becomes a bridge for meaning to travel freely across to the target text. Plett describes this phenomenon in terms of an “intertextual deep structure” whereby the intertext carries more than one meaning and the multiplicity of intertexts create a polyphonic textual dialogue.⁸⁰ Jonah’s psalm exemplifies this phenomenon, as its composition draws heavily on psalms that, once identified, trigger metaleptic transfers of meaning. Consequently, the meanings of these psalms are not merely reused but creatively transformed and applied to the book of Jonah’s unique context.

Hebrew poetry, with its compact and layered nature, is particularly conducive to metaleptic interpretation. Watson aptly observes that, “whereas in prose everything one wants to express is usually explicitly spelled out, in verse much is omitted and expected to be understood by the reader.”⁸¹ Poetry is, therefore, dense and concentrated.⁸² Intertextuality releases poetic pressure, expands condensed and concentrated language, and explains archaic and streamlined language in Hebrew poetry, making it an appropriate aid for reading Jonah’s psalm.

1.3 Beyond Textuality: Orality and Memory

The use of intertextuality in this thesis, while primarily focusing on the textual nature of scribal composition, does not reduce textual production to texts alone. The idea is not that the

⁷⁹ Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel’s Scripture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 2.

⁸⁰ Heinrich F. Plett, “Intertextualities,” in *Intertextuality*, ed. Heinrich F. Plett, *Untersuchungen zur Texttheorie* 15 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 10. For a similar point, see Kynes, *My Psalm Has Turned into Weeping*, 55–56.

⁸¹ Wilfred G. E. Watson, “Poetry, Biblical Hebrew,” in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, ed. Geoffrey Khan (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 3:152.

⁸² Michael Patrick O’Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 629.

author of Jonah's psalm had scrolls of psalms open to specific texts, parts of which he referred to in composing this psalm. Rather, the multiple verbal and thematic resonances found in this single poetic line is illustrative of oral, performative scribal context in which Jonah's psalm was composed. Zahn's comments are helpful in this regard:⁸³

The environment of writing-supported orality helps us understand the context for constant reshaping of texts – if texts were generally experienced orally and routinely accompanied by elaboration or explication of various sorts, the notion of what constituted a 'text' in early Judaism was more expansive than just words on a scroll. Whatever the specific conditions under which scribes wrote (alone, or in a group; with a copy-text in front of them or from dictation or from memory), the written texts they produced were only one element in the vibrant and ongoing discourse that constituted Israel's literary heritage.

With further specificity in this regard, Carr points out that works of harmonization like the Temple Scroll tend to follow the base text closely perhaps by consulting a written scroll while any supplementing texts used to enrich or expand the base text are rendered with what he calls "memory variants." He illustrates why this might be by considering the material constraints upon scribes: "Scrolls are unwieldy, and it is much easier to consult a scroll graphically when reading or copying it from beginning to end, than to skip around, looking for isolated citations."⁸⁴ The material limitations of scrolls forced the scribes to rely on their memory in recalling a network of texts at once, while also being firmly rooted in a literary setting.⁸⁵

⁸³ Zahn, *Genres of Rewriting in Second Temple Judaism*, 34.

⁸⁴ David M. Carr, "Torah on the Heart: Literary Jewish Textuality Within Its Ancient Near Eastern Context," *Oral Tradition* 25, no. 1 (2010): 31–32.

⁸⁵ See Edenburg's critical engagement with Carr where she illuminates the readers' literary competence to recognize intertextuality by using insights from cognitive science, ultimately arguing for a more literary setting for allusive texts in the Hebrew Bible, especially when those texts subvert conventional forms rather than reinforcing them. The book of Jonah certainly seems to fit that bill better. Edenburg, "Intertextuality, Literary Competence and the Question of Readership."

But scribal memory is not too far from textual material. The scribes responsible for biblical texts in the Second Temple period, in line with scribes from most ancient Mesopotamian cultures, were capable of precisely memorizing and recalling texts, as Carr has argued.⁸⁶ Of note is a Mesopotamian tablet that Carr mentions, containing the first lines of various stanzas from five different composition “with the reader expected to provide the rest from memory.”⁸⁷ Memorizing poetry has been shown to be particularly effective because of poetic devices which aid memorization.⁸⁸ Through memory, the scribes can access not only one text but a network of texts in composing one poetic line. This can potentially shed light on, for instance, the different verbal correspondence between Psalm 120:1 and Psalm 18 in Jonah 2:3 along with other texts like Psalm 102 and 107 that enrich the imagery (more on this in chapter two). Such multi-textual references within one poetic line are ubiquitous in Jonah’s psalm. The awareness of the aural context of textual production in Second Temple Judaism helps expand our imagination of how texts are interrelated.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2005). See also the helpful discussion by Molly Zahn in Zahn, *Genres of Rewriting in Second Temple Judaism*, 30–34. At the same time, I am cognizant of Carr’s caution in suggesting specific intertexts because the scribes responsible for a book like Jonah were probably trained to memorize far more texts than were preserved in our Hebrew Bible, so it is impossible to be certain about the exact intertexts at play in Jonah’s psalm. Carr, “Method in Determination of Direction of Dependence,” 524.

⁸⁷ Carr, “Torah on the Heart,” 20.

⁸⁸ Carr, “Torah on the Heart,” 26.

⁸⁹ On the literary level, we should also consider the effect of the orality of the psalm on the characterization of Jonah. The prophet is supposed to have orally *recited* this original psalm (Jonah 2:3) composed of phrases from and allusions to many different Psalms, opening another dimension to his claim that when his life was fainting, he *remembered* Yahweh (Jonah 2:8). He is cast as spontaneously composing a new psalm from a deep memory of Yahweh as expressed by his memory of the Psalms.

1.4 The Message of the Book of Jonah

This section demonstrates the significance of this thesis for understanding the message of the book of Jonah. It involves discussing my views on the book's genre, authorship, audience, and date—details that will help readers navigate this thesis better. It is worth noting that these points relate only marginally to the core arguments of the thesis, so the discussion here is not a full-fledged defense of them. Rather, they provide context for the main contribution.

The book of Jonah is notoriously difficult to categorize. It is not hard to summarize its contents, but the book resists straightforward answers to the question, “What message does it convey?” While acknowledging the risk of oversimplification, I highlight two predominant interpretations against which I will propose my own reading.⁹⁰ Some interpreters, mostly Christian, have seen a universalistic message in the book, anticipating all sorts of Christian ideas about an international religion that would arise a few centuries later. In this view, the character of Jonah becomes an anti-hero against the backdrop of Ezra-Nehemiah's narrow nationalism.⁹¹ The idea is that, in post-exilic times, Yahweh is no longer solely the God of Israel but also the nations, requiring nationalistic Israelites—represented by the character of Jonah—to accept this reality.⁹² Another major interpretation, often preferred by Jewish interpreters, focuses on Jonah as a book

⁹⁰ I have found Catherine Muldoon's criticism of the different readings of the book of Jonah that have held sway to be extremely insightful. Catherine L. Muldoon, *In Defense of Divine Justice: An Intertextual Approach to the Book of Jonah*, The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 47 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2010), 6–30. See also other views highlighted by Levine, Day, and Tillema. Levine, “Jonah as a Philosophical Book”; Day, “Problems in the Interpretation of the Book of Jonah.” Tillema, “The Book of Jonah in Recent Research.”

⁹¹ Thomas M. Bolin, “Eternal Delight and Deliciousness: The Book of Jonah After Ten Years,” *JHS* 9 (2009): 5. See also the work of Yvonne Sherwood who discusses anti-Jewish readings of Jonah in Yvonne Sherwood, *A Biblical Text and Its Afterlives: The Survival of Jonah in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 21–32, 64–74. Cf. Rhiannon Graybill, John Kaltner, and Steven L. McKenzie, *Jonah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 24H (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023), 49–50.

⁹² On international and national interpretations of the book of Jonah and their historical context, see Miles Jr., “Laughing at the Bible: Jonah as Parody,” 178–79, n.12.

about the nature of prophecy, giving preference to the character of Jonah and his concern for the fulfillment of prophecy rather than seeing a proto-Christian, universalistic, enlightenment religion in the book of Jonah.⁹³ Both readings find support in the book of Jonah but do not fully capture its complexity. Reducing the book of Jonah to a single message flattens both the book and its central character. Jonah, the character, is a privileged figure in the book, who knows the God of heaven and dry land (Jonah 1:9) but struggles with the implications of that knowledge (cf. Jonah 4:2). The universalist reading risks diminishing the character of Jonah to someone less insightful than the readers, but the book grants him special access to God and his revelation, positioning him as the preferred intermediary between God and the non-Israelites. The character of Jonah stands in the line of great prophets and legendary figures like Job, Moses, Abraham, Jeremiah, etc.⁹⁴ If anything, it is the non-Israelites who do not *know* (Jonah 4:11). At the same time, the interpretation centered on prophetic non-fulfillment is also too narrow, as only about half of the book concerns Jonah's prophecy to Nineveh. What of the sea voyage, the fish, and the thanksgiving hymn? Moreover, the book clearly contains tensions that open the door to universalist ideas. To embrace this challenging complexity, I read Jonah as a meta-prophetic book, which I will discuss in the following section.

1.4.1 Genre

Discerning the message of the book of Jonah also requires considering the medium i.e. the genre in which it is written. Day surveys various genre proposals advanced by scholars over the years, including allegory, parable, midrash, satire, and didactic fiction but he rightly argues against

⁹³ Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 419–20.

⁹⁴ Muldoon, *In Defense of Divine Justice*, 4. Susan Niditch, *Jonah: A Commentary*, ed. David Vanderhooft, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2023), 12–13. On the complex characterization of Jonah, see Annette Schellenberg, “An Anti-Prophet among the Prophets? On the Relationship of Jonah to Prophecy,” *JSOT* 39, no. 3 (2015): 354–57, 367–69.

all of them.⁹⁵ Rather than imposing modern literary genre categories, we might instead view the book of Jonah as a distinctive type of prophetic book since it tells the story of a prophet and is included in the book of the Twelve. This approach aligns with Ehud Ben Zvi's concept of Jonah as a "metaprophetic" book, which I adopt in this thesis. As a metaprophetic book, Jonah serves as a nexus for ideas explored at greater length in other prophets—nationalism, universalism, justice, mercy, repentance, prophetic office, and more—all condensed into a short narrative that invites critical dialogue with the broader prophetic corpus.⁹⁶

My reading of Jonah's psalm in chapter 2 as a deep and critical engagement with ideas and liturgy in traditional psalmody builds on and extends this metaprophetic framework. It contributes to interpreting the book of Jonah as a whole in the following way: the book not only functions as a cross-sectional gateway into, and a critical engagement, with the Prophetic corpus but also enters into dialogue with temple liturgy as represented in the Psalms. In this sense, my analysis of Jonah 2 positions Jonah as a metacanonical book, engaging key ideas from Israel's hymnic tradition.

1.4.2 *Authorship*

As with any book of the Hebrew Bible, discussing the authorship of the book of Jonah with certainty is impossible, especially since the book of Jonah comes to us without any claims of authorship. This is one reason I use the term "author" sparingly in this thesis as it could imply access not only to information about the author(s) of the book of Jonah but also their intentions—invoking the intentional fallacy. This is just a cautious approach, not a total rejection of conventional reading that assumes an author and seeks to understand their communication. I find

⁹⁵ Day, "Problems in the Interpretation of the Book of Jonah," 37–39. See also Erickson's and Niditch's discussion of this issue in Erickson, *Jonah*, 38–45 and Niditch, *Jonah*, 21–22.

⁹⁶ Ehud Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah: Reading and Rereading in Ancient Yehud*, JSOTSup 367 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 85.

John Barton's discussion of the intentional fallacy and his advocacy of the plain-sense reading particularly helpful.⁹⁷ For him, "biblical criticism, in the quest for this plain sense, is a semantic or linguistic and a literary operation first and foremost, only indirectly concerned with the original, the intended, the historical, or the literal meaning."⁹⁸ While pursuing this plain sense, my thesis also explores how the primary audience would have synchronically read Jonah's psalm alongside other texts to which they would have had access.

There have been various suggestions for the authorship of Jonah, ranging from the eighth-century BCE prophet himself to anonymous scribal groups as late as the third century BCE, though scholars are generally hesitant to discuss the authorship of an anonymous book like Jonah.⁹⁹ The picture grows even more complex when considering possible redactors and editors over time. One's view of the book's message and purpose (see 1.4 and 1.4.1 above) naturally influences views on authorship. If the book of Jonah criticizes growing exclusive nationalism in Second Temple Judaism, its author advocated universalism akin to Isaiah 40-66. But if the book focuses on the nature of prophecy and its fulfillment, its authors belonged to a school of prophets who sought to clarify the nature of earlier prophecies. Others like Schellenberg calls the authors of Jonah "literary prophets" in the Persian Yehud—figures for whom prophecy was scribalized and related complexly to classical prophets.¹⁰⁰

Identifying a specific individual or group requires reconstructing an authorial profile from the contents of the book. The author seems to know the story of the prophet named Jonah in 2

⁹⁷ Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism*, 69–116.

⁹⁸ Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism*, 101.

⁹⁹ Karin Almqvist, *Studies in the Book of Jonah*, Acta Universitatis Upsalensis 7 (Uppsala: Academia Upsalensis, 1986), 43. Cf. Nogalski, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, and Jonah*, 311.

¹⁰⁰ Schellenberg, "An Anti-Prophet among the Prophets?"

Kings 14 and was deeply sensitive to multiple scriptural traditions, crafting both narrative and psalm with elusive echoes of diverse biblical material.¹⁰¹ As Niditch observes, “Jonah’s exquisite sensitivity in verbal choices and scene creation, its orderly elegance of presentation, and its thematic cohesiveness suggest an author steeped in the tradition but free to innovate.”¹⁰² The author(s) are thus best situated in post exilic times (see 1.4.4 Date below), inheriting the traditions reflected throughout the book.

In particular, I am persuaded by arguments associating the composition of the book of Jonah with a literate scribal elite who viewed themselves as the literary stewards of prophetic tradition.¹⁰³ Though Ben Zvi focuses more on first readers, he identifies the authors as a scribal group in Persian-ruled Jerusalem:¹⁰⁴

The authorship and the primary readership of a book tend to be reflected in the book itself, and particularly if the book deals with issues that stand at the center of their self-understanding...the burlesque tone of the book masks a critical discourse of the literati about themselves, their works and their own claims of knowledge. If there is some mockery in the book, to some extent it is self-mockery, or more precisely, it is transformed into a discourse that sets the producers of the texts and readings and their world in perspective by hinting at and reflecting crucial questions of self-understanding.

This perspective reframes the discussion surrounding the book of Jonah: rather than a polemical work against a specific ideology or group, it emerges as sophisticated scribal literature engaging in self-critical reflection of exilic circumstances and received tradition.

¹⁰¹ Weimar, *Jona*, 55–59.

¹⁰² Niditch, *Jonah*, 16. See Erickson’s helpful portrait of the scribal world in the Persian Yehud in Erickson, *Jonah*, 30–33.

¹⁰³ Ben Zvi says they understood themselves to be “brokers of the divine instruction contained in the texts. Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah*, 106.

¹⁰⁴ Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah*, 11. Cf. Handy, *Jonah’s World*, 22. On whether this is a single group with one set curriculum as Ben Zvi argues or whether there were multiple such groups, see Schellenberg, “An Anti-Prophet among the Prophets?,” 363, n.31.

In considering authorship and the book's message, it is worth noting that the narrative creates layered meanings. Meaning on the level of the author is not the same as on the level of the characters in the story, depending on whether the author identifies with or critiques/satirizes the main character—likely at play in Jonah. This complexity increases with additional perspectives made available by the book's overall effect on readers, the psalm in chapter 2, and later reception. At minimum, I distinguish between the author and the character Jonah where ambiguity arises. As a rule, "Jonah" without any qualifier refers to the character of Jonah as portrayed in the story and the psalm. Specifically regarding Jonah 2, I understand the author to depict the character as weaving different psalmic intertexts together into a new psalm. Here, the author's compositional work merges with that of the character's: Jonah the prophet recites a new hymn out of traditional material in the belly of the fish while the scribal work of composition occurs on the level of the author. The author may use this to create an additional level of irony or meaning relating to the exile that is unavailable to the character, which I note when relevant. Overall, however, the author seems to endow the character with exegetical and intertextual skill comparable to their own. I also use "Jonah's psalm" to denote the text of Jonah 2:3-10 with its many potential meanings for readers, without specific reference to author or character.

1.4.3 Audience

The challenges in identifying the author(s) of the book of Jonah are somewhat eased by shifting the focus to the book's primary audience. Ben Zvi's work is foundational in this regard: he identifies the intended readership as the post-exilic Jerusalem *literati*—the same scribal elite likely responsible for the book's composition.

Through this lens, a strongly universalist reading makes little sense. The primary audience knew that Nineveh had ultimately been destroyed, despite its sparing in the book of Jonah. They

had to grapple with the fact that neither Nineveh nor Jerusalem escaped God's judgement permanently, even though both received temporary relief through divine freedom and human repentance.¹⁰⁵

Consequently, there is no need to posit an audience espousing the nationalism of Ezra-Nehemiah. Rather, the book of Jonah was a literary work written by and for this scribal elite, intended for their own repeated reading and reflection.

1.4.4 Date

The substance of my thesis does not depend on an exact date of the book of Jonah in the post-exilic period, but I will discuss my preference for a date in the Persian period here while acknowledging, with Simon, that any date between the late sixth and fourth centuries BCE remains possible.¹⁰⁶

The setting of the story is in the eighth century with its association with the prophet mentioned in 2 Kings 14, leading early interpreters to assume a pre-exilic date. Most modern scholars, however, favor a post-exilic date based on linguistic, historical, and theological evidence, with some proposing a date as late as the Hellenistic period.¹⁰⁷ In my view, a mid-sixth to early fifth-century Persian-period date is most persuasive, particularly following Muldoon's thorough linguistic analysis (along with other considerations): the style of Hebrew in the book of Jonah is

¹⁰⁵ See Lowell Handy's work, which extends Ben Zvi's idea and argues that the book of Jonah cannot be reduced to a flat, one-dimensional message. Rather, it reflects the complex dynamics of the post-exilic scribal elite under Persian rule, negotiating many different tensions of which local and international is one. Handy, *Jonah's World*.

¹⁰⁶ Simon, *Jonah*, xli.

¹⁰⁷ George M. Landes, "Linguistic Criteria and the Date of the Book of Jonah," *Eretz-Israel* 16 (1982): 147–70; Day, "Problems in the Interpretation of the Book of Jonah"; Jack M. Sasson, *Jonah: A New Translation with Introduction, Commentary, and Interpretation*, AB 24B (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 26–28; Tillema, "The Book of Jonah in Recent Research," 150; Graybill, Kaltner, and McKenzie, *Jonah*, 14–20. See also the work of Almbladh who argues that the author of Jonah adopts earlier styles of writing in a post-exilic setting. Almbladh, *Studies in the Book of Jonah*, 43–46.

transitional, blending features of Standard Biblical Hebrew and Late Biblical Hebrew with perhaps a hint of Northern Israelite dialect traces or Aramaisms.¹⁰⁸ This is bolstered by Dobbs-Allsopp's work on the language of Lamentations, which identifies a similar linguistic profile and suggests that Jonah belongs among books written in Transitional Biblical Hebrew around the sixth century BCE.¹⁰⁹

In summary, I view the book of Jonah as a complex literary work composed by post-exilic Jerusalem scribes during the Persian period—likely sometime between the mid-sixth and early fifth centuries BCE—and intended primarily for their own literate readership to encourage reflective rereading of prophetic traditions amid the traumas of exile. While acknowledging the book's resistance to simple categorizations, I critique the predominant interpretations for oversimplifying its theological tensions, including nationalism versus universalism, divine justice versus mercy, and the challenges of prophetic fulfillment, even as the narrative employs irony and self-critical discourse to explore divine sovereignty and human repentance. Regarding authorship, which remains anonymous and thus impossible to pinpoint with certainty, I approach it cautiously to avoid the intentional fallacy, prioritizing a plain-sense reading while viewing the scribes as innovative stewards of scriptural heritage who portray the character Jonah with exegetical skill akin to their own. Jonah's psalm in chapter 2 stands as a key element in this framework, intertextually weaving psalmic motifs of innocent suffering and deliverance to extend the book's metaphoric dialogue into the realm of temple liturgy, thereby illuminating post-exilic Israelite identity struggles and the broader resonance in the Second Temple literature through my combined diachronic and synchronic methods.

¹⁰⁸ Muldoon, *In Defense of Divine Justice*, 33–63.

¹⁰⁹ F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Linguistic Evidence for the Date of Lamentations," *JANES* 26 (1998): 35.

1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced the idea of Jonah's psalm (Jonah 2:3–10) as a masterful work of scribal ingenuity, defying both historical-critical and purely literary approaches. The psalm's seemingly incongruent themes and orientation, which do not easily align with the surrounding narrative, have led scholars to view it either as a later addition to soften Jonah's characterization or as an exaggerated and comical depiction of Jonah as a stereotypical Israelite prophet. This thesis, however, approaches Jonah's psalm intertextually, aiming to enrich both the psalm itself and its narrative contribution by uncovering its intricate allusions to the Psalms.

Intertextuality, much like Jonah's psalm, is a contested concept with various scholarly interpretations. In this thesis, I employ intertextuality broadly to describe how texts refer to and interact with other texts, aligning my approach with the biblical studies framework of inner-biblical exegesis and allusion. This involves a primarily diachronic method, examining how earlier texts influence later ones. However, I also acknowledge the complexities of textual pluriformity and the limits of establishing definitive textual relationships. To navigate these challenges, I incorporate a synchronic dimension of intertextuality, which emphasizes a forward-looking, generative reading that does not always depend on proving diachronic connections. Admittedly, this synchronic reading adopts the perspective of third-century Hellenistic readers who had access to other Second Temple texts for comparison, limiting the range of texts for synchronic intertextual readings. This dual approach allows for a balanced analysis—pursuing literary dependence where plausible while embracing intertextual readings when even circumspect connections are uncertain.

To structure my analysis in chapter two, which is the bulk of this thesis, I adopt several markers of this combined mode of intertextuality, including verbal resonance, availability, modification, partial integration, multiplicity, and thematic correspondence. These markers

facilitate an exploration of Jonah's psalm as a dynamic literary composition that engages with a network of texts and themes from the Psalter and beyond, with resonances seen in the Hodayot and other Qumran scrolls.

Additionally, I highlighted the aural dimension of intertextuality, where a single poetic line in Jonah's psalm may invoke multiple texts simultaneously, creating a rich web of allusions. While acknowledging this dimension of the composition of Jonah's psalm, I am persuaded by Edenburg's view on intertextuality in allusive texts like Jonah and Ben Zvi's argument that the book of Jonah, including its psalm, was crafted by educated scribes for a literate audience. Consequently, Jonah's psalm is highly allusive, often times recalling specific psalms that subtly underscore unspoken themes in both the psalm and the narrative, accessible only to attentive readers well-versed in Israel's liturgical traditions.

In chapter three, I explore the implications of reading Jonah's psalm through this intertextual lens. I elaborate upon the place of exile in the interpretation of the book of Jonah, seeing that the water-related metaphors associated with his sojourn in the sea are repeatedly aligned with the psalmists' exile among the nations. The emphasis on the temple in Jonah's psalm is shown to create hierarchy within the characters in the story of Jonah, mapping on to the different registers of speech and prayer. Through this, I demonstrate how the psalm completes Jonah's characterization by presenting him alongside literary figures like Moses, Cain, Abraham, and Elijah, ultimately portraying him as an innocent sufferer akin to king David as portrayed in the first book of Samuel and Chronicles. This characterization contrasts sharply with the non-Israelite characters in the book, who lack knowledge of Yahweh's worship and proper liturgical forms. The character of Jonah, by contrast, displays an intimate familiarity with Israel's high liturgy, rivaling David, who defeated Israel's enemies and forged an exclusive covenantal relationship with

Yahweh according to Chronicles. Furthermore, the central place given to the temple in the psalm complicates the universalist reading of the book of Jonah. I also discuss the concept of innocent suffering in Jonah's psalm—a key contribution of this thesis—and suggest further lines of research in its connection to Job and Tobit. Highlighting the deliberate absence of repentance in Jonah's psalm and narrative, I argue that this omission reframes Jonah's psalm as a case for the innocent suffering of Jonah and, by extension, the exilic community.

Moreover, my analysis will show how the psalm's liturgical language is transformed into a prophetic dialogue that engages key themes such as exile, temple, covenant, and innocent suffering. These themes align Jonah's psalm with the broader prophetic corpus, positioning the book of Jonah as a meta-prophetic work and perhaps even a meta-canonical book.

2 AN INTERTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF JONAH'S PSALM

2.1 Introduction

The following verse-by-verse analysis examines Jonah's psalm not as an isolated liturgical piece but as the poetic core that integrates with and illuminates the broader narrative of the book of Jonah. As argued in 1.1 and 1.4, the psalm's creative reworking of psalmodic traditions serves a metaprophetic function, transforming Jonah's crisis in the fish into an exilic metaphor of innocent suffering and deliverance. This poetic role gains particular force in relation to the book's open-ended conclusion in chapter 4, where Jonah's thankful prayer and temple-oriented praise (Jonah 2:10) stand in tension with his subsequent anger and resistance to divine mercy toward Nineveh (Jonah 4:1–11). Throughout the detailed intertextual discussion that follows, attention will be drawn—where relevant—to how individual motifs contribute to this narrative interconnectedness, ensuring that the psalm remains the interpretive nexus of the book rather than a detached insertion.

Jonah 2:3–10 is replete with language resembling the Psalms. Ben Zvi says, “This psalm contains a remarkable number of textual allusions even to the point of direct quotations from a significant number of psalms, and as such it calls attention to both an accepted repertoire of psalms in general and to certain psalms in particular.”¹ This chapter will examine the latter in Jonah's psalm, appropriately applying the previously discussed method of intertextuality.

¹ Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah*, 47–48.

2.2 Jonah's Cry for Help and Divine Answer (Jonah 2:3a)

The first line of Jonah's psalm in the Masoretic Text (MT) begins with these words:

וַיֹּאמֶר קִרְאתִי מִצָּרָה לִי אֱלֹהֵי הוּא וַיַּעֲנֵנִי

And he said, "I cried to YHWH from my distress, and he answered me"²

Almost all of these words are attested by the Minor Prophets scroll found at Wadi Murabba'at (Mur88) dated to the first century CE:

וַיֹּא[מר] קִרְאתִי מִצָּרָה לִי אֱל[ה]י וְה[וּא] עֲנָנִי

The Old Greek (OG) also reflects this reading but with two differences:

καὶ εἶπεν Ἐβόησα ἐν θλίψει μου πρὸς κύριον τὸν θεόν μου, καὶ εἰσῆκουσέν μου

and he said, "I cried to the Lord my God in my distress, and he answered me."

First, it has an additional expression, τὸν θεόν μου (my God), probably assimilated from Jonah 2:2, וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל יוֹנָה אֱלֹהֵי הוּא (And Jonah prayed to YHWH his God). With this change, it seems the OG translator tried to integrate the psalm into the narrative more explicitly than is evident in the MT.

Second, מצרה (from distress) is translated as ἐν θλίψει (in distress) rather than ἐκ θλίψει (from distress)—the phrase that conveys the מן preposition in all five instances of this phrase in the OG [Pss 59:14; 107:13; 142:11; Prov 21:23; Nah 2:2]—perhaps as result of confusion between מ and ב.³ However, there is an intertextual explanation for the OG's translation of מצרה as בצרה, which we will now turn to explore.

² All translations throughout this thesis are my own, unless otherwise stated.

³ Almbldh, *Studies in the Book of Jonah*, 26.

2.2.1 Verbal Resonance

The Greek translator might be thinking of Psalm 120:1, which is the only other text in the Hebrew Bible that uses the same words as Jonah 2:3a (albeit in a different order) except for a preposition and the form of the word צרה (distress):

אליהוה בצרתה לי קראתי ויענני

To YHWH in my distress I cried, and he answered me

The OG translator might have recognized the intertextual link to Psalm 120:1 and tried to assimilate Jonah 2:3a to the former. This is indeed the suggestion made by the editors of BHQ in their textual notes.⁴ The MT of Psalm 120:1 is supported by the OG, so the linguistic similarity between Psalm 120 and Jonah 2 is not limited to the MT. The fact that the two texts share all six words to convey the same idea is likely not a coincidence. As Opgen-Rhein says, “Man kann noch weiter gehen und sagen, daß V. 3a Ps 120, 1 zitiert” (One can go even further and say that verse 3a quotes Psalm 120:1).⁵ Hence, a further examination of the form and content of Psalm 120 might reveal the nature of its connection to Jonah’s psalm.

2.2.2 Availability

Establishing literary dependence requires evaluating whether Psalm 120 would have been available to the author of Jonah’s psalm. As the first of the “Songs of Ascents” (שיר המעלות), Psalm 120 introduces a subcollection of psalms likely compiled post-exile. While each psalm may have circulated independently before being grouped, dating the psalm relative to the composition

⁴ Anthony Gelston, ed., *The Twelve Minor Prophets = Tere ‘aśar*, BHQ 13 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2010), 93. See also Hans Walter Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah: A Commentary*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 126. Weimar, *Jona*, 203–4. Many other scholars note the close parallel to Psalm 120:1 in Jonah 2:3a, but only a few inquire further.

⁵ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 177.

of the book of Jonah remains uncertain.⁶ Without clear evidence of availability, the case for dependence rests on other indicators such as textual modifications, partial integration, multiplicity, and thematic resonance.

2.2.3 *Modification*

Often, the target text modifies the source text to suit its own purposes, which seems to be the case here. While *בצרה* (in distress) would fit fine in Jonah's psalm, conveying the idea of Jonah being *in* the womb of the fish (*במעי הדג* "in the innards of the fish" [2:1]), it would make more sense to use *מצרה* (from distress) since Jonah is said to pray *from* the womb of the fish (*ממעי הדגה*) in the preceding verse in 2:2. Wolff thinks this modification of the preposition in Jonah 2:3a from Psalm 120:1 is an intentional assimilation to Jonah 2:2b.⁷ The second line of 2:3 follows suit with the same preposition to further describe Jonah's locale, *מבטן שאול* (from the belly of Sheol). So, it seems plausible that *בצרה*⁸ is emended to *מצרה* in Jonah 2:3 to create a threefold description of Jonah praying — *ממעי הדגה* (2:2), *מצרה לי* (from my distress [2:3a]), *מבטן שאול* (from the belly of sheol [2:3b]).⁹

Another modification comes in the word order, suggesting the deliberate adaptation of Psalm 120:1 to fit Jonah's narrative context. Every word except for the last word is in a different

⁶ Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms Part 2 and Lamentations*, FOTL 15 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 320.

⁷ Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 134. See also Weimar, *Jona*, 238.

⁸ Psalm 120:1 has the rare ancient accusative form *בצרתה* whereas Jonah 2:3 has the regular form. Interestingly, Jonah 2:10 has a similar ending on the word *ישועתה*.

⁹ Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 47.

place in Jonah 2:3a. There is also good reason for this in Jonah as opposed to Psalm 120.¹⁰ Jonah 2:3a reorders the words of Psalm 120:1, placing קראתי (I cried) in the syntactically expected position. This reordering emphasizes Jonah's (the character) action over God's response, aligning with the narrative's recurring motif of Jonah being urged to cry out: the divine command to "cry out against it (Nineveh)" (וקרא עליה [1:2]), which is compounded by the captain's exhortation to Jonah to "call upon your God" (קרא אל־אלהיך [1:6]) and the sailors' act of crying out to Yahweh (ויקראו אל־יהוה) "and they cried out to YHWH" [1:14]).¹¹ Opgen-Rhein posits that the past tense קראתי (I called) creates irony with the previous instances of the verb used to describe the actions of the sailors, rendering Jonah's prayer insincere (at least in the way the author portrays it).¹² Having been asked to cry out twice in the narrative, Jonah finally cries out to God in the form of a psalm and in the words of the psalmist(s). Furthermore, the emphasis is shifted from God in Psalm 120:1 to Jonah (the character) in Jonah 2:3a, not only to relate his prayer to the building suspense created by קרא (to call) in the narrative of Jonah but also to hint at Jonah's (the character) self-centeredness in his appeal/thanksgiving for salvation.¹³ Indeed, the whole narrative revolves around the prophet and his every word and action. Perhaps there is a subtle critique of the prophet's self-conception in this change of word order from Psalm 120? This is consistently borne out in the rest of the prayer. Given the significance of the word order within the context of the book of Jonah,

¹⁰ Perry offers valuable advice when comparing intertexts: "they (intertexts) require heightened attention to minor variations, since these are often the carriers of essential meanings." T. Anthony Perry, *The Honeymoon Is Over: Jonah's Argument with God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 15.

¹¹ Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 134. Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 43.

¹² Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 41.

¹³ Opgen-Rhein helpfully points out that מצרה לי (from my distress) interrupts the verb and object complement in Jonah 2:3a to emphasize the "Ich-Perspektive" (I-perspective) Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 40. Magonet also sees the self-centeredness of Jonah's prayer. Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 47. But he thinks that the prayer pivots in the middle from being centered around Jonah to being oriented towards God.

I propose that the modification likely moves from Psalm 120:1 to Jonah 2:3, even though latter's syntax is more conventional.¹⁴ This aspect of my argument is stronger in its alignment with other indicators of dependence, which together form a compelling case.

2.2.4 *Partial Integration*

Partial integration of Psalm 120:1 into Jonah 2:3a creates subtle textual incongruities, further supporting the case for literary dependence. First, the phrase ויעני (and he answered me) employs a third-person reference to God in 2:3a (and in 2:8a, 10b but not in the rest of the verses), which, as Weimar deftly observes, is without function here since Jonah (the character) is removed from a human audience.¹⁵ Therefore, he concludes that this verse must be a “redaktionelle Bildung” (editorial composition) a later addition that adds an audience which the prophet addresses. However, redactional layers usually clarify the text rather than complicate them as the third person reference does in this case. A better explanation, that does not necessarily preclude redaction, is an intertextual one which suggests that Jonah 2:3a borrows and reworks language from Psalm 120:1. This intertext allows itself to be discovered through partial integration. Reading the psalm intertextually avoids the excesses of redaction criticism which, though often very helpful, at times tenuously hypothesizes redactional activity. Considered in light of Psalm 120, this third person reference to God might make more sense since Jonah 2:3 seems to follow the

¹⁴ This goes against Allen's argument that Jonah's psalm had an independent existence prior to its use in the book of Jonah and that none of the wording was changed in the process: “that the author did not take liberties with the psalm shows his respect for the original composition and for conventional psalm language.” Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 184. Assuming the independent existence of the psalm and concluding that none of its language was changed begs the question. It is better to see the psalm as a new creation that makes free use of traditional language from the Psalms.

¹⁵ Weimar, “Jonapsalm und Jonaerzählung,” 57. Nogalski disagrees, citing other psalms which have this variation. Nogalski, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, and Jonah*, 350–51. This is part of the reason why Jeremias thinks this psalm is composed independent of the book and later inserted into the book. Jeremias, “Der Psalm des Jona (Jona 2,3-10),” 204–5. Similarly, Ackerman, “Satire and Symbolism in the Song of Jonah,” 215.

pattern of Psalm 120:1–2, switching from third person reference about God in 2:3a to second person reference in 2:3b. This change in personal references to God from third person to second person within one psalm is also evidenced in 4Q381 f29:4 where it seems to follow the same change in Psalm 18.¹⁶

Second, the verb tenses in Jonah 2:3a are difficult to integrate into the flow of the book, creating more incongruity from partial integration. The *qatal* קראתי combined with the *wayyiqtol* ויעני puts the experience of Jonah (the character) and the psalmist in the past: “I *called* in my distress to YHWH, and he *answered* me” (Jon 2:3a).¹⁷ The OG translates both verbs in aorist tense (Εβόησα... εἰσήκουσέν). But this perspective is difficult to make sense of in both texts. In the book of Jonah, it is unclear whether Jonah (the character) is referring to a prayer which he had prayed from the womb of the fish and had received divine answer prior to the prayer in Jonah 2:3–10 (hence he is saying thanks) or if he is introducing his prayer with a statement of confidence, summarizing the rest of his prayer.¹⁸ For this reason, Hunter creatively suggests reading ויעני with the secondary meaning “to afflict”—“I called to the LORD out of my distress, but he caused me

¹⁶ Mika S. Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect and Justice for All: Reading Psalms in the Dead Sea Scrolls in Light of 4Q381* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 194.

¹⁷ Erickson discusses the issue of verbal tense in Jonah’s prayer and suggests that the *wayyiqtol*s in this psalm do not narrate past events but rather express consequence or point to change in subject. Erickson, *Jonah*, 318–19. While that may be a possibility, the versions do not understand them in this sense.

¹⁸ It is, of course, possible that Jonah had prayed for deliverance from drowning in the sea and God’s answer to his prayer was the fish. However, Jonah 2:3b equates being in the belly of the fish with being in the belly of Sheol. Berger convincingly argues that both drowning in the sea and the belly of the fish were distressful to Jonah. But the belly of the fish becomes more inviting as a result of Jonah’s prayer. Yitzhak Berger, *Jonah in the Shadows of Eden*, ISBL (Bloomington: IN: Indiana University, 2016), 89. Berger’s argument complements Cohn’s earlier proposal that the fish, just like water, was both destroyer and a rescuer. Gabriel H. Cohn, *Das Buch Jona im Lichte der biblischen Erzählkunst*, SSN (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1969), 82–83. Seeing the complex symbolism of the fish and the sea avoids the inconclusive debate about whether or not the fish was an answer to prayer. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, 184. It is both and more. The fish’s belly is “both a womb and a tomb.” Erickson, *Jonah*, 285.

grief.”¹⁹ But clearly, the versions do not pick up on this. Plus, the influence of Psalm 120 makes this less plausible. Adding to the incongruence is the syntax of Jonah 2:2 and 2:3, which makes Jonah 2:3 a continuation of the prayer he initially offered from the fish’s belly in 2:2. The verb *וַיֹּאמֶר* (and he said) in Jonah 2:3 expands on the previous *wayyiqtol* *וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל* (Then he prayed) in Jonah 2:2, following a pattern similar to the way these verbs are used together in Nehemiah 1:4–5.²⁰ Verse 2 is therefore an introduction to the prayer that follows.²¹ This suggests that Jonah (the character) is praying from the belly of the fish using the past tense, recalling a deliverance yet to happen.

Third, the partial integration of Psalm 120:1 into Jonah 2:3a becomes even clearer when comparing how the opening line relates to the broader context of each psalm. In both cases, the first verse stands somewhat apart from the rest of the composition, creating a comparable tension. For this reason, in Psalm 120:1, Gunkel emends *וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל* to *וַיִּעֲנֵי* so that it would read “To YHWH in my distress I call *that he may answer me*,” aligning it more closely with standard lament form.²² While this interpretation reflects an effort to fit the text into familiar categories, it is worth noting that no other textual witnesses support this reading. Furthermore, the Masoretic pointing does not necessarily require alteration simply because it does not conform to typical expectations of a

¹⁹ Hunter, *The Judgement of Jonah*, 129. Also, Erickson, *Jonah*, 318.

²⁰ The *wayyiqtol* *וַיֹּאמֶר* (he said) in this case is functioning epexegetically to specify the verbal idea in 2:2. Cf. Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 2nd ed (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 2018), § 3.5.1 (d), 100.

²¹ Weimar, *Jona*, 220–21. Weimar thinks the prayer is therefore fundamentally a lament which was later transformed into thanksgiving. But as we will see, the prayer defies such form critical limitations.

²² Gunkel gives both possible translations to this verse with *weyiqtol*. He first translates the verse as a present subjunctive: “Zu Jahve in meiner Drangsal rufe ich, ‘daß er mich höre’” (To Yahweh, in my distress, I cry out, ‘that He may hear me’). But he later cites Bidell and Chenne who translate the second part with a simple future tense: “und er wird mich erhören” (and He will hear me). Hermann Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 6th ed. (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 536, 538.

thanksgiving or lament psalm. The fact that Psalm 120 and Jonah 2 share unexpected beginning of their psalms shows that while Jonah 2:3a might seem strange in its placement and content, it is not alone in the way the prophet introduces his prayer.²³ This may not resolve the tension immediately, but it opens an interactive pathway between the two texts, inviting the reader to read one in light of the other.

Reading Psalm 120:1 closely provides insights that clarify the interpretive tension in Jonah 2:3a. Zenger somewhat convincingly argues that verse 1 is neither in need of emendation nor a summary of the rest of the psalmist's prayer (contra Kraus²⁴). It is rather a recollection of past deliverance which serves as a precedent and foundation for the present petition.²⁵ Another likely explanation is that the *qatal* is performative in Psalm 120:1, signifying the present performance of the action in past tense.²⁶ So, the psalmist cries out and receives answer in the same present time

²³ These two psalms also share form-critical problems. As mentioned in the previous footnote, Gunkel emends Psalm 120:1 to fit his form critical categories. Jonah's psalm is thought of as a thanksgiving psalm (cf. Jon 2:10a). cf. Gunkel, *Ausgewählte Psalmen*, 289. Erickson, *Jonah*, 285–86. However, וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל (he prayed) almost always introduces a lament in the rest of the Hebrew Bible (hence, Niditch, *Jonah*, 70–71.) Based on this and other disparities between the prose and poetry, Weimar observes that the narrative introduces a lament whereas the psalm in its final form is a thanksgiving. He later concludes that this is a result of two-fold layers of redaction, the first layer relating to a lament whereas the second transforming it into a thanksgiving. Weimar, "Jonapsalm und Jonaerzählung," 46–49; 64–68.

²⁴ Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, CC (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 423.

²⁵ Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150*, ed. Klaus Baltzer, trans. Linda M. Maloney, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 302. Also, John Goldingay, *Psalms: 90–150*, vol. 3, BCOT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 448. Alternatively, Villanueva argues that the first verse of Psalm 120 is an expression of thanksgiving which is deliberately juxtaposed to lament in order to highlight the tragic element of the prayer. Federico G. Villanueva, "From Thanksgiving to Lament: The Shape of Psalm 120," *VT* 70 (2020): 479–97. So, Psalm 120:1 is thanksgiving added to a lament whereas Jonah 2:3a is thanksgiving for a future deliverance.

²⁶ Crow suggests this use in Psalm 120:1. Loren D. Crow, *The Songs of Ascents (Psalms 120–134): Their Place in Israelite History and Religion*, SBLDS 148 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1996), 30. For the performative function of the perfect, see Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzsch and Sir Arthur Ernest Cowley, Second English Edition (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), §106i(b), 311–12. What about the *wayyiqtol* that follows the *qatal* in Psalm 120:1? Although the *wayyiqtol* is generally considered as denoting a past tense, it has been shown to transcend a strictly preterite connotation by Elizabeth Robar. Rather, it follows the reference time set by the *qatal* while retaining its perfective aspect. Elizabeth Robar, "Wayyiqtol as an Unlikely Preterite," *JSS* 58, no. 1 (2013): 26–31.

frame, perhaps immediately after the prayer ends in the psalm. It can thus convey a sense of confidence in the completion of the action. Gerstenberger confirms this reading when he says that the past tenses “may be taken in the sense of anticipated realization, as affirmation of confidence” (cf. Pss 3:5; 7:2; 31:2–3; 119:26).²⁷ This performative function of the *qatal* illuminates Jonah 2:3a, highlighting the present act of prayer in his statement, “I am calling to the Lord out of my distress...” Jonah cries out for help from the belly of the fish and confidently believes that God would answer him.²⁸ In addition, the narrative surrounding Jonah’s psalm adds an interpretative nuance that is unavailable in the Psalms. Ibn Ezra says that the prophet speaks the psalm ברוח נבואה (in the spirit of prophecy).²⁹ If that is the case, then Jonah’s prophetic confidence in God’s answer to his prayer is set in stark contrast to the uncertainty of the sailors (1:6) and the Ninevite king (3:9), aiding in the characterization of Jonah in the narrative and thus uniting the psalm and the story of Jonah.

2.2.5 Multiplicity

Multiplicity reinforces the intertextual connection between Jonah 2:3a and Psalm 120:1 by extending beyond verbal parallels to their broader contexts. While multiplicity typically refers to verbal links in surrounding contexts, it can also encompass positional correspondence—

²⁷ Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 318.

²⁸ Contra Gunkel, Limburg and others who say this is a summary statement Gunkel, *Ausgewählte Psalmen*, 291. James Limburg, *Jonah: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 66. Jeremias says verse 3 is a kind of an “Überschrift” (title) that sets the tone for the prayer as an answered prayer. Jeremias, “Der Psalm des Jona (Jona 2,3-10),” 205. Even if it is a summary statement, Jonah is still proleptically proclaiming his deliverance.

²⁹ Ibn Ezra says, ועתה שים לבך וראה כל תפילת נביא וברכתו היא ברוח נבואה (and now pay attention and see that all prayers of a prophet and his blessings were in the spirit of prophecy). He then goes on to give examples of when past tense verbs were employed in prophecy (Gen 48:22; 49:15; Num 24:17; Deut 32:15, 19; 33:28; Ps 3:5) Steven Bob, *Go to Nineveh: Medieval Jewish Commentaries on the Book of Jonah Translated and Explained* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013), 30. Opgen-Rhein supports the prophetic portrayal of Jonah’s psalm here. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 115.

specifically, where intertexts are placed within their respective texts. Both Jonah 2:3a and Psalm 120:1 function as opening lines, shaping the tone and theological orientation of their compositions.³⁰

Scribal practices in the Qumran scrolls illuminate the significance of positional correspondence and the composition of new psalms using earlier material.³¹ Several Qumran texts, such as 4Q174 and 4Q177, demonstrate a tendency to evoke an entire psalm by quoting its opening line. 4Q174 cites the first lines of Psalms (Pss 1:1 and 2:1), assuming the reader will recall the rest of the psalm. For this reason, Brooke notes that exegesis of the Psalms in 4Q174 “might be other than atomistic,” suggesting a holistic engagement with psalmic texts.³² Similarly 4Q177 quotes Psalm 11:1–2 and Psalm 12:1 in col. i and returns to Psalm 12:7 in col. ii, evidencing multiplicity. Notwithstanding the differences in time and genre, these scrolls teach us how the scribes read and

³⁰ The fact that Psalm 120:1 is not repeated exactly in Jonah 2:3a suggests that this is an allusion rather than a citation. This is true of almost all the intertexts within the psalm. On the other hand, for example, a word-for-word repetition of Psalm 105:1 is seen in Isaiah 12:4 which is part of a new psalmic composition just like the psalm of Jonah. However, the verbatim citation of הודו ליהוה קראו בשמו הודיעו בעמים עלילותיו (Give thanks to YHWH, call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples) points to its formulaic nature rather than evidence of borrowing especially since it is not explicitly introduced as a quotation. This observation is supported by David Willgren, *The Formation of the “Book” of Psalms: Reconsidering the Transmission and Canonization of Psalmody in Light of Material Culture and the Poetics of Anthologies*, FAT 2 88 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 297. Willgren’s subsequent discussion of stock phrases is broader than fixed language. He allows for emendations of stock phrases that do not imply literary dependence. When considering the whole of the Psalter, the issue is necessarily complex and cannot be drawn out here.

³¹ Here, I adopt the same methodological approach as Tooman, who examines the scribal reuse practices in the Qumran scrolls—despite their later date than most biblical books—because they offer clearer examples of literary dependence. Tooman, *Gog of Magog*, 34–35. While the relevance of these scrolls to the biblical texts may be debated due to differences in time and provenance, they remain instructive because the scribal practices in the Qumran scrolls have precedents in the formation of the biblical books themselves. Reinhard G. Kratz, “Biblical Interpretation and Redaction History,” *HeBAI* 9, no. 2 (2020): 209–46; George J. Brooke, “New Perspectives on the Bible and Its Interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Dynamics of Language and Exegesis at Qumran*, ed. Devorah Dimant and Reinhard Gregor Kratz, FAT 2 35 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 19–38.

³² George J. Brooke, *Reading the Dead Sea Scrolls: Essays in Method*, EJS 39 (Atlanta: SBL, 2013), 89. Likewise, Willgren shows that Psalms 1–2 were read as a unit even though only the first verse of each psalm is explicitly cited in 4Q174. Willgren, *The Formation of the “Book” of Psalms*, 160–62.

referred to the psalms—they considered and even commented upon the larger tapestry of psalmic texts by invoking one line.³³

The intertextuality evident in 4Q174 (indeed also of 4Q177) offers an additional insight relevant to my thesis, particularly regarding the use of psalms alongside other texts in a prophetic context. All of the base texts (Deut 33; 2 Sam 7; Psalms 1 and 2) are supplemented by what Brooke calls “secondary quotations” (e.g. Psalm 2:1 is explained by and juxtaposed with Daniel 11:32, 35, and 12:10).³⁴ Willgren also agrees with this assessment and concludes thus: “Taken together, the use of psalms in 4Q174 implies that they were regarded as authoritative...they were also understood to be prophetic.”³⁵ This reveals a network of interwoven texts operating within the consideration of a psalmic passage. Likewise, Jonah’s psalm employs a similar technique, integrating psalms within the prophetic framework of the book. This approach aligns with Ibn Ezra’s interpretation of prophetic perfects in Jonah’s psalm, which I previously discussed in relation to the verb tenses in Jonah 2:3a.

Beyond merely citing the first lines of psalms, several Qumran scrolls, such as 4Q380 and 4Q381, align more closely with Jonah’s psalm in their use of psalmic language to compose new works, demonstrating multiplicity in their literary design.³⁶ These scrolls, for instance, draw from

³³ 4Q174 and 177 are dated to second half of the first century BCE .George J. Brooke, “Florilegium,” in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam (Oxford: Oxford University, 2000), 1:297.

³⁴ Brooke, “Florilegium,” 298.

³⁵ Willgren, *The Formation of the “Book” of Psalms*, 319. For a more extensive consideration of Psalms as prophetic literature in Qumran, see Jesper Høgenhaven, “Psalms as Prophecy: Qumran Evidence for the Reading of Psalms as Prophetic Text and the Formation of the Canon,” in *Functions of Psalms and Prayers in the Late Second Temple Period*, ed. Mika S. Pajunen and Jeremy Penner, BZAW (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 486:231–51.

³⁶ 4Q393 is another interesting fragmentary scroll that freely reuses language from Psalm 51. Daniel K. Falk, “Biblical Adaptation in 4Q392 Works of God and 4Q393 Communal Confession,” in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues*, ed. Donald Parry and Eugene Ulrich, STDJ 30 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 126–46. Likewise, the *Barkhi Nafshi* fragments display

Psalms 18, 69, 89, and 106, showcasing how psalmic language is reused to create new compositions.³⁷ Jonah's psalm may participate in this same phenomenon, particularly given the dating of 4Q380 and 4Q381 to the Persian or early Hellenistic period.³⁸ Such non-atomistic literary awareness of individual psalms is evident in other Second Temple texts that later became canonical. For example, 2 Chronicles 6:41–42 reuses Psalm 132:8–10, modifying the text to reflect knowledge of the entire psalm. Willgren rightly concludes that “2 Chr 6 possibly draws from the entire psalm, although the verbatim overlaps are limited to vv. 8–10.”³⁹ This broader pattern of reuse provides a framework for understanding Jonah's (the author's) integration of psalmic material in the composition of a new psalm.

Multiplicity may also extend beyond individual psalms to encompass entire collections, which, in this case, includes the “Psalms of Ascent” (Psalms 120–134). While this is an ambitious and somewhat tentative suggestion, Psalm 120:1, as the opening verse of this collection, serves not only as the introduction to a single psalm but also as a gateway to a larger collection shaped by theological and literary concerns. As Hossfeld and Zenger poignantly note, “Since v. 1 is the beginning of the collection of Psalms 120–134, the verse thus at the same time projects a

dependence on the Psalms in the same way as the previous fragments and Jonah 2. Pajunen notes 4Q434's reuse of Psalm 103 in Mika S. Pajunen, “From Poetic Structure to Historical Setting: Exploring the Background of Barkhi Nafshi Hymns,” in *Prayer and Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature*, ed. Jeremy Penner, Ken Penner, and Cecilia Wassen, STDJ 98 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 368. But Willgren speculates if it is merely using familiar stock phrases. He goes on, however, to note the fascinating use of Psalm 37:15 in 4Q434, and the combination of Psalm 63:2, 7, 9 and Psalm 77:13 in 4Q437. Willgren, *The Formation of the “Book” of Psalms*, 334–35.

³⁷ Eileen M. Schuller, “4Q380 and 4Q381: Non-Canonical Psalms from Qumran,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research*, ed. Devorah Dimant and Uriel Rappaport, STDJ 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 92–94. On Psalm 106, Mika Pajunen analyzes the intertextual connections found in the scroll and concludes that the version in 4Q380 is the source of the MT psalm. Mika S. Pajunen, “The Textual Connection between 4Q380 Fragment 1 and Psalm 106,” in *The Hebrew Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Nora David et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 186–202.

³⁸ Schuller, “4Q380 and 4Q381: Non-Canonical Psalms from Qumran,” 96.

³⁹ Willgren, *The Formation of the “Book” of Psalms*, 302.

hermeneutical horizon that is significant for the overall movement of prayer accomplished in Psalms 120–134.”⁴⁰ Psalm 120 begins outside the land of Israel with the rest of the psalms leading the reader closer and closer to the temple in Psalms 132–134.

The conceptual alignment between Jonah’s prayer and the Psalms of Ascent suggests that Jonah 2:3a echoes the exilic and post-exilic theology of the collection, portraying a return from alienation to communion with God. By invoking the first line of the Psalms of Ascent, Jonah’s prayer reverses the direction of his journey from Joppa to Tarshish in chapter 1 back to the land of Israel in chapter 2 (cf. Jonah 2:5, 8).⁴¹ In other words, this is a prayer of a wearied exile on his way back from the edges of civilization to Zion. While the formation of the collection and the author of Jonah’s access to it remain uncertain, the ideological resonance is compelling.⁴²

Complicating and expanding the idea of multiplicity is the fact that Psalm 120:1 leads to a network of texts which seem to be at work together in Jonah 2. The *wayyiqtol* third person singular

⁴⁰ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 302. Opgen-Rhein makes use of this connection in his discussion of Jonah 2:3a. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 177–78.

⁴¹ Weimar very helpfully notes the connection to the entire Psalms of Ascent by pointing out that the last verse of the last psalm in the collection (Ps 134:3) is echoed in Jonah’s confession in 1:9. But he then concludes that the imagined location of the psalmist in Jonah 2 is not in the belly of the fish but in the sanctuary of Jerusalem. Weimar, *Jona*, 238. But that need not be the case as we will see in the next section.

⁴² On the other hand, Drew Longacre remarkably argues, using material evidence and pragmatic consideration of textual production, that the great Psalms scroll (11Q5) presupposes a Proto-Masoretic Psalter that more or less resembles the Masoretic psalter. Drew Longacre, “The 11Q5 Psalter as a Scribal Product: Standing at the Nexus of Textual Development, Editorial Processes, and Manuscript Production,” *ZAW* 134, no. 1 (2022): 85–111. Longacre’s research provides a thorough reconsideration of the popular idea that there was no (stable) Psalter or even a notion of a book of Psalms in the second temple period because of, among other things, the differences between the MT and 11Q5 as posited by Mroczek in Eva Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University, 2016), 25–50. At the very least, the existence of continuous *pesher* of some individual psalms in scrolls like 4Q171 shows that the individual psalms were treated as units even though their order was in flux. 11Q5 does have Psalms 121–132 in the order of the MT. The absence of Psalm 120 is harder to explain and thus makes my case more circumspect. But it is not impossible to imagine the existence of at least the collection of Psalms of Ascent in the Second Temple period, allowing us to read the reuse of Psalm 120:1 in Jonah 2:3a in light of the entire collection from Psalms 120–134. As Mroczek herself notes, the fragments of 1QPs^b which contain portions of Psalms 126–128 “perhaps represent a liturgical collection containing only the Psalms of Ascent.” Mroczek, *Literary Imagination*, 31. Thus, my reading would still work even if there was no stable psalter in Second Temple period.

with first person pronominal suffix וַיַּעֲנֵנִי (and he answered me) appears only one other time in the Psalms in Psalm 3:5. This thesis argues that Psalm 3:9 is alluded to in Jonah 2:10b (see the last section in this chapter, 2.16). Such a specific conjugation may be too narrow an expectation to occur in the Psalms. But even just the *wayyiqtol* form of the verb only appears two other times in the Psalms in 119:26 and 138:3. And as we will see in Jonah 2:5b (2.7.2.2), Psalm 138 is another psalm that features in Jonah's psalm. Psalm 119:26 can be safely eliminated from being related to the texts under examination in this thesis because 138:3, 3:5, 120:1, and Jonah 2:3 all share a unique combination of קרא (to call) and the *wayyiqtol* of ענה (to answer) but Psalm 119:26 does not. Perhaps it is a coincidence. Or perhaps these psalms are seen as somehow organically interrelated whether by form, content, liturgical use, or a combination of these factors and more. Whatever the reason, they make their way into Jonah's psalm together. It is not appropriate at this point to draw any conclusions from what appears to be a network of texts at work. So, I shall return to it after examining all the verses of Jonah's psalm.

2.2.6 *Thematic Correspondence*

In addition to multiplicity, thematic correspondence strengthens the connection between Jonah's psalm and Psalm 120, providing deeper insight into their shared theological and literary concerns. This analysis builds upon markers of dependence rooted in verbal correspondence, as these are essential for establishing meaningful intertextual connections. Jonah's prayer and Psalm 120 share a perspective of separation from God, a presumption of innocence, collective identity, a desire for retributive justice, and perception of the Other, which together illuminate the broader theological narrative in the book of Jonah.

2.2.6.1 The Petitioners' Perspective: Longing for the temple in exile

Both Jonah's prayer and Psalm 120 depict the psalmist's cry from a place of separation from God, emphasizing exile and distance. Psalm 120:5 locates the psalmist in Meshech (somewhere north of Israel cf. Ezek 38:2–3; 39:1) and in the tents of Kedar (nomadic tribes southeast of Israel). These places denote the farthest regions north and south of ancient Israel known at that time.⁴³ How can the psalmist dwell in both places? These locations symbolize a sense of exile, even if the psalmist is not literally outside the land of Israel.⁴⁴ In fact, the psalmist does not have to be physically outside of Israel to express these sentiments.⁴⁵ Jonah (the author) intensifies this imagery, crying out from the belly of the fish in watery chaos, a place that represents both physical and spiritual distance from God's holy temple (Jonah 2:5, 8).⁴⁶ This high degree of correspondence between Jonah's (the character's) situation and the psalmist's lament reflects shared themes of alienation.

Separation from God is further emphasized in both texts through structural and linguistic devices. In Psalm 120, the psalmist's separation from God is conveyed by the sudden omission of

⁴³ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 309. Gert T. M. Prinsloo, "The Role of Space in the שירי המעלות (Psalms 120–134)," *Biblica* 86, no. 4 (2005): 462.

⁴⁴ Zenger makes a convincing case to view Meshech as related to Gog, "the apocalyptic enemy from the north" (cf. Ezek 38:2–3; 39:1). Likewise, Kedar is born to Ishmael "who was at war with all his brothers (cf. Gen 25:13, 18). Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 309–10. These are places that signify distance from the land of Israel. Schaefer also follows suit when he says that the place names are "metaphors for exile in alien lands..." Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms*, ed. David W. Cotter, Jerome T. Walsh, and Chris Franke, BOSHNP (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 298.

⁴⁵ Goldingay, *Psalms: 90–150*, 3:449. This is in line with other elements in Jonah's psalm where metaphorical expressions of the psalms (e.g., drowning imagery) become literal experiences to Jonah.

⁴⁶ Of relevance here is the fact that waters are often used as a metaphor for the nations in the Hebrew Bible. For this theme, see John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988), 120–24. It is likely that Jonah's sojourn in the midst of the raging waters is symbolic of Israel in exile among the nations. On that metaphoric level, there is a high degree of correspondence between Jonah's prayer and the complaint of Psalm 120 in which the psalmist envisions himself as dwelling among barbaric nations.

God's name in verses 3–7. After introducing God in verse 1 by fronting the prepositional phrase אל־יהוה (to YHWH) and of the divine name in verse 2, the psalmist refrains from mentioning God again throughout the rest of the psalm, reflecting a sense of divine distance. Similarly, Jonah's flight from God is explicitly stated in Jonah 1, where the text repeatedly notes that he is fleeing from God's presence (מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה “from the presence of YHWH” Jonah 1:3 [x2], 10). Thus, Jonah's (the author's) use of Psalm 120:1 not only draws on its language but also adopts its thematic focus on separation—both from the land and from God.

2.2.6.2 Presumption of Innocence

Another shared theme is the presumption of innocence, where both Jonah (the character) and the psalmist portray themselves as innocent victims. Psalm 120 contains one of the most striking statements of self-conception in all of the Hebrew Bible. In verse 7, the psalmist declares אֲנִי־שָׁלוֹם וְכִי אֶדְבֵּר הֵמָּה לְמַלְחָמָה (I am peace but when I speak, they are for war). The phrase אֲנִי־שָׁלוֹם is usually rendered with a preposition to smooth out the translation, “I am for peace” (NRSV). It seems that the same tendency was true of two Kennicott manuscripts (39 and 224) which added a lamed preposition before שָׁלוֹם (peace), which was clearly to make sense of the sentence in light of the last phrase, הֵמָּה לְמַלְחָמָה (they are for war). But one must still deal with the force of the phrase as it is. I suggest that this is a clear statement of moral superiority over non-Israelites, for שָׁלוֹם (peace) in 120:7 is picked up from the end of the previous verse where the psalmist bemoans the fact that he has dwelt too long עִם שׂוֹנְאֵי שָׁלוֹם (with those who hate peace). Now in verse 7, the psalmist identifies himself not only with peace but as peace itself.⁴⁷ Therefore, his enemies, by

⁴⁷ Gerstenberger cites Aelred Cody's translation “I am peace itself, and so, whenever I spoke, they would turn to strife” and calls it “fanciful” which “nevertheless may come close to some original meaning.” Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 319. I am suggesting a very similar translation and meaning to Cody's here. See also, Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary*, ed. Peter Ackroyd et al., trans. Herbert Hartwell, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John

hating peace, hate him and, by implication, vice versa. Gerstenberger's comments on this sentiment shed some necessary light on the psychology behind such a statement:⁴⁸

There is a deeply human desire to point out, in times of conflict and disgrace, the impeccability of one's own self, and the total wickedness of some opponents. This self-righteous attitude, to some degree necessary in certain situations of brutal injustice, has been molded into liturgical shape, of a black-and-white type.

אני-שלום (I am peace), then, could be understood as a statement of moral confidence in contrast to the enemies of the psalmist. But even this is ironic as Brueggeman and Bellinger point out that the psalmist, who is peace, had called for retaliation with fiery, sharp arrows.⁴⁹

While Jonah (the character) does not have as direct a statement as Psalm 120:7, he nevertheless conceives of himself as the victim throughout the story (or at least in the psalm where he describes his “distress” [צרה]). His lack of repentance of any sort in the book reinforces his self-conception as innocent. He contrasts himself with those who pay regard to vain idols in Jonah 2:9–10 in a similar way as the psalmist in Psalm 120:7. In this contrast, Jonah's specific critique of those who worship idols is that they act faithlessly. In other words, they do not follow through on their words, implying that they are liars. But Jonah claims that he, on the other hand, will make good (אשלמה) on his vows (2:10b). There may be a play on words with שלום (peace) in the phrase, אשר נדרתי אשלמה (what I vowed I will pay), in 2:10b which corresponds to the psalmist's claim

Knox, 2010), 743–44. On the other hand, Kogut argues that this predicative sentence structure does not convey identity but rather exemplifies a broad category of cases where the lamed preposition is omitted. Kogut S., “Using Alternatively Independent and Suffixed Pronouns for Expressing Possession in Biblical Hebrew,” in *A Memorial Book for Moshe Goshen-Gotstein*, ed. Moshe Bar-Asher and Moshe Garsiel, Studies in Bible and Interpretation 3 (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1993), 401–11.

⁴⁸ Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 319–20.

⁴⁹ Walter Brueggemann and W. H. Bellinger, *Psalms*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (New York: Cambridge University, 2014), 524.

that he is peace.⁵⁰ Notwithstanding the pun, the presumption of righteousness is present in both texts. In fact, Ben Zvi brilliantly notes that the composition of Jonah's prayer using the language of the psalms resembles that of the characterization of David in the book of Chronicles (1 Chronicles 16:8–36), “who is the paragon of righteousness in this book.”⁵¹ Therefore, the cumulative effect of Jonah's prayer contributes to the characterization of Jonah as a righteous individual. By invoking the psalm in its broader context, Jonah's prayer draws upon its theme of innocent suffering, allowing the psalm's characterization of the speaker as peace itself to subtly inform Jonah's portrayal in the narrative.

The excessive use of the Psalms in Jonah's prayer has interesting synergies with Tobit's pious prayers, which are saturated with allusions to the Psalms.⁵² In light of Southwood's judicious attention to the characterization of Tobit as excessively pious and rigid, we can read the psalmic language used by Tobit as aiding that characterization just as it does in Jonah.⁵³

2.2.6.3 Collective Identity

The use of the first-person singular in Psalm 120 reflects both individual lament and communal identity, bridging personal experience with the collective concerns of the exilic community—a dynamic that might also be at play in Jonah's prayer. The “I” in Psalm 120 is not

⁵⁰ The ubiquity of puns in the book of Jonah is well documented by Baruch Halpern and Richard Elliott Friedman, “Composition and Paronomasia in the Book of Jonah,” *HAR* 4 (1980): 79–92. So, this additional pun that I suggest is not far-fetched in the book of Jonah.

⁵¹ Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah*, 107–8.

⁵² Stephen Ryan offers a detailed study of the language of the Psalms in Tobit while also considering how the later scribal transmitters of Tobit teased out the psalmic connections already present in the earlier versions and made new ones. Stephen Ryan, “The Psalms and the Book of Tobit,” in *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit*, ed. Jeremy Corley and Vincent Skemp, CBQMS 38 (Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005), 28–42. Ruth Henderson focuses on the psalms that feature in Tobit's prayer in chapter 13. Ruth Henderson, “A Scriptural Model for the Song of Tobit (Tobit 13.1–18),” *JSP* 27, no. 1 (2017): 47–79.

⁵³ Katherine E. Southwood, “Comical Moments and Comical Characterisations in Tobit: The Undermining of Self-Righteous Piety, Simplistic Retribution, and Limited Yahwism,” *JSOT* 46, no. 4 (2022): 443–59.

just a single Israelite bemoaning the distress of exile but represents a collective community of those in exile.⁵⁴ This is not to say that every instance of “I” in the Psalms (and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible) is to be interpreted communally. Some were composed as individual expressions which were later communalized, and others retained their individuality (cf. 1 Sam 2:1–10).⁵⁵ Psalm 120 sits between the two where it has a distinct individual quality which also expresses the concerns of a community.⁵⁶ Jonah’s prayer is similar in that it is clearly a prayer of the prophet but represents much more than the individual’s experience. Jonah may be depicted as a corporate figure who represents Israel (or at least those who went into exile).⁵⁷

2.2.6.4 Petition to Judge the Other

Both texts, within their broader contexts, convey a desire for their enemies to face punitive justice. Psalm 120:3 is likely an adaptation of oath formula (cf. Ruth 1:17; 1 Sam 3:17; 14:44; 20:13) which the psalmist uses to bring divine judgement upon his enemy.⁵⁸ Moreover, in Psalm 120:4 the psalmist specifies the judgement as involving sharp arrows with coals from a broom tree, invoking war imagery. After all, *המה למלחמה* (they are for war [Ps 120:7b]). “Sharp arrows” (*חצי חציונים...*) appears five times in the Hebrew Bible (Isa 5:28; Ps 46:6; 64:4; 120:4; and Prov 25:18) and in at least two of those instances (Ps 64:4 and Prov 25:18) they are associated with speech.

⁵⁴ Hakham, *Psalms*, 3:291.

⁵⁵ For an excellent history of scholarship on the collective individuality in the Psalms, see Marko Marttila, *Collective Reinterpretation in the Psalms: A Study of the Redaction History of the Psalter*, FAT 2 13 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 1–24. Marttila argues from a redaction-historical point of view that at least twenty of the psalms were collectivized in the post-exilic period, drawing from the collective features found in Deutero-Isaiah, Lamentations, and Deuteronomic history.

⁵⁶ Croft expresses similar sentiments about not being able to fit Psalm 120 into “recognized formal types.” Steven J. L. Croft, *The Identity of the Individual in the Psalms*, JSOTSup 44 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), 147–48.

⁵⁷ Wolff notes, “Jonah as a prophet and Jonah as a typical representative of Israel can hardly be separated from one another in the story.” Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 99.

⁵⁸ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 307.

Deceptive speech pierces like a sharp arrow. Therefore, the petition here is to return the oppression of the enemies upon themselves in accordance with the principle of *lex talionis*.⁵⁹ Jonah's (the character's) desire for Nineveh to receive their due is seen both in his fleeing from the first commission and in his five-word prophecy in chapter 3, where the wording is likely intended as a declaration of divine judgment upon Nineveh. Several lines of reasoning show Jonah's (the character's) tampering with Yahweh's word in this verse. Gitay rightly argues that Jonah "employs his rhetorical skill as an antirhetorical means in order to fail in his mission and thus to determine Nineveh's fateful destiny."⁶⁰ First, his prophecy in Jonah 3:4 has a sense of incompleteness because it contains no main verbs. Perhaps we are to understand that the prophet deliberately omitted the rest of the message that might have contained information about repentance. Second, official prophetic declarations from Yahweh were usually prefaced with something along the lines of "Thus says YHWH," but Jonah's prophecy has no such solemnity or formality. Third, Jonah does not explain why Nineveh would be overthrown (cf. 1:2), which is something the prophets go into detail when they pronounce judgement upon a nation. Jonah's actions and dialogue in chapter 4 make this more explicit where Jonah wants to see God's just punishment on Nineveh more than his merciful relenting.

2.2.6.5 Perception of the Other

For the psalmist, the distress of being outside the land of Israel is compounded by the behavior of those inhabiting the farthest lands from his homeland (presumably non-Israelites), whom he describes as warmongering liars with deceitful lips and tongues. Similarly, in Jonah's

⁵⁹ Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 424.

⁶⁰ Yehoshua Gitay, "Jonah: The Prophecy of Antirhetoric," in *Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Astrid B. Beck et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 201.

story, he is the only Israelite, while the rest of the characters are non-Israelite. Jonah's (the character's) characterization of these non-Israelites in Jonah 2:9–10 bears some resemblance to the psalmist's portrayal of the Other in Psalm 120. Marina Mannati argues that the lying lips and deceitful tongues in Psalm 120 refer to idolators.⁶¹ While this interpretation is not explicitly evident in the text, if Mannati is correct, the connection between the two texts deepens, as Jonah specifically targets those who regard vain idols (משמרים הבלי־שוא, Jonah 2:9) and contrasts himself with them (cf. Jonah 2:10).

However, this thematic correspondence is arguably the weakest link between Jonah's prayer and Psalm 120. The perception of the Other as deceitful or idolatrous is a common motif in the Psalms, raising the question of whether this connection is valid or merely coincidental. While the theme is ubiquitous, it is important to note that no other psalm describing enemies in a manner similar to Jonah 2:3 shares the same language as Psalm 120. This makes the overlap, while potentially coincidental, still worth mentioning. Additionally, the psalmist's enemies are not always portrayed as non-Israelites, and the Psalms often take a more positive view of non-Israelites.⁶² Thus, it is significant when a psalm, like Psalm 120, portrays enemies as explicitly non-Israelite.

These points of thematic correspondence are too many and too close to be dismissed, suggesting that Psalm 120 enhances and enriches Jonah's prayer by bringing to light some of Jonah's (the character's) subtle reasoning.

⁶¹ Marina Mannati, *Les Psaumes: Psaumes 107 à 150* (Bilbao, Spain: Desclée de Brouwer, 1968), 4:119.

⁶² Robert D. Miller, "The Gentiles in the Zion Hymns: Canaanite Myth and Christian Mission," *Transformation* 26, no. 4 (2009): 232.

2.2.7 *Broadening the Reference*

Not only is Jonah's psalm recalling the language of Psalm 120, but by using common words like קרא, ענה, צרה, etc., it draws from the general tenor of many psalms in the Psalter. The words ענה and קרא are used over fifty times together in the psalter to describe the relationship between God and the psalmists. They were also used in prophetic literature to speak of an eschatological restoration of relationship between God and Israel when they would call (קרא) upon God, and he would answer (ענה) them (Isa 58:9; 65:24; Jer 33:3; Zech 13:9). This is also exemplified in the psalms where the psalmist calls out for deliverance (3:5; 4:2; 27:7; 102:3; 119:145), sometimes expressing confidence (17:6; 22:3; 86:7; 118:5; 120:1; 138:3), and other times God himself promising the fact that he had (81:8; 99:6) and would answer when the psalmist calls upon him (91:15). Interestingly, a number of passages in Job use the same combination to refer to Job's relationship with God (5:1; 9:16; 12:4; 13:22; 14:15). Looking through the lens of these passages, Jonah's (the character's) reliance on traditional language to open his prayer reveals his self-conception as someone who belongs in the same company as God's covenant people, Israel, and the ideal righteous sufferers as represented in the Psalms (cf. 91:15) and Job.⁶³ This broad intertextual resonance underscores how Jonah's use of traditional psalmic language not only aligns him with the covenantal relationship between God and Israel but also situates him within the lineage of righteous sufferers who call upon God in their distress, expecting both a hearing and a response.

⁶³ Ben Sira uses language from Jonah 2:3b in 51:5 to express gratitude for deliverance from a fatal incident, which connects with the beginning of the book in 2:10–11 (forming an *inclusio*) where he says that the former generations of God's people called upon him and found deliverance. Maurice Gilbert concludes that Ben Sira joins himself with the earlier generations in chapter 51 in personally experiencing what the earlier generations of Israel had experienced. Maurice Gilbert SJ, "Prayer in the Book of Ben Sira: Function and Relevance," in *Prayer from Tobit to Qumran*, ed. Renate Egger-Wenzel and Jeremy Corley, DCLS (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), 123. Ben Sira uses Jonah's prayer in the same way Jonah uses the Psalms.

Having examined Jonah 2:3a through its textual history, I have demonstrated that Psalm 120:1 influenced its composition, particularly in the Old Greek (OG) tradition. Using indicators of literary dependence, I argued that Jonah 2:3a not only reflects language from Psalm 120:1 but also demonstrates an awareness of the broader context of Psalm 120, creating a generative dialogue between the two texts. Jonah's reliance on Psalm 120 fuels reflection upon exile, temple, innocent suffering, collective identity, just punishment of enemies, and the perception of the Other, all of which are relevant to the broader narrative of the book. By analyzing how these connections manifest in the transmission history and composition of Jonah 2:3a, this section highlighted the psalm's role in amplifying Jonah's portrayal as a prophet negotiating separation from God and divine justice.

2.3 From the Belly of Sheol: Echoes of Exilic Suffering (Jonah 2:3b)

According to the Masoretic accents, the second line of Jonah's prayer complements the first in a sort of poetic parallelism. The *atnach* extends the first line and introduces a pause before the second expression. So, unlike Psalm 120:1, Jonah 2:3a is only half of the verse which is then completed by an additional, more original poetic expression in Jonah 2:3b:

מבטן שאול שועתי שמעת קולי

from the belly of Sheol I cried out for help; you heard my voice

Before the MT, this line is mostly attested by Mur88 from the first century CE:

[מב]טן שאול שוע[תי שמ]ע[ת] קולי

Even the fragmentary 4Q82 contains the last two words: [ש]מע[ת]ה קולי.⁶⁴ The OG renders this verse as follows:

ἐκ κοιλίας ᾗδου κραυγῆς μου ἤκουσας φωνῆς μου

out of the womb of Hades, my cry you heard, my voice

Clearly, the Greek translator read the verb שועתי as a noun, relating it as a double object of the verb שמעת. This difference can be easily explained when one considers the fact that the verb שועתי (I cried for help) can also be pointed as a noun שועתי (my cry for help) which leads the Greek translator to write κραυγῆς μου (my cry for help) rather than the verbal equivalent, ἐκέκραξα (I cried for help). So, at least the consonantal text still stands. After all, the Greek Minor Prophets scroll from Nahal Hever (8HevXIIgr), probably in an effort to revise the OG to conform to the

⁶⁴ The תה- ending for second masculine singular verbal conjugation is frequent in the DSS. See Elisha Qimron, *A Grammar of the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Between Bible and Mishnah* (Jerusalem: Yad Yizhak Ben-Zvi, 2018), C 2. 1. 1. 1; 154–55.

proto-MT,⁶⁵ does represent the verb with the first-person aorist (which matches the perfect tense of שִׁוַּעַתִּי) middle verb ἐπεκαλεσάμην (I called upon).⁶⁶ Later in the seventh century, the Syro-Hexapla reflects the same verb, following the same tradition as the MT.⁶⁷ This shows, first, that as early as first century BCE the proto-MT text was preferred to the OG by some Hellenistic Jews. Second, a proto-MT text type of Jonah was probably available for comparison with the OG by the first century BCE.

2.3.1 Verbal Resonance

The first two words, מבטן שאול (from the belly of Sheol), find no parallel anywhere in the Hebrew Bible and are an original creation by the author of Jonah's psalm.⁶⁸ These words connect Jonah's sojourn in the lowest part of the ship (ירכתי הספינה [1:5]) and the womb of the fish (ממעי [2:2]) and relate the latter experience as being in the realm of death.⁶⁹ Interestingly, the Greek translation of the phrase, ἐκ κοιλίας ᾗδου (out of the womb of Hades), finds a remarkable parallel in the prayer of Ben Sira in Sirach 51:5: ἐκ βάθους κοιλίας ᾗδου (out of the depths of the womb of Hades).⁷⁰ Jonah 2:4 in the OG has the word βάθη (depths), so all the words of the phrase in Sirach

⁶⁵ James K. Aitken, "The Style of the Naḥal Hever Scroll of the Minor Prophets," in *Les Douze Prophètes Dans La LXX: Protocoles et Procédures Dans La Traduction Grecque: Stylistique, Poétique et Histoire*, ed. Cécile Dogniez and Philippe Le Moigne, VTSup 180 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 3–28.

⁶⁶ Emanuel Tov, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever (8HevXIIgr) (The Seiyâl Collection I)*, DJD, VIII (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 84.

⁶⁷ Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Duodecim Prophetæ*, 3rd ed., XIII, Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum. Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis Editum (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 247.

⁶⁸ Opgen-Rhein calls it "eine originäre Bildung des Dichters" (an original expression of the poet) Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm und Jonabuch*, 41.

⁶⁹ Sasson, *Jonah*, 172.

⁷⁰ Apart from Opgen-Rhein in Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm Und Jonabuch*, 178, only Box and Oesterley seem to point out this parallel in G. H. Box and W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old*

51:5 may have been sourced from Jonah 2:3–4. This reference to Jonah in Sirach is made more likely by its explicit reference to the Twelve Prophets in 49:10: “May the bones of the Twelve Prophets send forth new life from where they lie, for they comforted the people of Jacob and delivered them with confident hope.” Having said this only a couple of chapters earlier, he uses language from Jonah’s prayer to express confident hope and thanksgiving for deliverance “from the depth of the belly of Hades” in chapter 51. It is possible that Ben Sira uses Jonah’s prayer in similar ways to how Jonah uses the Psalms.⁷¹ Jonah’s prayer presents the perfect opportunity for Ben Sira to identify himself with the righteous sufferers of the past, further reinforcing my thesis.

While the first two words of Jonah 2:3b are original to Jonah’s psalm, the last three words, שועתי שמעת קולי (I cried for help; you heard my voice), find faint resonance in a couple of psalms, namely, Psalm 18:7 (cf 2 Sam 22:7) and 31:23b (cf. 28:2).⁷² Wolff notes echoes to these two psalms in his comments on this verse:⁷³

The word שְׁאוֹל, “Sheol,” the underworld, is an echo of the theme of Ps. 18:5, just as later vv. 4a and 6a echo Ps. 18:4f. At latest, the words “I implored, thou didst hear my voice” are a reminiscence of traditional material; for the change in the direction of the address coincides with the echo of Ps. 31:22b (שְׁמַעַתָּה קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵי, “Thou didst hear the voice of my supplication when I cried to thee”), for in what follows the influence of Ps. 31:22a on v. 5a is unmistakable. We can therefore see that there is considerable reliance here on the traditional language of the psalms, which is slightly adapted to the context of the story.

Testament, ed. R. H. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 1:512. Although Sasson says Ben Sira 51:1–12 used language from Jonah 2 among other texts. Sasson, *Jonah*, 213.

⁷¹ See footnote 63 which elaborates on this connection.

⁷² Additionally, Sasson lists Psalm 130:1–2a, Lamentations 3:55–56, and Psalm 116:3 as illustrative of the language and ideas in Jonah 2:3. Sasson, *Jonah*, 168–69. However, as we will see, Psalms 18 and 31 have the closest language to Jonah 2:3b. Conceptual links (which can be just as helpful as verbal links) will be treated at a later point in this thesis.

⁷³ Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 134.

From the belly of Sheol I cried for help; you heard my voice	מבטן שאול שועתי שמעת קולי	Jonah 2:3a
And to my God I cried for help; he heard my voice from his temple	ואל-אלהי אשוע ישמע מהיכלו קולי	Psalm 18:7b
You heard the voice of my petition when I cried to you for help	שמעת קול תחנוני בשועי אליך	Psalm 31:23b

Wolff is content to use the language of reliance in examining the echoes of Psalms 18 and 31 in Jonah 2:3b, 4a, 5a, and 6a. He is perhaps not wrong in suggesting literary dependence on these psalms, but one gets the sense that the echoes are entangled within Jonah's psalm and need to be systematically worked out for us to better appreciate their contribution to its composition. To be sure, these verbal parallels are not as strong as Psalm 120:1 in Jonah 2:3a. But there is still enough overlap in language, evidence of multiplicity and thematic correspondence that requires further analysis.

2.3.2 *Availability*

In all probability, Psalm 18 (at least in its earliest form) was available to the author of Jonah's psalm, for there is reason to think that the psalm is pre-exilic. Cross and Freedman date the poem (which had northern dialectical origins as represented by 2 Samuel 22 and later Judahite provenance as preserved in Psalm 18) to 9th–8th centuries BCE based on orthographic, linguistic, and parallels with ancient Canaanite sources.⁷⁴ They even go as far as to say, “a tenth century date for the poem is not at all improbable.”⁷⁵ Adding to this, the text of Psalm 18 is remarkably well-

⁷⁴ Frank Moore Cross and David Noel Freedman, “A Royal Song of Thanksgiving: II Samuel 22 = Psalm 18,” *JBL* 72, no. 1 (1953): 20. However, James Barr, after listing and analyzing all the differences in spelling between Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel, concludes that there is no reason to posit “that the differences are connected with northern and southern locality or with dialect.” James Barr, *The Variable Spellings of the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1989), 174. He does agree, however, that the Psalm evidences a later style than Samuel.

⁷⁵ Cross and Freedman, “A Royal Song of Thanksgiving: II Samuel 22 = Psalm 18,” 20. Similarly, Donald K. Berry, *The Psalms and Their Readers: Interpretive Strategies for Psalm 18*, JSOTSup 153 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), 24.

represented albeit fragmentarily in 11QPs^c, 11QPs^d, 4QPs^c,⁷⁶ and the Nahal Hever Psalms scrolls (5/6 Hev1b) which can be differentiated from its parallel in 2 Samuel 22 as attested by 4QSam^a.⁷⁷ So, it is historically plausible to suggest literary dependence of Jonah 2 on Psalm 18 as Wolff remarked.

2.3.3 Multiplicity

Widening the scope of correspondence between Psalm 18:7b and Jonah 2:3b to the entire verse, one finds that the first part of Psalm 18:7 lines up with the first line of Jonah 2:3 and continues to show similarity in this second line.

I cried to YHWH from my distress and he answered me; from the belly of Sheol I cried for help; you heard my voice	קראתי מצרה לי אל-יהוה ויענני מבטן שאול שועתי שמעת קולי	Jonah 2:3
In my distress I cried to YHWH and to my God I cried for help; he heard my voice from his temple and my cry for help went before him in his hearing	בצר-לי אקרא יהוה ואל-אלהי אשוע ישמע מהיכלו קולי ושועתי לפניו תבוא באזניו	Psalm 18:7
In my distress I cried to YHWH and to my God I called; and he heard my voice from his temple and my cry for help was in his hearing	בצר-לי אקרא יהוה ואל-אלהי אקרא וישמע מהיכלו קולי ושועתי באזניו	2 Samuel 22:7

The parallel verse in 2 Samuel 22:7 has slightly different words and therefore has less agreement with Jonah's psalm than Psalm 18, so it will not be considered as closely as Psalm 18.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ See for minor variants, Peter W. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms*, STDJ 17 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 87. It should be noted that verses 44–51 are not attested in any of the scrolls because of their fragmentary nature.

⁷⁷ For a detailed analysis of the textual issues in this scroll, see Donald W. Parry, "4QSam^a and the Royal Song of Thanksgiving (2 Sam 22/Ps 18)," in *Sapiential, Liturgical and Poetical Texts from Qumran*, ed. Daniel K. Falk, Florentino García Martínez, and Eileen M. Schuller, STDJ 35 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 146–59.

⁷⁸ The relationship between Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22 is debated and is not clear. There are many complex differences between the two in diction, orthography, and Masoretic vowel pointing. In all probability, they are both two versions of the same song as Young has argued in Theron Young, "Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22: Two Versions of the Same Song," in *Seeking Out the Wisdom of the Ancients: Essays Offered to Honor Michael V. Fox on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Ronald L. Troxel, Kelvin G. Friebel, and Dennis R. Magary (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 53–69.

The Greek translator's rendering of שׁוֹעֲתִי (I cried for help) in Jonah 2:3b as a noun, diverging from its typical verbal translation, may reflect the influence of Psalm 18 and related texts, suggesting an intertextual reading of Jonah's psalm. In the Hebrew Bible, the verbal root שׁוֹע occurs twenty-one times, but only in Jonah 2:3, Psalm 72:12, and Job 29:12 does the OG translate it as a noun.⁷⁹ Among these, Jonah (the book) is unique in having a finite verb in the Hebrew, שׁוֹעֲתִי, which appears in three other instances (Hab 1:2; Ps 30:3; Ps 88:14), all of which are rendered as verbs in the OG. This suggests that the OG generally distinguished between the verbal and nominal forms.

However, ambiguity arises in Psalm 30:3 and Jonah 2:3, where the consonantal Hebrew text could be pointed as either a verb or a noun. While the OG translates שׁוֹעֲתִי (I heard for help) as a verb in Psalm 30:3, it uses a noun in Jonah 2:3. Although the evidence is limited, it raises the question of whether there is a specific reason for this anomaly in Jonah beyond mere textual ambiguity. I propose that, similar to Jonah 2:3a—where the OG appears to read מִצָּרָה (from distress) as בִּצְרָה (in distress) under the influence of Psalm 120:1—the Greek translator of Jonah 2:3b may have been influenced by the noun שׁוֹעֲתִי (my cry for help) in Psalm 18:7 (cf. 2 Samuel 22:7) and Psalm 102:2.⁸⁰ This suggests that Jonah 2:3b was read in light of these texts, resulting in the translation choice.

⁷⁹ In Psalm 72:12 and Job 29:12, the MT has the piel participle מְשׁוֹעֵץ (to call for help) but the OG (along with the Peshitta in Ps 72:12) reads it as a noun, ἐκ χειρὸς δυνάστου (from the hand of a powerful one). But this Greek phrase does not match the consonantal Hebrew word מְשׁוֹעֵץ. Rather, it is the translation of מִיד (from the hand) with a variety of nouns that represent δυνάστου (powerful one) as in Job 5:25 and 6:23 (cf. Gen 49:24; Ps 126:4; Jer 38:3 [45:3 in OG]). So, these two instances are not similar to Jonah 2:3 where the Greek noun phrase by itself is perfectly capable of translating the consonantal text without having to add to the consonantal text.

⁸⁰ The noun שׁוֹעֲתִי (my cry for help) appears six times in the Hebrew Bible but only in 2 Samuel 22:7, Psalm 18:7, and 102:2 does the Greek version translate the noun with κραυγή (cry for help). As we will see later, Jonah 2:8c has language in common with Psalm 18:7 and Psalm 102:2, so at least these two psalms show multiplicity with other parts of Jonah's psalm. The psalms that feature in different places throughout the psalm of Jonah evidence what I

While Psalm 18 is not as explicitly interwoven into Jonah's prayer as Psalm 120, certain phrases and motifs—such as the imagery of encompassing danger and the ascent of prayer to God—highlight a more subtle linguistic and thematic resonance. Psalm 18:5 has links to Jonah 2:6 with the word **אֶפְפוּנִי** (they encompassed me), describing a very similar circumstance. Additionally, the idea of the psalmist's prayer reaching God in Psalm 18:7 is similarly detailed in Jonah 2:8 with the words **הִכָּל** (temple) and **תָּבוֹא** (it came). Further evidence of intertextuality with Psalm 18 can be seen in their thematic correspondence.

2.3.4 *Thematic Correspondence*

In many ways, Psalm 18 shares more explicit (or at least extended by its sheer size) conceptual overlap with Jonah 2 than Psalm 120.

2.3.4.1 The Petitioners' Perspective: Longing for the temple in watery exile

Psalm 18 and Jonah's prayer share the depictions of distress, deliverance, and divine response, though the tone and execution differ markedly. Both psalms mention the psalmists crying out from their distress (Jonah 2:3; Ps 18:7). While this theme is common in the Psalms, what sets these two texts apart is the specific nature of the distress. Both psalmists describe their experience as drowning in chaotic waters, linked metaphorically to death and Sheol (Jonah 2:3–4, 6; Ps 18:5–6, 16–17). In both cases, their prayers rise from the depths to the temple (Jonah 2:8; Ps 18:7), prompting Yahweh to respond. In Psalm 18, Yahweh dramatically comes down (Ps 18:10) in a thunderous theophany depicted as a storm-god rending the heavens to rescue the psalmist (Ps 18:8–16):⁸¹

would like to call psalmic entanglement, for they are so entwined together that it is difficult to limit their influence to just one line or phrase.

⁸¹ As many scholars have noted, it is questionable whether the theophany fits the psalm and therefore whether it is original to the psalm. However, as Alison Gray convincingly notes, the theophany receives a narrative frame in

Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him.	ותגעש ותרעש הארץ ומוסדי הרים ירגזו ויתגעשו כִּי־חרה לו	Ps 18:8
He bowed the heavens, and came down; thick darkness was under his feet. He rode on a cherub, and flew; he came swiftly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his covering around him, his canopy thick clouds dark with water.	עלה עשן באפו ואש־מפיו תאכל גחלים בערו ממנו	Ps 18:9
Out of the brightness before him there broke through his clouds hailstones and coals of fire.	ויט שמים וירד וערפל תחת רגליו	Ps 18:10
The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice.	וירכב על־כרוב ויעף וידא על־כנפ־רוח	Ps 18:11
And he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; he flashed forth lightnings, and routed them	ישת חשך סתרו סביבותיו סכתו חשכת־ מים עבי שחקים	Ps 18:12
Then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.	מגנה נגדו עביו עברו ברד וגחל־אש	Ps 18:13
He reached down from on high, he took me; he drew me out of mighty waters. (NRSV)	וירעם בשמים יהוה ועליון יתן קלו ברד וגחל־אש	Ps 18:14
	וישלח חציו ויפיצם וברקים רב ויהמם	Ps 18:15
	ויראו אפיקי מים ויגלו מוסדות תבל מגערתך יהוה מנשמת רוח אפך	Ps 18:16
	ישלח ממרום יקחני ימשני ממים רבים	Ps 18:17

He lifts the psalmist out of the watery depths (Ps 18:17), paralleling Jonah's ascent from the pit (Jonah 2:7). However, if this imagery is echoed in Jonah's prayer, it is rendered ironic by God's subdued response, for Yahweh, instead of coming down to save the psalmist in a grand theophany, speaks to the fish to vomit the prophet out⁸²: ויאמר יהוה לדג ויקא את־יונה אל־היבשה (and YHWH spoke to the fish and it vomited Jonah on to the dry ground [Jonah 2:11]).⁸³

the Psalm which connects Yahweh's battle with chaos with the resultant victory of the human king over his enemies. She concludes that the theophany is "integral to the message of the whole psalm." Alison Ruth Gray, *Psalm 18 in Words and Pictures: A Reading Through Metaphor*, BibInt 127 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 202.

⁸² After all, Yahweh does send the storm in Jonah 1, so Jonah's conception of Yahweh fits with the theophany in Psalm 18.

2.3.4.2 Presumption of Innocence:

Jonah's prayer, like Psalm 18, reflects a presumption of innocence, with deliverance tied not to repentance but to an assertion of righteousness and its expected reward. Jonah maintains his innocence throughout his prayer and the broader narrative, never repenting for his actions. This presumption is supported by the psalms he appears to rely on, with Psalm 18 serving as a prime example. Psalm 18:21–28 makes a very pronounced argument for the righteousness of the psalmist in the midst of his distress, portraying deliverance as the natural outcome of his moral integrity. The psalmist declares, וישב־יהוה לי בצדקי (So Yahweh has rewarded me according to my righteousness [Ps 18:24 cf. 18:20]). His righteousness is not merely acknowledged but presented as a justification for divine deliverance.

This idea aligns with Koch's view that retribution in the Hebrew Bible is less about God acting as an external cosmic judge and more about human deeds naturally generating their own consequences ("schicksalwirkender Tat" [fate-working deed]) whose workings Yahweh ensures.⁸⁴ Therefore, the plea of the psalmist to deal with him according to his righteousness is a prayer that asks God to ensure that the psalmist receives what is rightfully due to him because of his righteousness. Yahweh is expected to "return" (שוב cf. Ps 18:25) the deed to the one who

⁸³ This kind of comparison between the two psalms is reminiscent of what Julie Hughes calls "structural allusion" by which a sustained connection between two texts is seen. See her discussion of the structural allusion to the theophany in Psalm 18 in her treatment of 1QH 11:6–19 in Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions*, 203–204.

⁸⁴ Klaus Koch, "Gibt es ein Vergeltungsdogma im Alten Testament?," *ZTK* 52, no. 1 (1955): 29.

committed it.⁸⁵ Thus, deliverance from enemies is made possible on the grounds of the psalmist's righteousness.⁸⁶

Further supporting this interpretation is McCarter's argument that Jonah 2 and Psalm 18 (among other texts) reflect parallels with Mesopotamian river ordeals, where one's survival in turbulent waters served as proof of innocence.⁸⁷ In this view, Jonah's thanksgiving in the belly of the fish for a deliverance that has yet to take place is fitting, as it reflects his confidence that his righteousness will ultimately secure his rescue from distress.⁸⁸

2.3.4.3 Perception of the Enemies:

Jonah's (the character's) perception of Others in the narrative parallels the psalmic portrayal of enemies as foreigners, emphasizing a distinction between Israel and those outside its covenant community that is relevant in the broader narrative of Jonah. The characters in Jonah, other than the prophet himself, are consistently identified as existing outside the bounds of Israel. Jonah sets himself apart from them both in the way he identifies himself in chapter 1 (Jonah 1:9) and in his objection to God's sparing of Nineveh in chapter 4. While he never identifies the Others

⁸⁵ Kwakkel rightly points out that Psalm 18:21, 25 does not quite fit the theory of *schicksalwirkende Tatsphäre* (the sphere of fate-working deed) because the psalmist's צדק (righteousness) is not what God is asked to act upon but rather according to it. Gert Kwakkel, *According to My Righteousness: Upright Behaviour as Grounds for Deliverance in Psalms 7, 17, 18, 26, and 44*, OtSt 46 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 251–52. Nevertheless, he still affirms the idea that the psalmist expects Yahweh to respond to his righteous behavior appropriately. For a balanced evaluation of Koch's contribution, see Peter T. H. Hatton, "Reward and Retribution," in *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Wisdom Literature*, ed. Katherine J. Dell, Suzanna R. Millar, and Arthur Jan Keefer (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 414–32.

⁸⁶ Kwakkel surveys several psalms (7, 17, 26, 44) with this sentiment and concludes the same is true in Psalm 18. "In short, in view of the psalmist's loyalty to his God, all his was as it should have been" Kwakkel, *According to My Righteousness: Upright Behaviour as Grounds for Deliverance in Psalms 7, 17, 18, 26, and 44*, 282.

⁸⁷ P. Kyle McCarter, "The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature," *HTR* 66, no. 4 (1973): 403–12.

⁸⁸ This kind of tacit expectation for God to act in expected ways is not unlike that of Tobit who wished to die and assumed that God would grant his death wish, as Southwood has noted. Southwood, "Comical Moments," 4–5.

as his enemies, the psalms whose language he employs emphasize the identity of enemies as foreigners, those outside the communal bounds of Israel and Judah.

In Psalm 18, the identification of the enemies begins in verses 17–18, where God draws the psalmist ממים רבים (from many waters), a metaphor that is paralleled in the next two phrases, מאיבי עז (from my strong enemy), ומשנאי (from those who hate me):

He reached down	ישלח
from on high,	ממרום יקחני
he took me; he drew me	ימשני
out of mighty waters.	ממים רבים
He delivered me	יצילני
from my strong enemy,	מאיבי עז
	ומשנאי
and from those who hated me;	כי־אמצו ממני
for they were too mighty for me.	
(NRSV)	

The metaphor of many waters symbolizes the psalmist's struggle against powerful foes, equating the overwhelming threat of the waters with the might of his enemies. While the foreignness of these enemies is made explicit later in the psalm (vv. 44–50), it is also subtly hinted at in the association between the enemies and the many waters, as noted earlier.⁸⁹

To the psalmist, these foreign enemies might call upon Yahweh in their distress, but unlike the psalmist, they do not receive a response (Ps 18:42). This relationship, characterized by divine favor and deliverance, is reserved for individuals like the psalmist and, more specifically, for the king of Israel (Ps 18:51). Jonah's narrative draws on this psalmic imagery, reinforcing his

⁸⁹ Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 120–24. Plus, Isaiah 17:13 says that the nations roar like the roaring of מים רבים (many waters cf. 8:6–8; Jer 6:23). Likewise, Jeremiah describes Babylon's might as waves that roar like מים רבים (Jer 51:55).

perception of Others as outsiders who stand in contrast to Israel's privileged relationship with Yahweh.

2.3.4.4 Collective Identity

Psalm 18's depiction of the king as a corporate representative of Israel provides a lens through which Jonah's role in his narrative, and later Second Temple reuses of the psalm, can be understood. The ending of the psalm (Ps 18:51) ties Yahweh to Israel through the figure of the king, David (probably the social memory rather than tied to any text), and his offspring. In ancient Israel, kings were seen as corporate figures, acting as representatives of their people before God. Sigmund Mowinckel aptly notes, "The covenant between Yahweh and Israel and between Yahweh and David is one and the same thing...When [the king] says 'I' it is the whole Israel, who speaks through him and who appears in his person 'in the presence of Yahweh'."⁹⁰ As a royal psalm, Psalm 18 encapsulates this dynamic, portraying the king as both the embodiment and the voice of Israel before Yahweh.⁹¹ Similarly, Jonah assumes a comparable role within his narrative. It is as if Jonah (the character) identifies with the psalmist, drawing from the promise in the psalm's final verse, which assures salvation to the king and his line. Despite his non-royal heritage, Jonah appropriates this promise, presenting himself as a bearer of Israel's covenantal identity and its assurance of deliverance in times of distress.

This reimagining of Psalm 18 for broader application is not unprecedented in post-exilic communities. For instance, Hodayot 11 (1QH^a 11:6–19, and 20–35) incorporates Psalm 18, transforming its individual royal thanksgiving into a communal expression of identity and

⁹⁰ Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), 1:44.

⁹¹ Royal psalms are simply those psalms that highlight the king. They are not limited to a particular form or style. See Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1:47.

faithfulness.⁹² Similarly, Noncanonical Psalms B (4Q381), preserved in about a hundred fragments, representing psalms from around the same time as the book of Jonah (Persian/early Hellenistic period),⁹³ contains a psalm in fragment 24 lines 4–12, *Tehillah of the Man of God*, that uses language from Psalm 18 in the praise of the man of God (תהלה לאיש האל[הי]).⁹⁴ The table below shows a sample from one of the fragments which follows the sequence of Psalm 18 as we now have it.

4Q381 f24(a+b):4–12	Translation	Parallels with Psalm 18
תהלה לאיש האל[הי] ׀ יהוה אלהים --]	A psalm of the man of God. O LORD God	
גאל ליהודה מכל צָר ומאפרים ׀ --]	Free Judah from every enemy, and from Ephraim [...]	
דור. ויהללו בחיניו ויאמרו קום א[להי] --]אג[-- .]	generation. And they will praise him for his grace, and they will say, Rise, O God [...]	
שמך ישעי סלעי ומצודתי ומפלטי] -- . ביום א[ידי] --]	Your name is my deliverance, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer”, [O LORD ...] “on the day [of my...]	Psalm 18:3
אקרא ליהוה ויענני אלהי עזרתי] -- שנאי. ויאמר [--]	I cry out to the LORD”, for my God answered me. My help [...] those who hate me, and he said,	Psalm 18:7

⁹² Psalm 18 is more explicitly picked up in the next Hodayah in lines 20–35 in which the psalmist gives thanks to God for raising him to eternal heights from the depths of the pit. Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions*, 220, 229–30. This matches the general direction of Jonah’s prayer from being in the lowest regions of Sheol to the heights of the temple mount. Psalm 18 facilitates the thanksgiving of both Jonah and the writer of Hodayot for the same kind of deliverance.

⁹³ Eileen M. Schuller, *Non-Canonical Psalms from Qumran: A Pseudepigraphic Collection*, Harvard Semitic Studies 28 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986), 5.

⁹⁴ Schuller notes that both Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22 could have been behind this fragment, although she admits that in line 9, Psalm 18 is being used because 2 Samuel 22 has a shorter verse at that point. Schuller, *Non-Canonical Psalms from Qumran*, 121–22. Pajunen agrees that Psalm 18 is more prominent in this psalm than its parallel in 2 Samuel 22. Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect*, 195. See Chazon’s excellent treatment of Psalm 18 in 4Q381 in Chazon, *The Use of the Bible as a Key to Meaning in Psalms from Qumran*, 86–89, 95–96.

כי [הַצֹּדֵק] -- [לעם. ואני שׁ] -- שועתי לְפָנָיו באזניו תבוא.	Indeed [...] to the people, Psalm 18:7 “and I [...my cry] to Him shall enter His ears
וקוֹלִי מהיכלו ישמע. ותִּרְעַשׂ הארץ [ותגעש -- .] כי חרה לו עלה	Psalm 18:8 and [my] voice [He will hear in His temple”. “Then] the earth [shall tremble and shake, ...)] because he was angry, (smoke) went up
באפֿוֹ עשן -- [] כל [--] השכיל ושכל	Psalm 18:9 from [his] nostrils.[...] he gave insight, and [the] insight

It is possible that the psalmist's bold proclamation of righteousness in Psalm 18 inspired the composer of the *Tehillah* to associate it with the “man of God,” envisioning this song as one to be sung by God's “tested ones” in the future.⁹⁵ “His tested ones” (בחיניו) are, as Pajunen points out from the previous psalm (IV 16–17), those who “have lived according to God's will at all times regardless of the consequences. This is apparently the self-understanding of the group behind this psalm...”⁹⁶ The psalm's original focus on an individual king's victory in battle is thus adapted for a collective people who see their own self-perception reflected in the psalmist's experience. This psalm also picks up on the contrast within Psalm 18 between the righteous and the enemies in that the enemies may also call upon God in their distress, but they would not receive an answer from him (Ps 18:42).⁹⁷

Further analysis of 4Q381's dependence on Psalm 18 beginning in fragment 24 reveals that the relationship is not exclusive. It is not merely a pesher or some kind of exegetical appropriation

⁹⁵ Chazon, *The Use of the Bible as a Key to Meaning in Psalms from Qumran*, 89.

⁹⁶ Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect*, 190.

⁹⁷ Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect*, 191.

of one psalm.⁹⁸ Rather, as Schuller and Pajunen point out, the scroll draws from texts beyond Psalm 18 that participate in a similar dialogue of ideas. Fragment 29, column VI, line 3 combines language from Psalm 18:16d and Job 4:9.⁹⁹

At the blast of the breath of your nostrils (NRSV)	מנשמת רוח אפך (Psalm 18:16)
By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of his anger they are consumed (NRSV)	מנשמת אלוה יאבדו ומרוח אפו יכלו (Job 4:9)
At the blast of the breath of your nostrils they perish	[מנש]מת רוח אפך יאבדו (4Q381 f29:3)

A closer look at this combination shows that the connection between the two goes further than mere linguistic similarity. In the context of Job 4, Eliphaz elaborates on how the wicked suffer God's wrath as opposed to the righteous enjoying his favor. The psalmist in Psalm 18 seems to participate in the same ideology by appealing to his righteousness for deliverance from the wicked who deserve God's wrath as described in language of a cosmic theophany. So, the scribes responsible for 4Q381 are creating new inspired writings by carefully selecting language from the Psalms and Job that cohere both in language and in the ideas they communicate in their broader context.

Finally, the blending of lament and thanksgiving in 4Q381, as Chazon observes, parallels earlier discussions of Psalm 120 and Jonah 2.¹⁰⁰ Second Temple compositions like these show a

⁹⁸ Pajunen thinks that this part of the scroll is an exegetical reflection on Psalm 18 that takes up the "general setting and two major themes of Psalm 18, namely, the cry to God and its answer and the execution of divine justice." Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect*, 195. Even if Psalm 18 is the main inspiration for its composition, it can still stand on its own because of its exegetical imagination through a network of texts.

⁹⁹ Schuller, *Non-Canonical Psalms from Qumran*, 127; Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect*, 193.

¹⁰⁰ Chazon, *The Use of the Bible as a Key to Meaning in Psalms from Qumran*, 89.

remarkable fluidity in reworking older psalms, transcending modern genre and form-critical boundaries to craft innovative expressions of communal and individual identity.

2.3.5 *Expanding Multiplicity: Jonah's Psalm and the Network of Textual Resonances*

Jonah's psalm, particularly Jonah 2:3b, demonstrates a web of intertextual connections that extend far beyond a single source text, offering a rich tapestry of verbal and thematic correspondences within the Hebrew Bible and beyond.

The specific Greek translation of *בְּצַרְלִי* (in my distress) in Psalm 18:7 as *ἐν τῷ θλίβεσθαί με* (when I was afflicted) leads to a network of texts that are all interrelated.¹⁰¹ The phrase, *ἐν τῷ θλίβεσθαί*, appears eleven times in the OG, eight of which appear in the Psalms (17:7[18:7]; 105:44[106:44]; 106:6[107:6], 13, 19, 28; 119:1[120:1]), including the parallel text in 2 Samuel 22:7.¹⁰² Fascinatingly, in light of our findings in the previous section, this includes Psalm 120:1. Another psalm in this network is Psalm 107 (106 in OG), which emerges as a significant partner to Jonah's narrative.¹⁰³ Psalm 107 praises God for redeeming Israel from exile (107:2–3). While some wandered in the desert (107:4), others sat in darkness and shadow of death (107:10). God

¹⁰¹ It should be noted that the LXX doesn't consistently translate all occurrences of *בְּצַרְלִי* (in my distress) with this phrase. See for example, Deuteronomy 4:29–30, Isaiah 25:4, Hosea 5:15; Psalm 65:14 (66:14). What motivated the translators to render a noun phrase with a present middle infinitive in the 8 passages mentioned above is inconclusive.

¹⁰² The rest of them appear in Psalms of Solomon (1:1; 5:5; 15:1).

¹⁰³ In fact, 1QH^a 11:6–19 combines language from Jonah 2:3–7, Psalms 18, and 107:23–24 among other texts as Tooman and Hughes have shown. So, the connection between Jonah 2 and Psalms 18 and 107 is at least implicitly picked up by the Hodayot as evidenced in its combined use of all three texts in a new psalmic composition that conveys a similar cluster of ideas in a new context—a testament to the vitality of scripture. Tooman, “Between Imitation and Interpretation: Reuse of Scripture and Composition in Hodayot (1QH^a) 11:6–19.” Tooman does not think these intertexts come with any semantic transfer of meaning in the Hodayot, for their use is imitative and not interpretive. While it is premature and out of the bounds of this thesis to comment on the nature of intertextuality in 1QH^a 11:6–19 here, I would insist that metalepsis does open new insights into the nature of intertexts in Jonah 2. See also Hughes' treatment of 1QH 11:6–19 in which she makes mention of Psalm 107 and Jonah 2 but does not think that there are specific intertexts from these texts. But she does recognize that the ideas from those psalms are reflected in this scroll. Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions*, 200–207.

redeemed them from both the desert and death. The psalmist then proceeds to describe some who went down to the sea in ships (107:23), echoing Jonah's turbulent journey to Tarshish (107:25–28 cf. Jonah 1:4–5).¹⁰⁴ When they cried to God, He stilled the storm (107:29 cf. Jonah 1:15). To the psalmist in Psalm 107, God's deliverance of Jonah and the sailors was a picture of Israel's return from exile as he casts Israel's sins into the sea just as Jonah was hurled into the sea (Jonah 2:4 cf. Micah 7:19).¹⁰⁵ This connection is significant since, as Rudolph notes, post-exilic Judah was a small landlocked state and ancient Israel did not have a comfortable relationship with the sea or seafaring. This is why in the psalter only Psalm 107 describes distress at sea.¹⁰⁶ And the story of Jonah is the other example of an Israelite marine expedition.

In sum, Jonah 2:3b displays surface-level verbal connections to Psalm 18 (among other texts) and a deep thematic correspondence that helps illuminate Jonah's possible motivation for reliance upon Psalm 18. Jonah's use of Psalm 18 is further corroborated by 4Q381 and the Hodayot, the latter of which uses Jonah 2:3 in combination with Psalm 18 and other network of texts at play in Jonah's psalm which will be teased out throughout this chapter. Consequently, Wolff is correct to assume literary dependence on Psalm 18. As to Psalm 31, I will deal with it in Jonah 2:5 where there is a more explicit intertext. Ultimately, Jonah 2:3's dependence on Psalm

¹⁰⁴ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 107. The verb ירד (to descend) is used in both passages (Jon 1:3 cf. Ps 107:23) to describe descent into the sea away from the presence of God. For more correlations between the book of Jonah and Psalm 107, see Timothy J. Stone, "Following the Church Fathers: An Intertextual Path from Psalm 107 to Isaiah, Jonah, and Matthew 8:23–27," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 7, no. 1 (2013): 45–48. See also Hunter's discussion of the connection between Psalm 107 and Jonah in Hunter, *The Judgement of Jonah*, 167–69.

¹⁰⁵ Stone, "Following the Church Fathers," 46–47. This psalm provides an important link to see Jonah's prayer as indicative of Israel's cry to God in exile.

¹⁰⁶ Wilhelm Rudolph, *Joel - Amos - Obadja - Jona*, KAT (Stuttgart: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1971), 352–53. See also the discussion by Almbldh, *Studies in the Book of Jonah*, 9–15.

18 reveals a broader interaction between the book of Jonah and Psalm 18, further integrating Jonah's psalm in the book.

2.4 Cast into the Sea: Recalling Exile through the Exodus (Jonah 2:4a)

Verse 4a in the MT presents a few text critical issues:

ותשליכני מצולה בלבב ימים ונהר יסבבני

And you cast me into the deep, into the heart of seas, and the underwater river surrounded me

This line is largely attested by 4Q82 and Mur88 respectively with the exception of ימים (seas) which can be safely reconstructed in the lacuna.¹⁰⁷

ות[שליכני מצולה בלבב ימים ונהר] יסבבני

ותשליכני מצולה בלבב [ימים ונהר] יסבבני

The OG read this verse somewhat differently than the Hebrew witnesses:

ἀπέρριψάς με εἰς βάθη καρδίας θαλάσσης, καὶ ποταμοὶ με ἐκύκλωσαν

You cast me into the depths of the heart of the sea, and the rivers surrounded me

It has four minor differences in rendering this verse: the *waw* prefix is not represented at the beginning of the verse, מצולה (depth) is rendered by a plural noun βάθη (depths), ימים (seas) with a singular θαλάσσης (sea), and נהר (river) with a plural ποταμοί (rivers). But the Nahal Hever Greek Minor Prophets scroll differs with the OG in all four instances and agrees with the MT:¹⁰⁸

[καὶ ἀ]πέρριψάς με [ε εἰ]ς βάθ[ος] [ἐν καρδίᾳ θαλασσῶν, καὶ ποταμ]ὸς περιεκύκλωσ[έ]ν με [ε·]

Cross makes much of the first difference by positing that the OG reading is original and reflects an archaic feature of the poem because the *yiqtol* verb is rendered as a past tense, showing signs

¹⁰⁷ Beate Ego et al., eds., *Minor Prophets*, Biblia Qumranica 3B (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 83.

¹⁰⁸ Tov, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll*, 84. Ego et al., *Minor Prophets*, 82. Aquila also emends similarly: καὶ ἐρριψας με ἐν βυθῷ καρδίας θαλασσῶν (and you cast me into the depths of the heart of the seas).

of the *yaqtul* preterite.¹⁰⁹ While that does explain some of the oddities in the OG and in the verbal stems in the MT, Cross extends his thesis too far in proposing emendations based on metrical and diachronic linguistic theories which find no support in the versions. It is simpler to assume that the OG displays these differences for stylistic reasons. Despite all the differences, the MT preserves an ancient reading just as in the previous verse, so we can proceed to see what intertextual resonances this line exudes.

The editors of the BHS suggest deleting either *מצולה* or *בלבב ימים* with one of them being a gloss of the other. Some scholars extend this suggestion, but Sasson demonstrates that it is unnecessary to delete either of these words because they complement each other by conveying different shades of meaning in describing the plight of the prophet.¹¹⁰ He does so by showing how each of these words are used in different texts of the Hebrew Bible. I will investigate this line similarly by analyzing parallel texts for possible intertextual allusions.

2.4.1 *Verbal Resonance: Connections between Jonah 2:4a, Exodus 15, Ezekiel 27–28, and Psalm 102*

While no direct parallel to Jonah 2:4a exists in the Hebrew Bible, the Qumran fragment 4Q158 intriguingly combines Jonah 2:4a and Exodus 15:5, 8, hinting at a possible intertextual connection between the two. 4Q158, initially titled “Biblical Paraphrase: Genesis, Exodus” but later grouped with 4QReworked Pentateuch has a fragment that contains what Molly Zahn calls a

¹⁰⁹ Frank Moore Cross, “Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Verse: The Prosody of the Psalm of Jonah,” in *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall*, ed. H. B. Huffmon, F. A. Spina, and A. R. W. Green (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 161. But it is confusing when on the next page, Cross argues for a singular rendering of *נהר* because of its “mythological redolence” even though the OG has a plural. So, the OG does not reflect an archaic reading in this instance, making Cross’ thesis inconsistent. Despite this, the newest Anchor Bible Commentary on Jonah follows Cross’ suggestions. Graybill, Kaltner, and McKenzie, *Jonah*, 196–97.

¹¹⁰ Sasson, *Jonah*, 175. Weimar observes brilliantly that *מצולה* here is probably inspired by Psalm 69:3 and 16. Weimar, *Jona*, 245. We will see how Psalm 69 figures into Jonah’s psalm in a later section.

“paraphrase” of Exodus 6 and 15 along with new material.¹¹¹ Notably, fragment 14, lines 7–8, include language strikingly similar to Jonah 2:4a. A good reconstruction is given in the *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*:

(of your sons I shall [cause to live in the la]nd in security [... And Egypt I shall hurl into] the middle of the sea, into the depths 8 of the abyss [...] who dwell)¹¹²

4Q158 f14:7–8
בניכה א[ושיב בא]רץ לבטח ל[... ואת
מצרים השלכתי ב]לבב ים במצו[ל]ות 8
תהום [...] אשר יישבו

And you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas. And the underwater river surrounded me
The deep covered them; they went down into the depths like a stone.
At the blow of your nostrils the waters heaped up. The floods stood up like a wall. The deep condensed in the heart of the sea

Jonah 2:4a ותשליכני מצולה בלבב ימים ונהר יסבבני

Exodus 15:5, 8
תהמת יכסימו ירדו במצולת כמו-אבן
וברוח אפיך נערמו מים נצבו כמו-נד נזלים
קפאו תהמת בלב-ים

Zahn rightly notes the linguistic resonance in these lines with Exodus 15:5 and 8. But she does not note the other parallel in these lines to Jonah 2:4a. Lange and Weigold note this parallel, however.¹¹³ Given the closeness of language (even though the first word is part of a reasonable reconstruction), we might even suspect if the scribe responsible for 4Q158 relied on Jonah 2 to recall the events of Exodus 14–15 just as we saw in 4Q381 f29:3 which combines two different poetic texts.¹¹⁴ The rare phrase בלבב ימים (in the heart of the seas) appears in both texts and is

¹¹¹ Molly M. Zahn, *Rethinking Rewritten Scripture: Composition and Exegesis in the 4QReworked Pentateuch Manuscripts*, STDJ 95 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 59.

¹¹² Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 308–309.

¹¹³ Lange and Weigold, *Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Jewish Literature*, 332.

¹¹⁴ Segall notes the closeness of language to Jonah 2:4 in passing but does not elaborate upon it. Michael Segal, “Biblical Exegesis in 4Q158: Techniques and Genre,” *Textus* 19 (1998): 55.

unique within the Hebrew Bible, where לבב (heart) is otherwise not used to describe inanimate objects.¹¹⁵ This linguistic resonance suggests that the scribe of 4Q158 may have been influenced by Jonah 2:4a when reimagining the Exodus narrative, allowing us to read Jonah 2:4 in light of Exodus 15 and its paraphrase in 4Q158.

The verb ותשליכני (you cast me) in Jonah 2:4a further strengthens the connection to Exodus 15. Although Exodus 15 uses different verbs to describe Egypt's casting into the sea (e.g., 15:1, 4, 21), later texts such as Nehemiah 9:11 and Micah 7:19 recount the event using the *hiphil* form of שלך (to cast):¹¹⁶

And you divided the sea before them, so that they passed through the sea on dry land, but you threw their pursuers into the depths, like a stone into mighty waters (NRSV)	והים בקעת לפניהם ויעברו בתוך-הים ביבשה ואת־רדפיהם השלכת במצולת כמו־אבן במים עזים	Nehemiah 9:11
He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. (NRSV)	שוב ירחמנו יכבש עונתינו ותשליך במצלות ים כל־חטאותם	Micah 7:19
You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the underwater river surrounded me.	ותשליכני מצולה בלבב ימים ונהר יסבבני	Jonah 2:4a

The use of שלך (to cast) in Jonah 2:4a has been thought to have missed the opportunity to better integrate the psalm into the narrative since the first chapter repeatedly uses a synonym טול (to

¹¹⁵ Sasson, *Jonah*, 175. Fascinatingly, 4Q158 also has plural of מצולה (deep) and singular of ימים (seas) just like the OG's translation of Jonah 2:4a. Did the OG translator revert back to language he knows is typical from other texts like Exodus 14–15 in his translation of Jonah 2:4a?

¹¹⁶ To be sure, this root only occurs in *hiphil* and *hophal* in the Hebrew Bible. More specifically, in the poetic laments of the Psalms and the book of Jonah, this root appears with Yahweh as the subject and an individual as the object. W. Thiel, “שלך,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 15:95. But only Micah 7:19 and Nehemiah 9:11 share מצולה with Jonah 2.

throw cf. Jonah 1:4, 5, 12, 15).¹¹⁷ But given the association of שלך (to cast) with the Exodus in Nehemiah and Micah, it plays an important allusive role.¹¹⁸ Upon closer examination, Exodus 15 and Jonah 2 are closely related as Hunter¹¹⁹ and Vermeulen¹²⁰ have already demonstrated.

This association with Exodus 15 ties Jonah's experience to the Egyptians' fate in the Exodus, introducing an ironic undertone to Jonah's suffering. Rather than aligning with Israel's deliverance, Jonah's descent into the sea echoes the judgment against Egypt. Far from being a righteous sufferer, Jonah is suffering the same fate as that of the ancient enemies of Israel in the Exodus.¹²¹

This irony is compounded by Jonah's (the author's) possible reliance on Ezekiel 27–28, where בלב ימים (in the heart of the seas) appears multiple times to describe Tyre's pride and its

¹¹⁷ Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 160. Graybill, Kaltner, and McKenzie, *Jonah*, 196. Fascinatingly, the root טול is associated with the Babylonian exile in Jeremiah 16:13 (cf. 22:26, 28). Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, "Jonah, the Eternal Fugitive: Exploring the Intertextuality of Jonah's Flight in the Bible and Its Later Reception," in *Images of Exile in the Prophetic Literature*, ed. Jesper Høgenhaven, Frederik Poulsen, and Cian Power (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 264. But the psalm of Jonah seemingly wants to also draw upon Exodus traditions in addition to the exile with the root שלך.

¹¹⁸ Opgen-Rhein suggests that the use of a synonym here is to create distance between the narrative and the psalm. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 180. More interesting is Sasson's suggestion that טול in chapter 1 is used of God and the sailors whereas שלך is only reserved for God in chapter 2. Sasson, *Jonah*, 174. But he does not show why שלך would be exclusively related to God. The allusive connotations from Nehemiah 9:11 and Micah 7:19 might help strengthen this point.

¹¹⁹ Alastair G. Hunter, "Jonah from the Whale: Exodus Motifs in Jonah 2," in *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character and Anonymous Artist*, ed. Johannes C. de Moor, OTL 45 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 142–58.

¹²⁰ Jacques Vermeulen, "La prière de Jonas (Jon 2) et le cantique de Moïse (Ex 15)," in *Écritures Et Réécritures: La Reprise Interprétative Des Traditions Fondatrices Par La Littérature Biblique Et Extra-Biblique*, ed. Claire Clivaz et al., BETL 248 (Paris: Peeters, 2012), 185–98.

¹²¹ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 181. Furthermore, on page 189, Opgen-Rhein astutely points out that if the connection to the narrative and psalm of Exodus 14–15 is extended to Jonah 1–2, then the salvation of the pagan sailors corresponds to the salvation of Israel in Exodus 14 with Jonah taking the place of Egypt.

eventual judgment in the sea.¹²² בלבב ימים (in the heart of the seas) has a close connection with בלב ימים (in the heart of the seas) which occurs six times in Ezekiel (27:4, 25, 26, 27; 28:2, 8).¹²³ Ezekiel prophesies against Tyre and the prince of Tyre, denouncing their pride for being over the בלב ימים (in the heart of the seas). They even do business with Tarshish (Ezek 27:12), whose ships travelled for their trade “in the heart of the seas” (בלב ימים Ezek 27:25). However, their judgement is that they will sink בלב ימים (in the heart of the seas) just like Egypt in the Exodus:

Your riches, your wares, your merchandise, your mariners and your pilots, your caulkers, your dealers in merchandise, and all your warriors within you, with all the company that is with you, sink into the heart of the seas on the day of your ruin (NRSV)

Ezekiel 27:27 הונך ועזבוניך מערבך מלחיד וחבליך מחזיקי בדקך וערבי מערבך וכל-אנשי מלחמתך אשר-בך ובכל-קהלך אשר בתוכך יפלו בלב ימים ביום מפלתך

Jonah's use of this phrase places him in uncomfortable company with Egypt and Tyre—two symbols of pride and divine judgment. This is irony on the level of the author rather than from the perspective of the prophet.

We can also think of the character of Jonah alluding to Ezekiel, which raises the question, “Why does Jonah, who seems to think of himself as righteous, utilize language associated with Egypt and Tyre?” Perhaps that is his lament in this verse, an accusation against Yahweh not unlike that of Job—the world is out of place with the righteous Hebrew in the sea instead of Egypt and

¹²² Berger, *Jonah in the Shadows of Eden*, 24–28. Day and Erickson also note the dependence on Ezekiel 26–27 in Day, “Problems in the Interpretation of the Book of Jonah,” 34. Erickson, *Jonah*, 323–24.

¹²³ As pointed out earlier, בלבב ימים (in the heart of the seas) is a curiously unique phrase in the Hebrew Bible because לבב (heart) is not used of inanimate objects except one other time in the Samaritan Pentateuch in Deuteronomy 4:11, עד לבב השמים (up the heart of the skies). Is the author of Jonah's psalm elevating the seas from being inanimate to more of a personification of the seas found in mythological realms?

Tyre.¹²⁴ But Jonah is also certain that God will make things right. After all, Yahweh shows himself to be blameless with the blameless (Ps 18:26). This is hinted at by the *polel* verb יִסְבֵּבֵנִי which, as Sasson points out, has a protective rather than hostile connotation in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Deut 32:10; Ps 32:10). Sasson further suggests imagining that “even as Jonah drowns, God is warding death away from him,” revealing a paradox where Jonah’s lament against divine justice intertwines with his unwavering trust in divine deliverance.¹²⁵

Beyond the connection to Exodus 15 through 4Q158, the language of Jonah 2:4a also seems to recall Psalm 102. The Masora magna on וְתִשְׁלִיכֵנִי (and you cast me) insightfully notes that the verb in that specific form occurs twice in the Hebrew Bible—Jonah 2:4a and Psalm 102:11. This connection by itself may not mean much as most of the notes in the Masora are not exegetically motivated. But the fuller phrase in Psalm 102:11, כִּי נִשְׂאתָנִי וְתִשְׁלִיכֵנִי (for you lifted me up and cast me down), has far-reaching resonance with the book of Jonah, especially with Jonah 1:12 where Jonah instructs the sailors to שְׂאוּנִי וְהִטְלֵנִי אֶל־הַיָּם (lift me up and cast me into the sea).¹²⁶ The unique form of the verb in Jonah 2:4a with its only parallel in Psalm 102:11 not only adds variety to the writing, but also a potential intertextual link to Psalm 102. This link to Psalm 102 is strengthened by the previous mention of it in discussing שְׂוַעֲתִי in Jonah 2:3b with reference to how the OG translated the verb as a noun because of its different vocalization in Psalm 102:2.

¹²⁴ Weimar, *Jona*, 247.

¹²⁵ Sasson, *Jonah*, 176.

¹²⁶ The verb טָלַח (to throw) is repeated in Jonah 1, but the poetic retelling of Jonah’s being cast into the sea in 2:4a does not utilize this verb. Instead, it opts for the more common synonym שָׁלַח (to cast). Plus, וְתִשְׁלִיכֵנִי (and you cast me) here introduces a discrepancy from chapter 1 where the sailors cast Jonah into the sea, not Yahweh as the psalm says. Is this a missed opportunity to better integrate the psalm into the book? Or does it point to Jonah’s twisted sense of reality as Barrett has argued? Rob Barrett, “Meaning More than They Say: The Conflict between YHWH and Jonah,” *JSOT* 37, no. 2 (2012): 244. Perhaps. Could there be another literary reason for this discrepancy? Weimar grants that the change in verb could be under the influence of the Psalms. Weimar, *Jona*, 245. Golka is more certain that the verb has been changed “under the influence of Ps. 102:10.” Golka, “Divine Repentance,” 95.

Moreover, the same verse from Psalm 102 also has resonances with Jonah 2:8b, showing multiplicity in its relationship to Jonah 2.

So, what is the significance of this relationship? Perhaps the link to Psalm 102:11 facilitates the theologizing of the sailors' actions in chapter 1 of lifting up and throwing Jonah overboard—introducing divine agency behind the sailors' actions in chapter 1.¹²⁷ The sailors were only God's instruments in casting Jonah into the sea. Sweeney sees this as a “very self-serving critique of YHWH's actions by the prophet; he relates how YHWH placed him in a situation of threat but says nothing about his own actions that led to this turn of events.”¹²⁸ Psalm 102's reflection on personal suffering and lament as related to exile further deepens this connection with Jonah's experience in the psalm as an exilic suffering brought upon by God himself, complementing and extending the scope of Jonah's suffering as in Psalm 107.¹²⁹

Jonah 2:4a draws on a network of intertexts, including Exodus 15, Ezekiel 27–28, and Psalm 102, to convey a multilayered narrative of judgment, exile, and divine intervention. These connections illuminate Jonah's (the character's) poetic recital of a psalm as both a personal lament and a broader reflection on Israel's history, positioning Jonah as a figure caught between divine justice and mercy. These themes are prominent in both Jonah's psalm and the book's narrative, indicating that—far from being a secondary or ill-fitting addition—the psalm engages directly with ideas central to the book of Jonah as a whole.

¹²⁷ Opgen-Rhein talks about “Theologisierung” (theologizing) of events in the story of Jonah in the psalm. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 190.

¹²⁸ Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, BOSHNP (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 1:320.

¹²⁹ W. H. Bellinger, “Psalm 102: Lament and Theology in an Exilic Setting,” in “*My Words Are Lovely*”: *Studies in the Rhetoric of the Psalms*, ed. Robert L. Foster and David M. Howard, LHBOTS 467 (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 147–55.

2.5 Sea Billows and Psalms: Quoting Psalm 42 (Jonah 2:4b)

One of the clearest intertexts in Jonah's psalm appears in the last line of verse 4:

כל־משברִיךְ וגליךְ עלי עברו

all your breakers and your waves passed over me

This line is found in Mur88 as follows:

כָּל מִשְׁבְּרִיךְ וְגִלְיָךְ עָלַי עָבְרוּ

4Q82 complements this reading with

כֹּל מִשְׁבְּרִיכָהּ וְגִלְיָכָה עָלַי עָבְרוּ¹³⁰

The OG rendering of this line is without any difference:

πάντες οἱ μετεωρισμοί σου καὶ τὰ κύματά σου ἐπ' ἐμὲ διῃλθον¹³¹

All your breakers and your waves passed upon me

Aquila renders משברִיךְ (your breakers) as συντριμμοί σου (your crushings) rather than οἱ μετεωρισμοί σου (your breakers). Fascinatingly, the only other time משבר (breaker) is translated as συντριμμοί is found in 2 Samuel 22:5 where it differs from its parallel in Psalm 18:5. Did Aquila, known for his literalism, stray away from preserving the Hebrew form here to hint at the connection to 2 Samuel 22:5?¹³² This complicates the relationship between Jonah 2 and Psalm 18 as discussed in the previous section, at least for one later Greek tradition. For Aquila, perhaps it is not so much textual dependence on one version of the psalm but on a more abstract tradition of the

¹³⁰ The plene spelling in כֹּל (all) is characteristic of Qumran Hebrew orthography, as is the extra ה in משברִיכָה (your breakers).

¹³¹ Symmachus has οἱ γχοφοί σου (your thick darkness) for משברִיךְ (your breakers), which defies any explanation.

¹³² Aquila is certainly able to do this despite attempts to portray him as slavishly literal. See Timothy Edwards, "Aquila in the Psalter: A Prolegomenon," in *Greek Scripture and the Rabbis*, ed. T. M. Law and Alison Salvesen, CBET 66 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 87–106.

psalm which finds expression in two different psalms. Whatever may be happening with Aquilla, the compelling nature and volume of the textual evidence suggests that the MT represents an ancient reading.

2.5.1 *Verbal Resonance*

The apparent parallel to Jonah 2:4b is found word-for-word in Psalm 42:8, כל־משברִיךְ וגִּלִּיךְ (all your breakers and your waves passed over me). Rudolph says that this phrase is the only verbatim quotation in the whole psalm taken from Psalm 42:8b, therefore, he thinks that it is likely a gloss, which has the added advantage of making all the verses from 4–10 the same length.¹³³ This view raises more questions than answers because it assumes that the whole poetic line is secondary to the psalm just because it is a verbatim quote, but his observation about Psalm 42:8 still stands. Jonah 2:4b does reflect the exact wording as Psalm 42:8, inviting further investigation since this is the first time a phrase has been repeated from the Psalms in Jonah's psalm without any modification.

What could be the significance of this intertext? Does it come from Psalm 42:8? Or is it simply a stock phrase available to anyone in a similar circumstance at sea?¹³⁴ Or perhaps it does come from Psalm 42:8 but without any consideration of its meaning in Psalm 42. The indicators of literary dependence prove useful in navigating these questions.

¹³³ Rudolph, *Joel - Amos - Obadja - Jona*, 346. On the other hand, Weimar thinks the quotational nature of this line means that it goes back to the same hand that is responsible for Jonah 2:3a which is a citation from Psalm 120:1. Weimar, *Jona*, 244–45.

¹³⁴ Kaplan argues that this quotation is merely an echo, without any intertextual import, because Jonah's psalm is a thanksgiving psalm and Psalm 42 is a lament. Kaplan, "Pastiche, Hyperbole, and the Composition of Jonah's Prayer," 36. But such formal limitations for intertextual reuse are questionable.

2.5.2 Availability

Does the MT of Psalm 42:8 reflect an ancient extant tradition which would have been available to the author of Jonah's psalm? The earliest Hebrew textual evidence for Psalm 42 comes from three fragmentary Qumran scrolls: 4Q85, 4Q98d, and 11Q8, which preserve parts of Psalm 42:5 and 43:1–3. Furthermore, the OG translation of Psalm 42:8 matches exactly with Jonah 2:4b, suggesting that the MT of Psalm 42:8 is corroborated by the Greek tradition.

In antiquity, Psalms 42 and 43 likely existed as a single psalm. This conclusion is supported by their shared threefold refrain (42:6, 12; 43:5), the repetition of 42:10b in 43:2b, and their thematic and textual unity.¹³⁵ Even if they were distinct compositions, their placement together in the Psalter indicates that they were interpreted and read as a cohesive unity by its editors. Together, these psalms form a lament of God's afflicted people in a foreign land, culminating in a petition and a vow of praise. As Zenger notes, Psalms 42–43 were probably an early exilic prayer, particularly because Jonah 2:4 and Joel 1:20, 2:17 appear to presuppose it.¹³⁶

For the purposes of avoiding circular reasoning, Jonah 2:4 should be excluded as evidence for dating Psalms 42–43. However, Joel 1:20 (which shares the rare verb עָרַג with Psalm 42:2) and 2:17 suggest that Psalms 42–43 predates both Joel and Jonah, making this available for the author of Jonah to use in his psalm. Still, availability does not imply dependence, especially since there is no modification to the intertext.

¹³⁵ Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms Part 1 with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry*, FOTL 14 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 178. Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, trans. Hilton C. Oswald, vol. 1, CC (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 437. BHS notes that multiple Masoretic manuscripts join the two psalms.

¹³⁶ Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Die Psalmen I: Psalm 1–50*, vol. 1, KAT 29 (Stuttgart: Echter Verlag, 1993), 266.

2.5.3 *Partial Integration*

This poetic line in Jonah 2:4b does not quite make sense in the psalm when read within story of Jonah, indicating its origin elsewhere. Magonet observes that the second masculine singular suffixes on the two nouns in this line stand out within the psalm since no other nouns in the psalm share these suffixes. For this reason, he argues that the line was taken from Psalm 42:8 without alteration.¹³⁷

Finally, one must consider why Psalm 42:8 might be invoked in Jonah 2:4 apart from the fact that the author of Jonah's psalm needed language to express a watery turmoil. Here, evidence of multiplicity and thematic correspondence can clarify the rationale behind the connection.

2.5.4 *Multiplicity*

The immediately preceding line to Psalm 42:8b reads תהום-אל-תהום קורא לקול צנורִיד (Deep calls to deep at the thunder of your fountains) and Jonah 2:6 similarly describes תהום (deep) surrounding the psalmist. Additionally, Theodotion renders מצולה (depth) in 2:4a with ἀβυσσος (abyss), the standard Greek translation for תהום, as is evident from the translation of Jonah 2:6 and Psalm 42:8 (41:8).¹³⁸ Similarly, the Targum interprets שאול (Sheol) in Jonah 2:3 as תהומא (the deep), further reinforcing a shared conceptual framework.

Another possible point of verbal contact is in Psalm 43:3b: יביאוני אל-הר-קדשך ואל- משכנותיך (they will bring me to your holy hill and to your dwellings), which corresponds to the twice repeated phrase אל-היכל קדשך (to your holy temple) in Jonah 2:5 and 8. DeWette notes

¹³⁷ Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 44. However, such an argument is not conclusive. The poet of Jonah's psalm could recall and modify intertexts freely, as evidenced in the adaptation of Psalm 120:1 in Jonah 2:3a. Still, the suffixes in Jonah's psalm do feel out of place, potentially pointing to partial integration or even a lack of deliberate integration.

¹³⁸ Job 41:23(22) is one other time that מצולה is translated as ἀβυσσος. Erickson thinks Theodotion's translation here hints at mythological connotations of מצולה. Erickson, *Jonah*, 321.

another point of contact between these two psalms: Psalm 42:5 in Jonah 2:10, particularly in the shared cultic context. The phrases בקול־רנה ותודה (with the voice of gladness and thanksgiving [Ps 42:5]) and ואני בקול תודה (But I, with a voice of thanksgiving,...[Jonah 2:10]) both evoke the setting of temple worship.¹³⁹

Other than these three instances, there does not seem to be any more evidence of multiplicity between the two texts, which makes one wonder if the connection is merely a convenient repetition of one line without much metaleptic significance—a sort of a stock phrase. This is the view of Susan Niditch who says “such a recurrence of language is not a matter of quotation or anthologizing but an indication of an author’s immersion in a culturally shared corpus of traditional means of expressing particular moods, emotions, settings, or other content.”¹⁴⁰ While this view has merit, it risks overlooking the broader and intricately woven interrelationships between Jonah’s prayer and specific textual traditions. As observed in the first three lines of Jonah’s psalm, these connections suggest a dynamic engagement with traditional texts that may go beyond mere repetition. Thus, while Psalm 42:8b and Jonah 2:4 may initially appear to share a stock phrase, their correspondence might reflect a richer literary and theological interaction.

2.5.5 *Thematic Correspondence*

This section evaluates whether, as Opgen-Rhein argues, the conceptual correspondence of Psalm 42–43 prompted the borrowing of the phrase from Psalm 42:8 in Jonah 2:4.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ DeWette, “Die Einleitung,” 464.

¹⁴⁰ Niditch, *Jonah*, 74.

¹⁴¹ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 183–84.

2.5.5.1 The Petitioners' Perspective: Longing for the temple in watery exile

Both Jonah's psalm and Psalms 42–43 explore the tension between distance from God's presence in the temple and the hope of restoration, with vivid imagery that conveys the journey from separation to communion with God. In Psalms 42–43, the psalmist's longing for God's presence unfolds in a trajectory resembling the Psalms of Ascent but condensed into three stanzas.¹⁴² The first stanza (Ps 42:1–6) begins with the image of a deer longing for streams of water, presumably in a desert. Such is the psalmist's longing for God, prompting him to ask when he can come and see the face of God (Ps 42:3). Until then, his only source of water is his own tears amidst mockery from his enemies (Ps 42:4).¹⁴³ His hope is fixed on a time when he can go to the house of God with a multitude in celebration of a festival (Ps 42:5–6). The second stanza (Ps 42:7–12) adds texture to the desert places where God's presence is scant—the lands of Jordan, Hermon, and mount Mizar (Ps 42:7). This is very much like Kedar and Meshech in Psalm 120:5, which signify distance from God and his land.¹⁴⁴ As opposed to the parched land of the first stanza, deep waters and fountains are invoked to describe the psalmist's distress in these lands (Ps 42:8). But God's love and song are with him day and night as he prays for deliverance from these waters (Ps 42:9). If the first stanza depicts a multitude of worshippers with the psalmist, the second stanza pictures the hostile group who mock and oppress the psalmist, compounding his longing for God's presence by saying, “Where is your God?” (Ps 42:10–11). He comforts himself with the same refrain as in the first stanza by hoping in a time when he can go to worship God (Ps 42:12). The third stanza (Ps 43:1–5) petitions God to save the psalmist from his enemies by sending his light

¹⁴² Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 1:265. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 184.

¹⁴³ Else K. Holt, “‘...Ad Fontes Aquarum’: God as Water in the Psalms?,” in *Metaphors in the Psalms*, ed. Pierre Van Hecke and Antje Labahn, BETL 231 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 74.

¹⁴⁴ Weiser, *Psalms*, 348.

and truth to guide him to the holy hill and sacrifice before God with gladness and singing. The most explicit cultic references come at the end in Psalm 43:4 where the psalmist is supposed to end his journey to the temple. This offsets the parched desert of the first stanza and the chaotic waters of foreign lands where God's presence is but the subject of the enemy's taunt. Now, the psalmist delights in the full experience of God's presence in the temple where rather than drink his tears, he feasts with God (Ps 42:4).

Both the themes of God's presence and the psalmists' proximity to the land of Israel are at play in the book of Jonah. God's presence plays a centrifugal (a movement away from the center) and centripetal role (a movement towards the center) in the book of Jonah. The first chapter describes the prophet trying to flee from the face of God whereas chapter 2 shows his longing to go back to God's holy sanctuary where his presence resides. It is in this context that Jonah (the character) quotes Psalm 42, whose context intersects very conveniently with that of Jonah's. Joppa, the sea, and Tarshish in the book of Jonah signify similar ideas of distance from God and the land as Jordan, Hermon, and Mount Mizar in Psalm 42, for Jonah flees from God from Joppa via the sea to Tarshish. While the association with Psalm 120 and the same ideas of pilgrimage and God's presence in that psalm are only available through careful analysis of the allusion and the collection of the Psalms of Ascent, the clearer connection with Psalm 42–43 readily brings those ideas to the forefront.

2.5.5.2 Perception of the Enemies:

The psalmist's enemies in Psalms 42–43 are characterized as hostile foreigners, reflecting a theme that illuminates both the narrative and psalm of Jonah. The first encounter of the enemies of the psalmist in Psalm 42 comes in verse 4 where they mock him all day long saying, "Where is your God?" The same derision is repeated in verse 11, hinting at their identity—they do not share

the same God as the psalmist. Kraus notes that this question is usually asked by non-Israelites.¹⁴⁵ This is confirmed by the geographical location from which the psalmist seems to pray: the lands of Jordan and Hermon, and Mount Mizar. These lands are not known to share the same religious beliefs as the land of Israel. They are described as **אויב** (enemy) and **צַרֵּר** (adversary [42:10, 11]). More explicitly, they are called **גוי לא־חָסִיד** (a nation that is not faithful) in 43:1. Psalm 43:1 has further descriptions of this unfaithful nation: **אִישׁ־מְרֵמָה וְעוֹלָה** (man of deceit and wickedness). This is similar to how the psalmist in Psalm 120:2–3 describes his enemies. Curiously, Jonah (the character) has something similar to say about his enemies in Jonah 2:9, **מַשְׁמֵרִים הַבְּלִי־שׁוֹא חֶסֶדִם**, **יַעֲזֹבוּ** (those who worship vain things abandon their faithfulness).

❖ 2.5.5.2.1 *Chaotic waters as a metaphor for foreign nations*

The use of water imagery in Psalm 42:8 serves as a metaphor for the psalmist's experience of exile, mirroring Jonah's poetic depiction of his plight. Psalm 42:8 introduces the imagery of **תְּהוֹם־אֶל־תְּהוֹם קוֹרָא לְקוֹל צְנוּרִיד כָּל־מִשְׁבְּרִיד וְגִלְדִּי עָלַי עֲבָרוּ** (Deep calls to deep at the thunder of your fountains; all your breakers and your waves passed over me), which seems incongruous with the preceding desert imagery. If anything, water was associated with God's presence at the beginning of the psalm where it presents the image of a parched deer longing for streams of water to quench its thirst (Ps 42:2–3). So, why would the psalmist be drowning away from God in deep, primordial fountains where God's breakers and waves cross over him? The picture of a desert does not invite the imagery of a watery death; it invokes just the opposite—death from thirst and starvation. So, what does verse 8 convey with its unexpected and unsustained metaphor? Sasson thinks verse 8

¹⁴⁵ Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 1:439.

fits better in Jonah 2 than in Psalm 42.¹⁴⁶ But a closer look at the context of the second stanza (42:7–11) might give us the clue to the significance of verse 8 and its implications on Jonah's psalm.

The second stanza (Ps 42:7–11) adds texture to the image of a desert in the first (Ps 42:1–6) with the lands of Jordan, Hermon, and mount Mizar signifying the desert places where God is not found. They stand in opposition to the temple where God dwells. Verse 8 metaphorizes the psalmist's alienation with the imagery of the deep, floods, breakers, and waves. What if these metaphors refer to the psalmist's experience of exile among foreign nations?¹⁴⁷ The first mention of water is metaphorized in 42:2b–3a—God is the fresh water in the desert for whom the psalmist longs.¹⁴⁸ So, continuity and contrast with the water imagery in the second stanza also warrants metaphorization. Verse 8 asserts that God sends his chaos waters to encompass the psalmist who is parched for fresh water. מִשְׁבֵּר (breaker) appears five times in the Hebrew Bible where it does not refer to natural phenomenon except perhaps in Jonah 2:4 (cf 2 Sam 22:5; Pss 42:8; 88:8; 93:4). It denotes primordial waters of chaos which constantly undermine the stability and order of creation. These mythological waters that endanger life in Psalm 93:4 and 2 Samuel 22:5 are now said to belong to God in Psalm 42:8 and 88:8, which he uses to punish the psalmist.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Sasson, *Jonah*, 176. Wilson thinks that Psalm 42:8 borrowed this phrase from Jonah 2:4. Wilson, "The Authenticity of Jonah," 439.

¹⁴⁷ This is not to say that Psalm 42 is about the Babylonian exile. It might just be about an individual "exile," an emotional homelessness. But it can still think of a personal exile metaphorically just as later books metaphorize exile in different ways. Cf. Martien A. Halvorson-Taylor, *Enduring Exile: The Metaphorization of Exile in the Hebrew Bible*, VTSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

¹⁴⁸ Holt, "'...Ad Fontes Aquarum': God as Water in the Psalms?," 75.

¹⁴⁹ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 182.

Just what do these waters refer to in Psalm 42:8? As Holt points out, the logic here is similar to that of Isaiah 8:6–8:¹⁵⁰

Because this people has refused the waters of Shiloah that flow gently, and melt in fear before Rezin and the son of Remaliah; therefore, the Lord is bringing up against it the mighty flood waters of the River, the king of Assyria and all his glory; it will rise above all its channels and overflow all its banks; it will sweep on into Judah as a flood, and, pouring over, it will reach up to the neck; and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel (NRSV).

The contrast between the gentle waters of Shiloah and the mighty flood waters of the river (Euphrates) which will flood the land of Judah are parallel to the two images of water in Psalm 42. Rather than the quiet fresh waters in the desert, the psalmist experiences God's chaos waters that threaten the survival of life and order. The Isaiah passage further illustrates the metaphorical potency of mighty flood waters in signifying Assyria, the nation which exiled the northern kingdom of Israel. This signification also works in Psalm 42:8 since the previous verse speaks of foreign lands from which the psalmist remembers God:

My soul is cast down within me;
therefore I will remember you from
the land of Jordan and Hermon, from
mount Mizar
Deep calls to deep at the thunder of
your cataracts; all your waves and
your billows have gone over me.
(NRSV)

Psalm 42:7–8
עלי נפשי תשתוחח על־כן אזכרך
מארץ ירדן וחרמונים מהר מצער
תהום־אל־תהום קורא לקול צנור־ך
כל־משבר־ך וגל־ך עלי עברו

After all, foreign nations are frequently compared to overwhelming waters in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Ps 68:23), adding further support to my suggestion in Psalm 42:8.¹⁵¹ But uniquely to Psalm 42:8, these waves and breakers are said to belong to God as the second person suffixes on *משבר־ך* and *גל־ך* highlight. With this, the psalmist emphasizes God's direct agency in afflicting the psalmist

¹⁵⁰ Holt, "'...Ad Fontes Aquarum': God as Water in the Psalms?," 76.

¹⁵¹ Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 120–24.

with his sovereignty over foreign nations. This rich theological metaphor in Psalm 42:8 is perfectly at home in Jonah 2:4a as it attributes the casting of Jonah into the sea to God himself. As Opgen-Rhein notes, Jonah (the character) faces God as his enemy much like Job.¹⁵² Moreover, a major theme in the book of Jonah is God's sovereignty over nations beyond Israel crystallized by his control over nature.¹⁵³ Therefore, rather than an odd addition to Psalm 42, verse 8 becomes an integral verse that conceptualizes the psalmist's place among the nations in metaphorical and mythological terms that resonates with other parts of the Hebrew Bible. This helps us envision Jonah's use of Psalm 42:8b as more contextual than it may appear at first glance.

❖ 2.5.5.2.2 *Liturgical and metaphorical resonance in the Hodayot*

The Hodayot (1QH^a) draw on Psalm 42:8 and Jonah 2:4b, extending their metaphorical associations with exile and judgment to describe communal experiences of suffering. 1QH^a 14:25–27 uses language from both Psalm 42 and Jonah 2 to describe a sailor besieged by chaotic seas.¹⁵⁴

Psalm 42:8b and Jonah 2:4b

כל־משברִיד וגליך עלי עברו
all your breakers and your waves passed over
me

1QH^a 14:25–27

ויכינִי מִחֲשֶׁבֶת רָשָׁעָה יִתְּגַלְלוּ בְּאִשְׁמָהּ. וְאֲנִי
הֵייתִי כַמֶּלֶחַ בְּאוֹנִיָּה בְּזַעַף
They establish] a scheme of wickedness; they
wallow in their guilt. [...] I have [become] as a
sailor on a ship in the raging
יָמִים. גְּלִיהֶם וְכֹל מִשְׁבְּרֵיהֶם עָלַי הַמָּוֶה רוּחַ עֹעִיִּים]
בְּאִין] דְּמָמָה לְהַשִּׁיב נֶפֶשׁ וְאִין

¹⁵² Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 183–84. Likewise, Erickson, *Jonah*, 295. Jonah and Job share many parallels as pointed out by Katharine J. Dell, “Reinventing the Wheel: The Shaping of the Book of Jonah,” in *After the Exile: Essays in Honour of Rex Mason*, ed. John Barton and David J. Reimer (Macon, GA: Mercer University, 1996), 85–101.

¹⁵³ God appoints the great wind, the great fish, the gourd, and the worm, and the east wind to serve his purposes in the story of Jonah. These natural elements point to God's ownership of the world (Jonah 1:9), which is further buttressed by many parallels to Genesis 1–11 as pointed out by Hesse and Kikawada. Isaac M. Kikawada and Eric W. Hesse, “Jonah and Genesis 1–11,” *AJBI* 10 (1984): 3–19. See also Tiemeyer, “Jonah, the Eternal Fugitive,” 262–63.

¹⁵⁴ Lange and Weigold, *Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Jewish Literature*, 287.

seas; their waves and all their breakers roared against me;¹⁵⁵ a staggering wind [without] calm to revive my soul and without

נתיבת לישר דרך על פני מים. ויהם תהום לאנחת
ונגש[ו חיי] עד שערי מות
paths to make a straight path upon the face of
the waters. And the deep roars to my groaning
and [my life] approaches the gates of death

The image of the sea begins in the previous line where the writer compares himself to a sailor in a ship that is on raging seas (1QH^a 14:25). These lines (14:25–27) seem to allude to the book of Jonah with the images of a sailor (מלח), ship (אוניה), seas (ימים), waves (גל), breakers (משבר), and deep (תהום). There are similarities between this picture and the one in 1QH^a 11 which contains allusions to Jonah 2 and Psalm 107.¹⁵⁶ But here in column 14, there is an added layer of meaning with the verb המו.¹⁵⁷ It conveys the raging of the seas just as it does in 1QH^a 11:14.

And the foundations of the wall break as a ship upon the water, and the clouds thunder with a roar. Those who sit in the dust, as well as those who go down to the seas are terrified by the roar of the water, and their wise men are for them as sailors on the deeps. For all their wisdom is swallowed up by the roar of the seas, when the ocean depths boil over the springs of water, and they are tossed up to the towering waves

1QH^a 11:14 אושי קיר כאוניה על פני מים ויהמו
שחקים בקול המון. ויִשְׁבִּי עפר

1QH^a 11:15 כיורדי ימים נבעתים מהמון מים.
וחכמיהם למו כמלחים במצולות כי
תתבלע

1QH^a 11:16 כול חכמתם בהמות ימים. ברתוח
תהומות על נבוכי מים ויִתְרָגְשוּ לרום
גלים

¹⁵⁵ The targum in Jonah 2:4 distances God from the waves and breakers by attributing them to the sea rather than God: כל נחשוליה דימא וגלוייה עלי עדו (all the churnings of the sea and its waves passed over me). The same sort of phenomenon seems to be at work here in the Hodayot where the waves and breakers are the sea's rather than God's.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Angela Kim Harkins, "Thanksgiving Hymns (Hodayot)," in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture* (Philadelphia: JPS, 2013), 2:2060. Tooman, "Between Imitation and Interpretation: Reuse of Scripture and Composition in Hodayot (1QHa) 11:6–19."

¹⁵⁷ By comparing column 14 with 11, I am not assuming common authorship of the two hymns like older scholarship posited. Rather, the Hodayot were probably similar to the Psalms in that they were written by different authors and were placed in a scroll much like an anthology. Cf. Svend Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran*, ATDan 2 (Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget, 1960).

and crashing waves by their roar. And when
they are tossed up, Sh[eo]l [and Abaddon]
shall open. [And al]l the arrows of the pit¹⁵⁸

1QH^a 11:17 ומשברי מים בהמון קולם. ובהתרגשם
יפתחו ש[אן]ל[אן] וא[בד]ן. ו[כֹּל] חצי
שחת

The denominative form המון (roaring) is also used in 11:14–15 to describe the roaring of the seas, strengthening the link between the two hymns. The same noun is used in 14:10 where the writer expresses hope amidst the המון עם (the roaring of the people) because he knows that God would raise up survivors among those nations (14:11). In a few lines after that, the writer introduces the image of a sailor on rough seas whose waves and breakers roar against him. It is hard to miss the connection between the foreign nations who roar against the writer (presumably in exile in light of 12:6–13:6) and the waves of the sea which roar against him if we read all of column 14 in context. The speaker in this thanksgiving hymn is admittedly a singular person. But in light of Carol Newsom's work on the Hodayot as employing liturgical language that stratifies social identity, we can think of the first-person experience of the writer of this hymn as forming the identity of the community and facilitating group expression.¹⁵⁹ By connecting roaring waters to foreign nations, the hymn resonates with both Psalm 42's depiction of exile and Jonah's prayer amidst chaos waters.

❖ 2.5.5.2.3 *Deliverance as a second exodus in Psalm 42 and Jonah 2*

The imagery in Psalm 42–43 and Jonah 2 draws on the concept of a second exodus, reframing deliverance as a return from exile to the temple in Jerusalem. The psalmist in Psalm 42–43, lamenting his situation in a foreign land, describes his suffering as akin to being cast into the

¹⁵⁸ Based on the translation in Michael Owen Wise, Martin G. Abegg, and Edward M. Cook, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, Revised (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2005).

¹⁵⁹ Carol A. Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran*, STDJ 52 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 202–4.

depths of a stormy sea—a metaphor for God’s judgment. But he conceives of deliverance as a return from exile, particularly to the temple in Jerusalem, שלח־אורך ואמתך המה ינחוני יביאוני אל־ (send your light and your truth; they will lead me; they will bring me to your holy hill [Ps 43:3]). Similarly, Jonah’s prayer in Jonah 2:10 reflects this expectation, with his deliverance framed as a journey back toward God’s holy sanctuary (Jonah 2:5, 8, 10). Jonah’s use of Psalm 42:8, then, is more fitting considering the overall movement and message of Psalm 42–43.

Smart identifies an allusion to the Babylonian exile in Jonah 2:4, interpreting Psalm 42:8 as the cry of Israel in exile.¹⁶⁰ As we have seen in our examination of Psalm 42–43, Smart is not wrong to see exilic connotations in this psalm. If that is indeed the case, then this poetic line is not simply a formulaic expression that was ready for use by the author of Jonah’s psalm. Rather, it comes with strings attached.

This metaphorical association of foreign nations and chaotic waters finds further resonance in Exodus 15, where Pharaoh and his armies are cast into the deep, and the waters cover them (Ex 15:5). The Israelites, however, experience deliverance as they cross over the waters: עֲדִיעֵבֶר עִמָּךְ (until your people crossed over, O YHWH, until they crossed over, the people whom you bought [Ex 15:16]). In both Psalm 42 and Jonah 2, this imagery is reversed. Instead of “crossing over” the waters and the deep (Ex 15:16), the psalmists experience God’s breakers and waves (representing the nations) crossing over them. In this way, the verb עָבַר in Jonah 2:4b complements and corroborates the exodus connotations evoked by the first verb in 2:4a, שָׁלַח. Together, these verbs evoke a profound inversion of the exodus, transforming the crossing of the sea from a triumphant act of deliverance into a moment of divine judgment. This

¹⁶⁰ James D. Smart, “The Book of Jonah,” in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), 6:886.

theological reversal underscores Jonah's (the character's) plight as a microcosm of Israel's broader struggle with exile and the hope of restoration.

2.5.5.3 Presumption of Innocence/Righteousness:

The psalmist enumerates the details of his distress without divulging the reason for his circumstances. There is no explanation for why the psalmist is in trouble. In other psalms, there are clear confessions of guilt that connect act to consequence (cf. Ps 51). But here, the psalmist is facing persecution for no apparent fault of his own. Instead, his enemies are morally compromised (Ps 42:10–11; 43:1). He petitions God to save him and render justice to him (43:1), not show mercy. In other words, he is seeking vindication, not absolution. Undergirding this petition is the presumption of innocence. In fact, his request for entry into the temple (Ps 43:3) is bold in light of Psalms like Psalm 15 and 24 which place a high premium on moral perfection for those who wish to dwell in the house of God. In the same way, Jonah's (the character's) confident prayer of thanksgiving shows no marks of penitence for fleeing from God in chapter 1. Instead, he characterizes the Other as morally suspicious (Jonah 2:9).

2.5.5.4 Collective Identity

Much like Psalm 120, Psalm 42–43 does not clearly lend itself to a corporate voice. Rather, there is a distinct “I” who situates himself within a broader community who go up to the temple in 42:5. At the same time, the “I” also carries the broader concerns of the community through his lament. Gerstenberger notes that the threefold refrain of Psalm 42–43 points to a collective liturgical performance meant to voice the lament and petition of an exiled group, further strengthening the previous discussion that the book of Jonah is a story of national exile mapped on to the personal story of the prophet.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 179.

The lament of Psalm 42–43 features a meta detail which highlights the performance of the lament in the form of a שיר (song), a תפלה (prayer [42:9]). For this reason, Kraus calls this a “prayer song” rather than an individual lament.¹⁶² The prayer offers the psalmist a liminal space to voice a lamenting song through distress which eventually leads to a thanksgiving song of joy performed with a community, בקול־רנה ותודה המון חוגג (with a voice of gladness and thanksgiving, a festive gathering [42:5]). In this framework, Psalm 42–43 offers itself as a song of the night (42:9) to be appropriated by those who are away from God’s presence, outside the land, in order to effect the future end of their individual (or communal) exile. Psalm 42–43 is that song that facilitates a journey from exile back to the temple.

Jonah’s invocation of Psalm 42:8 can thus be seen as a deliberate liturgical act—a kind of incantation to deliver himself from exile and return to the temple.¹⁶³ This extends the corporate dimension of the psalm to a broader context, connecting Jonah’s personal plight to the collective experience of the exiles. By quoting Psalm 42:8, the author of Jonah aligns the character’s individual struggle with the shared hope of returning to the land, reinforcing the communal undertones embedded in his prayer.

In conclusion, the exact quotation of Psalm 42:8b in Jonah 2:4b seems to contain no less metaleptic transfer of meaning than the more fluid allusions to Psalms 18 and 120 in the previous lines. Dismissing this line as merely a stock phrase is no longer tenable in light of multiplicity and thematic correspondence between the two texts. Furthermore, its influence extends into later

¹⁶² Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 1:438.

¹⁶³ Commenting on the ritual language of Jonah 2:10, Erickson says, “ritual practices do not simply propose solutions to problems; they redefine and re-present the situation itself.” Erickson, *Jonah*, 308. Cf. Catherine Bell, “The Ritual Body and The Dynamics of Ritual Power,” *JRitSt* 4, no. 2 (1990): 299–313.

traditions, as seen in its free use in 1QHa 14:26, preserving the metaphorical association that bridge the psalm and Jonah's narrative.

2.6 Cast Away: Exilic Separation from God (Jonah 2:5a)

Following a direct quote from Psalm 42:8 to describe Jonah's predicament in verse 4b, verse 5a cites another psalm with slight modification, revealing the perspective of the prophet as he is cast off into the depths of the sea. The verse reads as follows:

ואני אמרתי נגרשתי מנגד עיניך

But as for me, I said, 'I am cut off from before your sight'

Between 4Q82 and Mur88, the whole unit is represented as it stands in the MT.

[] ואני אמרתי [נגרשתי מנגד עיניך]

ואני אמרתי [נגרשתי] מנגד עיניך

The OG has a slight difference with the Hebrew to make for a smoother translation.

καὶ ἐγὼ εἶπα Ἀπῶσμαι ἐξ ὀφθαλμῶν σου

And I said, 'I am cast out from your sight'

It does not translate נגד with ἐναντίας. However, the Nahal Hever Greek Minor Prophets scroll tries to account for every word in Hebrew by rendering the line:

[καὶ ἐγὼ] εἶπα ἀπῶσμαι] ἐξ ἐναντίας ὀφθαλμῶν σου

And I said, 'I am cast out from before your sight'

What is highlighted time and again by the Greek Jonah from Nahal Hever is its representation of the Hebrew *Vorlage* in its minute details, corresponding almost exactly to the MT. This fact immunizes us from the charge that the intertextual connections in Jonah's prayer can only be seen in the medieval Masoretic codices.

2.6.1 Verbal Resonance

In analyzing the dynamics of composition at play in Jonah 2:5a, one poetic text emerges that closely resembles it—Psalm 31:23a:

ואני אמרתי בחפזי נגרזתי מנגד עיניך

But as for me, I said in my haste, 'I am cut off from before your sight'

With the addition of בחפזי (in my haste) in Psalm 31:23a and the different but closely related verbs (נגרזתי vs נגרשתי), these two texts evidence a remarkable degree of similarity. Is there any relationship between them beyond lexical correspondence? Delekat is of the opinion that, based on a similar phrase in Lamentations 3:54, על-ראשי אמרתי נגזרתי (Water flowed over my head; I said 'I am cut off'), this poetic line is "handelt es sich offenbar um eine geläufige Wendung" (it evidently concerns a familiar turn of phrase).¹⁶⁴ But three occurrences of the verb, none of them with the same orthography, hardly counts as commonly used phrase. What if the three texts are interacting with each other and participating in an integrated dialogue? In what follows, I will discuss the possible relationship between the three texts by looking at the broader textual units and their intertextual features as discovered by availability, modification, partial integration, multiplicity, and thematic correspondence.

2.6.2 Availability

Textually, Psalm 31 is first attested in very fragmentary form in 4QPs^a, frg. 4i and 4QPs^q, col. I. Only the last letter of our line (Ps 31:23a), a final vocalic ה, survived in 4QPs^a line 3, but we can imagine the verse in reconstructed form as it appears in the edited volume by Ulrich because parts of verse 24 follow verse 23, and there is space after that to fit verse 25.¹⁶⁵

[ואני אמרתי בחפזי נגרזתי מנגד עיניך]ה

[אהבו את יהוה כול חסידי]וֹ אמנם [נ]וצר

¹⁶⁴ Lienhard Delekat, "Zum hebräischen Wörterbuch," *VT* 14, no. 1 (1964): 11.

¹⁶⁵ Eugene Ulrich, ed., *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants*, VTSup 134 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 636.

The sequence gives us enough warrant to reconstruct the fragment, albeit tentatively, according to the MT. Furthermore, 4QPs^a gives us the wording of verses 24–25 with space after these verses before beginning Psalm 33, confirming again the fixed sequence of these verses at the end of the psalm just as it is in the MT.¹⁶⁶ As to the rest of the psalm, the Nahal Hever psalms scroll preserves fragments of all of the verses from Psalm 31:2–22, with the beginning and the end of the psalm being more vulnerable to decay and tear.

The OG of Psalm 31:23 (30:23), except for one additional particle ἄρα, also agrees with the MT in its translation:

ἐγὼ δὲ εἶπα ἐν τῇ ἐκστάσει μου Ἀπέρριμμαι ἄρα ἀπὸ προσώπου τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν σου

But I said in my amazement, ‘I am therefore cast out from the presence of your eyes’

Interestingly, the word ἐκστάσει in this verse is picked up from here and added to the superscription (31:1) as ἐκστάσεως (amazement).¹⁶⁷ The translator of the psalm thought it best to describe the nature of the whole psalm in its own language, suggesting a holistic reading of the Psalms by ancient readers. The OG, then, points to the stability and availability of the content of the psalm by the Hellenistic period, indicating that the Hebrew version of the psalm was already available before then. So, there is no compelling material and textual reason to think that Psalm 31 is later than the book of Jonah. But what about linguistic and form-critical evidence?

¹⁶⁶ It is interesting to note that Psalm 32 is omitted from this sequence. But it is characteristic of all the psalms scrolls we find at Qumran—their order is fluid, but their content remains stable.

¹⁶⁷ Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Psalmi Cum Odis*, 3rd ed., X, Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum. Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis Editum (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 123.

Linguistically, Psalm 31 exhibits a mixed bag of archaic features that relatively antedate the linguistic features of Jonah's prayer but also later ones.¹⁶⁸ Form-critically, there does not seem to be any cohesion or a clear flow of thought because of the overlapping elements of lament and thanksgiving.¹⁶⁹ As Hossfeld notes, Psalm 31 is anthological in character, displaying little literary unity, for it seems to contain language from many other parts of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁷⁰ He argues that a shorter lament psalm (*Grundpsalm*) from the late pre-exilic times was redacted by later post-exilic editors who added thanksgiving elements to it, giving shape to the final form of Psalm 31.¹⁷¹ Against Hossfeld, Botha argues for the unity of the psalm by teasing out intertextual connections to the book of Samuel, in particular to the song of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2 and David's song of victory in 2 Samuel 22 and also David's flight from Saul in 1 Samuel 22–24.¹⁷² One can make a case for the literary unity of the psalm even without the intertextual connections to Samuel as Bons has argued in his very thorough analysis of Psalm 31.¹⁷³ Whatever the case, the overall literary and linguistic characteristics of the psalm are unhelpful in relative dating. In fact, along with Hossfeld, Potgieter argues that the psalm borrows language from Jonah 2 and Jeremiah 20 rather than the

¹⁶⁸ For example, Psalm 31:5 has the relative pronoun *וְ* which typically appears only in early Hebrew poetry and has been replaced by a more common relative pronoun *אֲשֶׁר* which also appears in the psalm (31:8), thus making it difficult to date the psalm by linguistic means alone. Cf. John Huehnergard, "Relative Particles," in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, ed. Geoffrey Khan (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 3:363.

¹⁶⁹ Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 137.

¹⁷⁰ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 1:192.

¹⁷¹ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 1:193.

¹⁷² Phil J. Botha, "Freedom to Roam in a Wide Open Space: Psalm 31 Read in Conjunction with the History of David in the Books of Samuel and the Psalms," in *Seitenblicke: Literarische und historische Studien zu Nebenfiguren im zweiten Samuelbuch*, ed. Walter Dietrich, OBO 249 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 424–42. To be sure, Botha thinks the psalm belongs to Hellenistic period.

¹⁷³ Eberhard Bons, *Psalm 31, Rettung als Paradigma: eine synchron-leseorientierte Analyse*, Frankfurter theologische Studien 48 (Frankfurt: Knecht, 1994).

other way around.¹⁷⁴ His argument presents the first possibility that Jonah's prayer may have inspired the language of the Psalms in the Hebrew Bible. But we shall see if the indicators of literary dependence which we have been employing in our analysis also point in that direction.

2.6.3 *Modification*

There are two differences between Psalm 31:23a and Jonah 2:5a: first, **בחפזי** (in my haste) is omitted and second, a different spelling or an altogether different verb is used for **נגרזתי** (I am cut off) in Jonah 2:5a. With respect to **בחפזי** (in my haste), Wolff remarks that it does not fit the situation of drowning and hence was omitted in Jonah 2:5. He also cites metrical reasons which are more speculative.¹⁷⁵ But Wolff is probably right in that the author of Jonah's psalm omitted this word because it does not fit Jonah's (the character's) situation.

Second, the rare verb **נגרזתי** in Psalm 31:23 is transformed into the more understandable **נגרשתי** in Jonah 2:5a, and similarly in Lamentations 3:54 with **נגזרתי**. Delekat thinks that **נגרזתי** from Psalm 31:23 is to be read in both Jonah 2:5a and in Lamentations 3:54.¹⁷⁶ This is an intriguing suggestion because some commentators think the verb in Lamentations 3:54, **נגזרתי**, would make better sense in Psalms 31:23a rather than the other way around.¹⁷⁷ Similarly, Potgieter argues that

¹⁷⁴ Henk J. Potgieter, "David' in Consultation with the Prophets: The Intertextual Relationship of Psalm 31 with the Books of Jonah and Jeremiah," *OTE* 25, no. 1 (2012): 115–26. Unfortunately, Potgieter merely assumes the direction of dependence from Jonah and Jeremiah to Psalm 31 because of its overall pastiche character and goes on to conclude that Psalm 31 was composed by the same scribal group that was responsible for the insertion of Jonah 2 and Jeremiah 20 to portrays the respective prophets as pious followers of Yahweh.

¹⁷⁵ Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 135. Magonet has an even more speculative explanation that **בחפזי** would undermine the personal transformation that the prophet goes through in the psalm from being self-centered to God-oriented. Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 45.

¹⁷⁶ Delekat, "Zum hebräischen Wörterbuch," 11.

¹⁷⁷ Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 1:359. Sasson, *Jonah*, 178.

נגרזתי in Psalm 31:23a is a result of a mistake in hearing נגרשתי from Jonah 2.¹⁷⁸ But Delekat's suggestion follows the principle of *lectio difficilior potior* and should be given more thought because Psalm 31:23a has the more difficult and obscure root. Dahood supports the reading of Psalm 31:23a as it is in the MT by noting that the context and the noun גִּרְזָן (axe) shed light on the root meaning "to cut off."¹⁷⁹ So, how do we explain the other two texts in light of Psalm 31:23?

My explanation grants that the root גרז is in the background of all three texts just as Delekat argues. However, contrary to his supposition that these texts are not connected, I argue that they are connected.¹⁸⁰ In favor of my argument is the ambiguity of the verbal root גרז. Recognizing this ambiguity in Psalm 31, the author of Jonah's prayer seizes the opportunity to modify the root only slightly to make it more intelligible, for the root גרש on the other hand is far more common in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 3:24; 21:10; Ex 34:11; Lev 22:13, etc.). Moreover, גרש has a homonym which means being tossed about by water (Isa 57:20; Am 8:8), a meaning appropriate to Jonah's situation, creating delightful wordplay.¹⁸¹ This works against Potgieter's argument that Psalm 31:23a reworks Jonah 2:5a. Why would the scribe of Psalm 31 choose to obfuscate a perfectly common verb from Jonah 2:5? The occurrence in Lamentations can be explained similarly since גזר is also a more intelligible root (1 Kings 3:26; Ps 136:13; Hab 3:17; 2 Chron 26:21).¹⁸² The relationship

¹⁷⁸ Potgieter, "'David' in Consultation," 123.

¹⁷⁹ Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I: 1–50*, AB 16 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 191. Here, Dahood might be following Dunash, a medieval grammarian, who also noted the connection between this root and גִּרְזָן. There is a fascinating discussion among medieval grammarians about this root and whether the nun in גִּרְזָן should be considered a radical or not. Dominique Barthélemy, Stephen Desmond Ryan, and Adrian Schenker, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancient Testament: Psaumes*, OBO 50 (Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 4:182.

¹⁸⁰ Barthélemy also argues this point in Barthélemy, Ryan, and Schenker, *CTAT*, 4:183.

¹⁸¹ Erickson, *Jonah*, 326. Shalom Paul, "An Overlooked Double Entendre in Jonah 2:5," in *The Honeycomb of the Word: Interpreting the Primary Testament with André LaCocque*, ed. W. Dow Edgerton (Chicago: Exploration Press, 2001), 155–57.

¹⁸² The metathesis of ר and ז is another option.

between these three texts is also strengthened by the fact that according to the critical apparatus of the BHS in Psalm 31:23, some manuscripts emend the verb form to נְגַזְרָתִי which accords with Lamentations 3:54 and 2 manuscripts emend the verb to נְגַרְשָׁתִי because of Jonah 2:5a, but never the other way around. This confirms my suggestion that Psalm 31:23 represents the more difficult form, which the other texts try to clarify with more common verbal roots.

2.6.4 Partial Integration

Are there signs that the borrowing from Psalm 31 in Jonah 2 resulted in partial integration? Admittedly, this is a difficult point to argue in cases where the intertext seems to have been modified. The frozen phrase in Jonah 2:4b from Psalm 42:8 is a better instance of partial integration. Nevertheless, we can see if this line is more at home in one of the passages or perhaps both.

Notwithstanding the speculations about the form-critical layers of Psalm 31, verse 23a comes third in a staggered sequence of ואני statements in the psalm (31:7, 15).¹⁸³

I hate those who worship vain idols. But as for me, I trust in YHWH.	שנאתי השמרים הבלי-שוא ואני אליהוה בטחתי	Psalm 31:7
But as for me, I trust upon you, o YHWH. I said, "You are my God"	ואני עליך בטחתי יהוה אמרתי אלהי אתה	Psalm 31:15
But as for me, I said in my haste, "I am cut off from before your sight." Therefore, you heard the sound of my petition when I cried out to you for help.	ואני אמרתי בחפזי נגרזתי מנגד עיניך אכן שמעת קול תחנוני בשועי אליך	Psalm 31:23

In both verses 7 and 15, ואני introduces a *casus pendens* that emphatically asserts the psalmist's confidence in God. But in verse 23, the psalmist uses the same construction to recount a time of

¹⁸³ Interestingly, this sequence goes back to Psalm 30:7 ואני אמרתי בשלוי בל-אמוט לעולם (But as for me, I said in my prosperity, 'I shall never be moved') which might be one of the reasons these two psalms are placed side by side.

distrust and haste in which he thought that he was cut off from God's eyes. In recounting his past inner despair, the psalmist ends on a dramatic note of hope. Additionally, the concept of being in (or away in this verse) the presence of God (מנגד עיניך) has cultic connotations in which the worshipper goes to the temple to "see" (ראה) the face of God. This fits very well with the preceding request of the psalmist for God's face to shine upon him (Ps 31:17) [האירה פניך על-עבדך], a reference to the priestly blessing in Numbers 6:24. So, even though there does not seem to be a clear progression in the psalm, this verse is not unexpected nor unusual, indicating that this expression is original to Psalm 31.¹⁸⁴

On the other hand, while it may seem as though Jonah 2:5a fits very well in both the narrative and the prayer at first glance, a few things stand out that make us rethink its place in the psalm. First, Jonah actively tries to flee from God's presence in chapter 1. But here he uses a *nifal* verb נגרשתי to describe his distress. Why is he surprised that he is removed from God's presence when he had decided to do that himself? Interpreters throughout history have seen this disjunction and sought to resolve the tension in various ways.¹⁸⁵ Second, the author of the book of Jonah prefers the phrase מלפני יהוה (from the presence of YHWH [Jonah 1:3, 10]) to מנגד עיניך (from before your sight). He could have said:

ואני אמרתי נגרשתי מלפניך

but as for me, I said 'I am cut off from your presence'

¹⁸⁴ John Goldingay, *Psalms 1–41*, vol. 1, BCOT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 448. Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 139. Contra Sasson who thinks this verse does not fit Psalm 31. Sasson, *Jonah*, 178. To be fair, the last point about the cultic context might also fit in Jonah 2 because he wishes to "see" the holy sanctuary of God in the next line.

¹⁸⁵ Tiemeyer, *Jonah*, 143.

The word מלפני (from the presence of) does appear in the psalms (Pss 17:2; 51:13; 97:5), but due to partial integration of the phrase from Psalm 31:23, Jonah 2:5a retains the more formulaic wording. Third, the word that comes after this line אך (surely) is of significance when considered in connection with Psalm 31:23.

But as for me, I said ‘I am cut off from before your sight; surely, I will once again look upon your holy temple.’	ואני אמרתי נגרשתי מנגד עיניך אך אוסיף להביט אל־היכל קדשך	Jonah 2:5
But as for me, I said in my haste, “I am cut off from before your sight.” Therefore, you heard the sound of my petition when I cried out to you for help.	ואני אמרתי בחפזי נגרזתי מנגד עיניך אכן שמעת קול תחנוני בשועי אליך	Psalm 31:23

It is easy to miss this little particle unless we pay close attention to both texts. The similarity between them does not stop with עיניך (your eyes) just because there is a disjunctive accent on it. It seems like the more comprehensible particle in Psalm 31:23 has made its way into Jonah 2:5 and has resulted in confusing syntax. Wolff notes this link but thinks it resulted in a misreading.¹⁸⁶ Magonet also points this out and concludes that Jonah 2:5b retains the “I” perspective of Jonah as opposed to Psalm 31:23b.¹⁸⁷ As we will see in the next section, the particle is difficult to make sense of, making it good evidence of the partial integration of Psalm 31:23a in Jonah 2:5a.

2.6.5 Multiplicity

As Wolff had observed in the earlier verse (Jonah 2:3), Psalm 31:23b resonates with the beginning of Jonah’s prayer with the words אכן שמעת קול תחנוני בשועי אליך (Therefore, you heard the sound of my petition when I cried out to you for help). So, even at first glance, there seems to

¹⁸⁶ Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 126.

¹⁸⁷ Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 45.

be a connection between the two texts that goes beyond the stock phraseology of the psalms. More explicit is the parallel in Jonah 2:9:

Those who worship vain idols abandon their faithfulness	משמרים הבלי־שוא חסדם יעזבו	Jonah 2:9
I hate those who worship vain idols, but I trust in YHWH	שנאתי השמרים הבלי־שוא ואני אל־יהוה בטחתי	Psalms 31:7

As opposed to its occurrence in Psalm 31:7 where the psalmist's enemies are the clear referents to the *השמרים הבלי־שוא* (those who worship vain idols), Jonah 2:9 surprises the reader and lets them make their own associations in the narrative.¹⁸⁸ Again, the direction of dependence would make more sense from Psalm 31 to Jonah 2 in this instance.

Another point of contact comes from Psalm 31:21 where it describes God hiding the psalmist in a booth (*סכה*). This sheds an intriguing light on Jonah making himself a booth outside the city of Nineveh (Jonah 4:5).¹⁸⁹ Granted, this last point is ambitious. But the first two provide enough evidence to indicate multiplicity of verbal links between the two texts. Through these and other conceptual links in the next section, Psalm 31 proves to be a more instructive source to Jonah 2 rather than the other way around.

2.6.6 *Thematic Correspondence*

Beyond verbal links, thematic resonances can bind texts together. We have seen that to be true in the case of Psalms 120, 18, and 42 so far. What follows is an exploration of how certain themes in Psalm 31 enrich the psalm and story of Jonah.

¹⁸⁸ Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 46.

¹⁸⁹ Opgen-Rhein thinks Jonah's *סכה* is the counterpart of the temple in Jonah 2:5, 8. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 186. This link that goes beyond the psalm into Jonah's narrative makes it likely that Psalm 31 informed Jonah 2 rather than vice versa because the use of *סכה* in Psalm 31 is part and parcel of the language about God being the psalmist's refuge. But Jonah's *סכה* depends on the more traditional understanding of the concept in order to subvert or play with its connotations in the narrative.

2.6.6.1 The Petitioner's Perspective: Longing for the temple in exile

Botha argues that the stronghold mentioned in Psalm 31:3–4 should be read in connection to David's time in the stronghold of Moab (1 Sam 22:4) and in the wilderness (1 Sam 24:22).¹⁹⁰ Clearly, David was portrayed as being in a kind of exile while fleeing from Saul. This situates the psalmist in Psalm 31 as occupying a similar state of exile, with his physical stronghold serving as a temporary refuge. In turn, he acknowledges that Yahweh is his stronghold in Psalm 31:3. Consequently, the psalmist's despair that he was cut off from the presence of God in verse 23 can be read both spatially, as exile from God's land, as well as metaphorically, as a reflection of personal death.

The experience of being cut off from God's presence as encapsulated by נִגְרָזְתִּי in Psalm 31:23 is more commonly expressed in texts that speak of the experience of exile in the Hebrew Bible (Lam 3:54; Ezek 37:11; Isa 53:8; Ps 88:6).¹⁹¹ This theme of exile looms large in the Psalm 31 as well, making its appearance in Jonah's psalm more intriguing. Opgen-Rhein wonders if the modification of the verb נִגְרָשְׁתִּי in Jonah 2:5a carries with it the notion of driving out the foreigners from the land (Exod 23:28f; 33:2; 34:11; Deut 33:27 etc.).¹⁹² If this interpretation holds, Jonah (the character) perceives himself as being treated like the Canaanites, who were driven out of the Promised Land by the Israelites, further emphasized by the reversal of the exodus narrative in Jonah 2:4a, where God casts Jonah into the sea in the same way as he did Egyptians in the Exodus.

¹⁹⁰ Botha, "Freedom to Roam," 437.

¹⁹¹ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 1:199.

¹⁹² Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 184. Hunter is more sure of this connotation. Hunter, *The Judgement of Jonah*, 139–41.

While distance from the land suggests exilic connotations, its reversal is captured through temple imagery. Hossfeld highlights that the temple serves as the space in which salvation is experienced (Ps 31:17).¹⁹³ Similarly, Jonah connects his salvation to the temple in his prayer (Jonah 2:5, 8). This theme of salvation associated with the temple has been a consistent thread throughout the analysis of Psalms 120, 18, and 42, further tying Jonah's prayer to these psalmic traditions.

2.6.6.2 The Presumption of Innocence:

We observed in the previous lines of Jonah's psalm that Psalms 120, 18, and 42 have either explicit or implicit statements of innocence and righteousness which underlie their petition and thanksgiving for rescue. However, Psalm 31:11 seems to break this pattern with the line **כִּי כָלוּ** **בִּיגוֹן חַיִּי וּשְׁנוֹתַי בְּאַנְחָה כְּשֶׁל בְּעוֹנִי כְּחִי וְעַצְמִי עָשָׂשׁוּ** (for my life has come to an end with grief, and my years with groaning; my strength fails because of my guilt, and my bones have become weak). Is this a confession of guilt because of which the strength of the psalmist fails? The answer lies with the word **בְּעוֹנִי** (because of my guilt). The MT points the word **בְּעוֹנִי** to mean "because of my guilt" from the root **עוֹן**. However, it seems that the MT stands alone in the way this word is understood by other ancient traditions. The OG translates the word with *ἐν πτωχείᾳ* (in poverty/destitution) reading the word as **בְּעָנִי** (in poverty/misery) from the root **עָנִי**. Symmachus reads the word with a first-person pronominal suffix **בְּעָנִי**, and so translates it *διὰ τῇν κάκωσίν μου* (because of my affliction/suffering). Syriac versions follow the OG in its translation. Even the consonantal text **בְּעוֹנִי** can be read with this root by pointing it **בְּעוֹנִי** like in 2 Samuel 16:12 (cf. Ps 107:41) with a

¹⁹³ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 1:192. Opgen-Rhein argues that the conception of God's eyes being oriented towards the temple is Deuteronomistic (1 Kings 8:29, 52 etc.). Jonah 2:8 seems to participate in the same ideology that sees the temple as the place where God directs his attention. So, he suggests that Psalm 31:23a is a strategically chosen text that supports this conception of the temple. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 185–86.

long *holem vav* rather than a short *qamets hatuf*. Thus, the NRSV goes with the versions in its translation “because of my misery.” This reading has strong support outside the MT, thus removing any confession or reference to guilt in this psalm. This is why Gerstenberger says, “Strangely enough, there are no theological reflections on guilt or innocence, as in Psalms 7, 17, 26 or 51, nor on covenant or moral codes or any other cause of the evil experienced by the supplicant. The MT reading, ‘by my iniquity’ in v. 11a is a later modification, marking the intrusion of a guilt-oriented theology.”¹⁹⁴

Gerstenberger’s text-critical point stands but he overstates the lack of reflection on guilt and innocence in the psalm. Evidence for such reflection comes from verses 19–20. In verse 19, the psalmist’s enemies are characterized as those having lying lips, speaking insolently against the righteous, הדברות על-צדיק עתק (those who speak arrogantly against the righteous). The psalmist wishes that those lying lips be mute. On the other hand, he recounts the goodness of God to those who fear him and to those who take refuge in him (31:20). The righteous (צדיק) in verse 19 are the same group of God-fearers (ליראיך) and those who take refuge in him (לחסים בך) in verse 20. Even more explicitly he declares in verse 24 that Yahweh preserves the faithful (אמונים). The psalmist clearly identifies with this group,¹⁹⁵ for he begins the psalm by saying בך יהוה חסיתי (in you, o YHWH, I take refuge [31:2]). So, by seeking deliverance on the basis that God is good to the righteous, the psalmist is claiming innocence in his suffering.

The source of his suffering is entirely external to him in the lips and actions of his enemies. It is his enemies who laid a trap for him (31:5); they take counsel together against him to take his life (31:14); they pursue him (31:16); they lie and speak with great pride and contempt (31:19). As

¹⁹⁴ Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 140.

¹⁹⁵ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 1:192.

a result, he suffers in his body: his eyes, soul, and body become weak (31:10), his strength fails and his bones waste away (31:11) even to the point of death (31:23). But his suffering is inflicted upon him by his enemies which is the reason why he only asks for deliverance from the hands of his enemies (31:16). So, Gerstenberger is only half right in that the psalmist does not contemplate his own guilt in this psalm. The psalmist finds that the guilt rests with his enemies as he takes refuge in his innocence.

The Hodayot are instructive in this discussion of guilt and innocence in Psalm 31, for they reuse this psalm in several hymns. In hymn 12, the speaker describes his suffering at the hands of his enemies much like the psalmist.¹⁹⁶ Fascinatingly, line 36 has a strong allusion to Psalm 31:23a:¹⁹⁷

But as for me, I said in my haste, I am
cut off from before your sight

ואני אמרתי בחפזי נגרזתי מנגד עיניך Psalm 31:23

But as for me, I said in my sin, “I am
abandoned from your covenant”/ (or
I said, “In my sin I am abandoned
from your covenant”

ואני אמרתי בפשעי נעזבתי מבריתכה 1QHa 12:36

¹⁹⁶ Although the hymn makes use of a wide variety of texts, it pays special regard to Psalm 31. Earlier in the hymn in 1QHa 12:10 it says ויחשבוני לכלי אובד (and all my friends and my relatives have been driven away from me and they think of me as a broken vessel). Compare this with Psalm 31:12–13: מכל־צרי הייתי מכל־צרי הייתי (and because of all my enemies I have become a disgrace and to my neighbors exceedingly so, a dreadful thing to my acquaintances and those who see me in the street flee from me. I am forgotten from (their) mind like a dead man; I have become like a broken vessel). The phrase כלי אובד (broken vessel) appears only in Psalm 31 in the Hebrew Bible, so 1QHa 12:10 is almost certainly an allusion to Psalm 31:13. Cf. Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions*, 108–9; Harkins, “Thanksgiving Hymns,” 2050. In 11QHa 12:11, The enemies also plot against the speaker just as in Psalm 31:14. It is also tempting to see the convergence of the sequence of Psalm 31 in the flow of the hymn since the next allusion comes towards the end of the hymn from the last to third verse of Psalm 31.

¹⁹⁷ The syntax of 1QHa 12:36 is ambiguous but Holm-Nielsen and Mansoor both appeal to Psalm 31:23 to clarify it and thus take בפשעי (in my sin) to be modifying אמרתי (I said). Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran*, 78. Menahem Mansoor, *The Thanksgiving Hymns*, STDJ 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 130. But Hughes and Harkins take בפשעי to be modifying נעזבתי (I am abandoned) instead. Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions*, 101; Harkins, “Thanksgiving Hymns,” 2053. The former reading interprets the speech of the speaker as being sinful (i.e. the sin of the speaker was that he thought he was abandoned) whereas the latter interprets the speaker reflecting on his own sin which led to his abandonment.

Here there is an explicit mention of the speaker's sin with the word **בפשעי** (in my sin). But why use the language of Psalm 31 which does not attribute any guilt to the psalmist? Perhaps this is just a case of non-contextual allusion or an echo. Or there is a more complex phenomenon at work in this hymn that preserves the innocent suffering of the psalms while acknowledging that the broader state of affairs is a result of the people breaking the covenant. I will examine the penitential statements in the hymn and consider how they relate to the innocent suffering found in Psalm 31.

After claiming that God has revealed wonderful mysteries to him in order to proclaim them to all the living, the speaker declares that humanity is not worthy of such privilege because it is sinful from birth (12:30–31), setting up a contrast between the speaker and the rest of the humanity in their sinful condition:

והוא בעוון מרחם ועד שבה באשמת מעל ואני ידעתי כי לֹא לאנוש צדקה וּלֹא לבן אדם תום דרך

And he (man) is in sin from the womb until old age in the guilt of unfaithfulness. But I know that righteousness is not for man and perfect way is not for the son of man

This ideology can also be found in the Hebrew Bible (Ps 14:1–3; Eccl 7:20; Job 25:5). The speaker goes to say that God's spirit perfects the way of humanity (12:32–33) to receive divine mysteries, which is presumably how he himself received the mysteries. However, he says that fear and trembling seized him because he remembered his own guilt and that of his father's. It is in this context that he alludes to Psalm 31:23. This seems like a clear comment that precludes any idea of innocent suffering. But a close examination of these lines (12:35–36) may bring things into better focus.

כי זכרתי אשמותי עם מעל אבותי בקום רשעים על בריתך וחלכאים על דברכה ואני אמרתי בפשעי נעזבתי

מבריתכה

For I remembered my guilt with the unfaithfulness of my fathers when the wicked rose up against your covenant and the villains against your word. And I said in my sin, ‘I am abandoned by your covenant’

Reading these lines paints anything but a clear picture. The speaker remembers his sin *when the wicked rise up* against God’s covenant (בְּקוֹם רָשָׁעִים עַל בְּרִיתְךָ). How can the actions of the wicked remind the speaker of his own sin when he is opposed by them throughout the hymn?

I propose that the author works within a covenantal framework in this hymn that helps explain this dynamic. The word בְּרִית (covenant) appears at least six times in this hymn (12:6, 20, 25, 35, 36, 40). In fact, there very well might be an *inclusio* with בְּרִית in 12:6 and 12:40, but we cannot be sure because of the fragmentary nature of the top and bottom of the manuscript. It is the covenant that enables the speaker’s face to shine upon others in the covenant with God’s light (12:6–7, 28). But there are those that have separated themselves from the covenant because of idolatry (12:20) and those that have stayed faithful to the covenant by meeting together and listening to the speaker (25–26). In 12:35, the speaker recalls his sin and that of his father’s when the wicked broke the covenant i.e. the idolaters from 12:20. So, within this covenantal framework, the actions of the wicked against the covenant somehow incriminates the speaker himself. This is similar to Daniel 9:5–6 where the prophet includes himself in the confession of national sin:

We have sinned and done wrong, acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and ordinances. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land. (NRSV)

However, Daniel is not personally guilty of anything he confesses. A similar dynamic is at work in the Hodayah. The hymnist's self-perception is that of an innocent sufferer throughout the hymn. Interestingly, he characterizes himself as the innocent sufferer of Isaiah 53:3 in 12:9–10 and 24:¹⁹⁸

Isaiah 53:3 and Psalm 31:13

נבזה וחדל אישים איש מכאבות וידוע חלי וכמסתר
פנים ממנו נבזה ולא חשבנהו

He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with
infirmity; and as one from whom others hide
their faces he was despised, and we held him
of no account (NRSV)

נשכחתי כמת מלב הייתי ככלי אבד

I have passed out of mind like one who is dead;
I have become like a broken vessel (NRSV)

1QH^a 12:9–10

בהולל מעשיהם כי נמאסי למו. ולא יחשבוני
בהגבירכה בי כי אֵאֵא ידיחני מארצי

Their works are deceitful, for good works were
rejected by them. Neither did they esteem me;
even when you displayed your might through
me. Instead, they drove me out from my land

כצפור מקנה. וכול רעי ומודעי נדחו ממני ויחשבוני
לכלי אובד

as a bird from its nest. And all my friends and
acquaintances have been driven away from
me; they esteem me as a ruined vessel.

Line 10 combines words from Isaiah 53:3 and Psalm 31:13, both of which have clear notions of innocent suffering. The sustained dependence on Psalm 31 and Isaiah 53 makes way for the speaker of the hymn to remain innocent in his personal suffering while acknowledging national sin and even his own inherited sin as a result of covenant treachery, an idea that is not found in Psalm 31. Therefore, even in other reiterations of Psalm 31:23a, this self-perception is retained.

The hymn's creative reuse of Psalm 31:23a within its covenantal framework reveals a nuanced understanding of guilt and innocence. While the hymnist perceives himself as an innocent sufferer, echoing themes from Isaiah 53 and Psalm 31, he simultaneously acknowledges inherited guilt and national sin tied to covenant unfaithfulness. This dynamic underscores the tension between personal and collective accountability, enriching the theological depth of the text and demonstrating its ability to engage and reinterpret earlier scriptural traditions.

¹⁹⁸ Harkins, "Thanksgiving Hymns," 2050.

2.6.6.3 The Perception of the Other:

We have seen that the psalmist's enemies are the source of his distress in the previous section. But how does he see them? Both the psalmist of Psalm 31 and Jonah (the character) explicitly share their perception of the Other: Psalm 31:7 says שְׂנֵאתִי הַבְּלִי־שׁוֹא (I hate those who worship vain idols) and with only a slight modification Jonah 2:9 lessens the harshness by saying מַשְׁמֵרִים הַבְּלִי־שׁוֹא חֲסֹדָם יַעֲזֹבוּ (those who worship vain idols abandon their faithfulness).¹⁹⁹ In other words, they are idolaters, not worshippers of Yahweh. The language of Psalm 31 describing its enemies further gives voice to the author of Hodayot 12, which also envisions its enemies as those who worship idols (12:15–16, 20 cf. Deut 29:17, Ezek 14:3).

2.6.6.4 Petition to Judge the Enemies:

Psalm 31 further reflects on why the psalmist hates his enemies in verse 24: אֶהְבֵּה אֶת־יְהוָה (love the Lord all his godly ones; faithful ones the Lord protects but exceedingly repays the arrogant ones). Hossfeld suggests that this verse engages with the credo of Exodus 34:6–7.²⁰⁰ Yahweh shows mercy to the faithful but also pays what is due to those who do prideful things, presumably the same people as described in verse 7.²⁰¹ How interesting that Jonah also engages with the same text in chapter 4 to protest the sparing of Nineveh.²⁰² Jonah is in full agreement with the psalmist in that he wishes that God mete out judgement on the people of Nineveh who are the Other in the narrative.

¹⁹⁹ While it may seem like Jonah 2:9 mitigates the hatred of idolaters, the intertextual reference to Psalm 31 might actually recall the psalm in its entire verse, thus preserving this sentiment discreetly.

²⁰⁰ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 1:197.

²⁰¹ The OG reads the verb in verse 7 as having a second masculine singular subject, “You hate...” rather than “I hate...”

²⁰² Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 186.

2.6.7 Broadening the Reference

Our examination of Jonah 2:5a has revealed a close connection to Psalm 31:23a and the sentiments expressed in the wider psalm. But since it is not an exact quote, it may also be activating other texts. As we have seen, Lamentations 3:54 is evocative in this regard: **צפ־מים על־ראשי אמרתי** (Water flows upon my head. I said ‘I am cut off’). This is quite an informative text for Jonah (the author) since it was probably composed roughly around the same time as Jonah, reflecting on the Babylonian exile.²⁰³ This verse depicts the speaker drowning in a pit with water closing over his head. So, he says, “I am cut off” (**אמרתי נגזרתי**). Berlin helpfully notes the significance of this verse, “Exilic literature often uses prison as a symbol of exile. So here again there is a nexus between exile and death.”²⁰⁴ To the speaker of Lamentations 3, Judah’s exile to Babylon is akin to his personal death. And he expresses this reality in similar words to Psalm 31:23a and Jonah 2:5a. The famed medieval Rabbi Rashi brilliantly relates the waters in this verse to non-Jewish nations just like the waters in Psalm 42:8 (cf Jonah 2:4b) and elsewhere.²⁰⁵ This leads to a collective interpretation of **נגזרתי** as the voice of the exiled nation but expressed through the suffering of one person **אני הגבר ראה עני** (I am the man who has seen affliction [Lam 3:1]).²⁰⁶ The same verb is also used of the innocent sufferer in Isaiah 53:8 and of the nation in exile in Ezekiel 37:11. Moreover, Kelsey sagely observes that the verb **גרש** recalls Cain’s exile east of the garden (Gen 4:14) leading her to conclude, “From neither Cain nor Jonah is there any acknowledgement of wrongdoing; each

²⁰³ Dobbs-Allsopp, “Linguistic Evidence for the Date of Lamentations.”

²⁰⁴ Adele Berlin, *Lamentations: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 97.

²⁰⁵ He comments on **צפ־מים** with one word, **עפ"ם**, an acronym which stands for **עבודת כוכבים ומזלות** (worshippers of stars and planets). This was frequently used in medieval Jewish writings to refer to non-Jews.

²⁰⁶ Robert B. Salters, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Lamentations*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 266.

man apparently regards the punishment as unjust.”²⁰⁷ These exilic themes of a corporate individual experiencing watery distress innocently and calling out for deliverance align almost perfectly with what we have seen so far in Jonah’s prayer.

To summarize our findings, Jonah 2:5a refigures Psalm 31:23a with slight modifications to align with Jonah’s unique character and situation. The two texts share multiple points of verbal and thematic resonance, including language, the overarching themes of exile and return to the temple, the motif of innocent suffering, and attitudes toward non-Israelites. Moreover, Hodayot 12 also uses Psalm 31:23a with similar overtones but with an added emphasis on covenant. Finally, Jonah 2:5a revolves in the same orbit as Lamentations 3:54 which also echoes Psalm 31:23a. Jonah, in modifying the verb נגרוזתי from Psalm 31:23 (“I am cut off”) to נגרשתי (“I am cast away”) blends the two concepts of death and exile together much like Lamentations 3:54. This might even align Jonah with Cain in his protest against unjust punishment. A clear pattern of Jonah’s (the author’s and the character’s to an extent) rich and layered engagement with the Psalms begins to emerge, enriching both the narrative and the psalm of Jonah.

²⁰⁷ Marian Kelsey, “The Book of Jonah and the Theme of Exile,” *JSOT* 45, no. 1 (2020): 133. Weimar also sees a connection to the Cain story through this verb. Weimar, *Jona*, 249. Tiemeyer notes this connection as well, proposing a further connection to Genesis 3:23 and Jonah 2:4 with similar verbal roots. Tiemeyer, “Jonah, the Eternal Fugitive,” 259–63.

2.7 Exilic Longing for Return to the Temple (Jonah 2:5b)

The MT of Jonah 2:5b reads as follows:

אך אוסיף להביט אל־היכל קדשך

surely, I will once again look towards your holy temple

This line is represented as it is, save one minor lacuna, by Mur88:

אך אוסיף להביט אל ה[י]כל קדשך

The first word of this line has been variously rendered. 4QXII^g has a curious lacuna right after the first word of this line:

אכ[ה אסף ל]הביט אל היכל קודשך

As Lange notes, the medial *kaph* likely does not end the word אֵך because 4QXII^g does not use medial letters in final position. Therefore, he thinks “the 4QXII^g-text replaced the more difficult to understand affirmative אַך (‘surely’) in Jonah 2:5 with the interrogative אַכָּה (‘how’),” extending a lament rather than a sure confidence of deliverance.²⁰⁸ But this would be the only time in all of the Qumran scrolls that this word is spelled defectively without a *yodh*, making this suggestion questionable at best. It is better to see this as a difference in orthography.²⁰⁹ The OG also struggles with the first word but represents the rest of the verse without any change:

ἄρα προσθήσω τοῦ ἐπιβλέψαι πρὸς τὸν ναὸν τὸν ἅγιόν σου

shall I indeed look again to your holy temple?

Here, ἄρα is an interrogative particle which marks anxiety or impatience.²¹⁰ Theodotion translates it with πῶς, reading the Hebrew word as אַי. Naturally, there have been many proposals of

²⁰⁸ Armin Lange, “4QXIIg (4Q82) as an Editorial Text,” *Textus* 26 (2016): 111.

²⁰⁹ Gelston, *BHQ*, 93.

²¹⁰ Henry George Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Revised (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 233.

emendation of the first word over the years.²¹¹ But Barthélemy is right in noting that the link between Jonah 2:5 and Psalm 31:23 might mean that אֵל (MT) and not אֱלֹהִים can carry the semantic force of הַמִּקְדָּשׁ, contrasting the despair in Jonah 2:5a with a confident assertion that Jonah would once again look at the holy sanctuary of God.²¹² As discussed in Jonah 2:3a, the past tenses convey a hopeful, prophetic confidence throughout the prayer, so אֵל as introducing Jonah's hope that he will once again see God's holy temple makes good sense in the prayer here.²¹³ In short, the MT portrays Jonah at this point in his prayer as confident in his deliverance, whereas the Greek traditions soften this confidence by inserting pious uncertainty into the prayer. As the reader discovers, this softening of Jonah's confidence in the OG happens a few more times through the psalm, reimagining the prophet in more conventional terms.²¹⁴

2.7.1 *Partial Integration*

Other than the continued influence of Psalm 31:23, can we detect any possible intertexts in the composition of Jonah 2:5b?²¹⁵ Evidence for intertextuality can be found in partial integration of intertexts (either verbal or conceptual) that results in incongruence in the target text. This line introduces elements that are unexpected in the book of Jonah. The phrase הַיְכָל קֹדֶשׁ (holy temple) typically refers to the temple in Jerusalem (Pss 5:8; 79:1; 138:2). How can the northern prophet

²¹¹ Dominique Barthélemy, Stephen Desmond Ryan, and Adrian Schenker, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancient Testament: Ezechiel, Daniel et les 12 Prophetes*, OBO 50 (Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 3:708.

²¹² Barthélemy, Ryan, and Schenker, *CTAT*, 3:709. Sasson, *Jonah*, 179–80. Erickson, *Jonah*, 327.

²¹³ Tiemeyer points out that Jerome thought Jonah's prophetic spirit enabled him to dwell on his yet future deliverance. Tiemeyer, *Jonah*, 144.

²¹⁴ Larry Perkins, "The Septuagint of Jonah: Aspects of Literary Analysis Applied to Biblical Translation," *BIOSCS* 20 (1987): 48–50.

²¹⁵ Of course, it could also be a totally original composition without direct textual influence as we saw in Jonah 2:3b.

from the eighth century divided monarchy hope to look upon the Jerusalem temple?²¹⁶ The references to the temple are limited to this prayer in the book, suggesting either that the entire prayer is secondary to the book or that there is partial integration of different intertexts.

The construction **אל+ נבט** further underscores this line's uniqueness. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, this combination is used for looking towards God (Ex 3:6; Isa 22:11; Zech 12:10; Ps 34:6), his commandments (Ps 119:6), people (1 Sam 16:7; 2 Kings 3:14; Isa 51:2; 66:2), the bronze serpent (Num 21:9), the rock from which Israel were hewn (Isa 51:1), the earth (Isa 51:6), and toil (Hab 1:13) but never for looking at the temple or the tabernacle.²¹⁷ Even the two psalms which have the exact phrase **אל-היכל קדשך**—Psalm 5:8 and 138:2—depict the psalmist worshipping or prostrating himself (**אשתחוה**) in the temple, not looking at or towards the temple. Some psalmists even hope to live in the temple (Ps 23:6; 27:4), but never to look at the temple. Perhaps the author of Jonah's psalm recognizes the spatial limitations of the prophet and says that he would merely look at it, making this unique phrase more tailor-made for Jonah (the character) rather than a stock phrase. Or maybe the author meant to use the temple as a circumlocution to

²¹⁶ Nogalski, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, and Jonah*, 355. Scholars have dealt with this in different ways. Some have argued that the Jerusalem temple is in view and others think the heavenly temple is the referent (Ps 11:4; Mic 1:2). Sasson, *Jonah*, 181. Erickson helpfully notes that the temple space was in a different dimension to the biblical authors. The Jerusalem temple is somehow united to the heavenly temple and therefore can act as the antipole to the deep waters. Erickson, *Jonah*, 328. Niditch thinks that asking these questions is unnecessary and unhelpful. Niditch, *Jonah*, 74. But it is precisely the incoherence raised by these questions that invites comparison with other texts. For a helpful consideration of hermeneutics of composite texts in the Pentateuch and biblical texts more generally, see Hindy Najman and Konrad Schmid, "Reading the Blood Plague (Exodus 7:14–25): The Hermeneutics of a Composite Text," *JBL* 141, no. 1 (2022): 23–42.

²¹⁷ Opgen-Rhein notes more generally that participation in temple liturgy could be described as a visual process as seeing God himself (Ex 34:23; Ps 63:3a; 84:8), his loveliness (Ps 27:4), his power and glory (Ps 63:3b), a procession (Ps 68:25). Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 187.

avoid the image of directly seeing God, much like what the Targum does with the phrase מנגד (before your sight) in Jonah 2:5a by substituting it with מקביל מימרח (before your Memra).²¹⁸

2.7.2 Reading Jonah 2:5b with the Psalms

Jonah 2:5b might not have a direct quotation from the Psalms, but it reflects psalmic traditions relevant to both the psalm and the story. I demonstrated the prayer's deep interaction with particular Psalms thus far. In what follows, I will show how this line relates to traditions found in several psalms.

2.7.2.1 Intertextual resonance with Psalm 5: Temple worship and divine justice

Jonah's prayer in 2:5b echoes Psalms 5 and 138, which both contain the exact phrase אלהי-היכל קדשך (toward your holy temple). These psalms highlight themes of proper temple worship, moral contrast, and divine justice that resonate strongly with Jonah's situation.

Psalm 5 portrays the temple as a place of justice where the righteous are welcomed and the wicked are excluded. Konrad Schaefer's remarks on Psalm 5 are suggestive of what I think is the significance of the temple in this psalm and that of Jonah, "The psalmist prepares a legal defense that expects a final settlement and ritual sacrifice in the temple."²¹⁹ His defense is based on his moral qualifications over his enemies. God does not delight in wickedness nor does evil dwell with him (Ps 5:5), implying that those who commit evil deeds cannot enter the temple.²²⁰ Only the

²¹⁸ Etan Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Jonah*, Third Edition (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1981), 74. Simon notes that seeing the temple creates a balance with the first part of the verse which describes Jonah being driven away from God's sight. Simon, *Jonah*, 21.

²¹⁹ Schaefer, *Psalms*, 15. Gerstenberger notes that there is disagreement about the existence of a temple court in ancient Israel. Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 60.

²²⁰ Schaefer, *Psalms*, 15.

righteous person can stand before God's presence in the sanctuary and worship there as opposed to those who commit wicked acts (Ps 5:6):

לֹא־יִתְּצֻבוּ הַזֵּלִים לִנְגַד עֵינֶיךָ שְׁנֵאת כָּל־פְּעֻלֵי אוֹן²²¹

The boastful will not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers (NRSV)

There is a clear contrast between the psalmist who can enter the temple and the Other who cannot because of their moral behavior.²²² Furthering this contrast is Psalm 5:8, which has a very similar *casus pendens* to Psalm 31:23 and Jonah 2:5a, 10: וַאֲנִי בְּרַב חֶסֶדךָ אָבוֹא בֵּיתְךָ אֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֱלֹהֵיכָל־קֹדֶשְׁךָ (But as for me, I will enter your house because of your great faithfulness; I will bow down towards your holy temple in your fear). The preposition **אל** orientates the prostration of the psalmist *towards* the temple, highlighting the proper posture of worship. This can be understood in contrast to those who turn their backs against the temple (**אחריהם אל־היכל**) in Ezekiel 8:16, who laments improper worship in the temple. Perhaps **בִּירֵאתְךָ** (in your fear) makes this orientation clearer in Psalm 5:8. As opposed to the wicked who cannot even temporarily sojourn in the temple (Ps 5:5), the psalmist knows the correct way to worship in the temple, in the fear of Yahweh.²²³ This is a subtle but salient point in the book of Jonah. The prophet is presented as the one who *knows* Yahweh (Jonah 1:9, 12) and his religion whereas the non-Israelites in the story can only guess what is appropriate (Jonah 1:6–7, 3:9). Even the genre of the psalm elevates Jonah's prayer above the spontaneous prose prayers of the sailors in chapter 1 and the Ninevites in chapter 3. But ironically, the sailors also "fear" (**ירא**) Yahweh with great fear (Jonah 1:10) just as Jonah does

²²¹ The phrase **לנגד עיניך** (before your eyes) in Psalm 5:6 resembles Jonah's lament that he was cut off from God's sight in Jonah 2:5a.

²²² Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 1:155.

²²³ Martin Ravndal Hauge, *Between Sheol and Temple: Motif Structure and Function in the I-Psalms*, JSOTSup 178 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 177.

(Jonah 1:9). Jonah (the character), like the psalmist, aligns himself with those who are righteous and fit to worship in the temple, contrasting himself with evildoers. However, Jonah's confidence in his return to the temple contrasts with his disobedience, raising questions about his moral standing.

The contrast between the righteous and the wicked is sustained further in the psalm by depicting the evil of the enemies (Ps 5:10–11). They must be held guilty for their deeds (Ps 5:11a). Because of their many acts of transgression, they must be driven out (Ps 5:11b). The word “driven out” (נָדַח) is a synonym of גָּרַשׁ which Jonah uses in Jonah 2:5a wherein he fears that he is cast out like evildoers.²²⁴ But the psalmist here is assured that Yahweh blesses the righteous (Ps 5:13), a group of which he is part. So, the temple serves as the place of justice, for it is where the righteous and the wicked are separated for their respective destinies. We can already see how this serves Jonah's case in chapter 4 where he wants Nineveh to be held responsible for their evil (cf. Ps 5:11a).

2.7.2.2 Intertextual resonance with Psalm 138: Praise for end of exile

Psalm 138 is related to Psalm 5 with the phrase אֶשְׁתַּחוּהוּ אֶל־הֵיכַל קֹדֶשׁ (I will bow down towards your holy temple [Pss 5:8b; 138:2]) and provides another layer of resonance with Jonah 2:5b. This psalm is often seen as a prayer of thanksgiving for deliverance, similar to Jonah's context. Limburg's comment on the similarity of this phrase to Jonah 2:5b is illuminating: “Psalm 138 presents the sort of prayer that an individual might use to give thanks on such an occasion.”²²⁵ The occasion he was referring to is that of an answer to prayer for deliverance. The preceding psalm, Psalm 137, provides the occasion for thanksgiving when it asks the question in 137:4, “How

²²⁴ See discussion on this verb in the previous section on Jonah 2:5a.

²²⁵ Limburg, *Jonah: A Commentary*, 67.

can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Psalm 138 is placed next to Psalm 137 as a way for the exiles to praise God in their own rebuilt temple when the exile ends.²²⁶ In support of this are some Greek manuscripts who add the superscription, ζαχαριου εν τη διασπορα (Zechariah in the exile).²²⁷ When the exile ends, even the foreign kings will join in their song (Ps 138:4) because God will not "forsake the works of his hands" (Ps 138:8). This correlates neatly with the evidence concerning Jonah's situation. How can he give thanks in the darkness of the fish's belly away from the land of Israel and the temple? The words of Psalm 138 seem appropriate for exactly such a situation. In the words of Jonah 2:5b, then, there is perhaps even an expectation of cosmic restoration of the temple and land as Anderson says,

So when Jonah, sinking in the waters of the Sea of Chaos, yearns to see YHWH's Temple, we must see that it is not a simple wish to go to the Jerusalem Temple, neither is it a wish to 'go to heaven.' Rather the temple imagery in Jonah expresses the deeper postexilic hope of a full restoration of the land and Temple to that of Eden-like status.²²⁸

In this way, Jonah's psalm does not simply use the language of traditional piety to characterize Jonah as a pietistic prophet, but also creates a complex case for a return from exile that most post-exilic prophets were already making, furthering the argument that Jonah is a "meta-prophetic" book. This intertextual layering enhances Jonah's psalm, presenting it not just as a moment of individual devotion but as part of a larger narrative of exile and return.

Psalm 138's connection to the book of Jonah does not stop there. In Psalm 138:2, the psalmist wants to go to the temple and prostrate himself in worship and praise God for his name,

²²⁶ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 532. Susan Gillingham, *Psalms Through the Centuries: A Reception History Commentary on Psalms 73–151*, vol. 3, Wiley Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2022), 372.

²²⁷ Rahlfs, *Psalmi Cum Odis*, X, 322.

²²⁸ Joel Edmund Anderson, "Jonah's Peculiar Re-Creation," *BTB* 41, no. 4 (2011): 183.

for his grace, his faithfulness (אמת). Jonah is called בן־אמתי (son of Amittai), an epithet which characterizes Jonah as the “son of truth, having the truth of God.”²²⁹ This connection deepens through Psalm 138:3, where the psalmist thanks God that on the day he called God answered him ביום קראתי ותענני (On the day I called, you answered me), the same way Jonah begins his prayer קראתי מצרה לי אל־יהוה ויענני (I called from my distress to YHWH and he answered me [Jonah 2:3a]). Additionally, Psalm 138:1 and 4 place the psalm in an international setting where the psalmist praises God “before the gods” (נגד אלהים);²³⁰ these are the gods of the kings of the earth (138:4).²³¹ Consequently, Hossfeld maintains that unlike Psalm 5:8, Psalm 138:2 does not place the petitioner in the temple but rather in the direction of the temple, complementing the exilic trajectory set by the preceding psalm.²³² In other words, Psalm 138 is claiming an international Yahwism which even foreign kings will acknowledge. Kraus connects this with the theological emphasis of Isaiah 40–55 when he says, “The message of Deutero-Isaiah must be presupposed.”²³³ This international setting of the psalms anticipates Jonah’s encounters with non-Israelites, such as the sailors praying to their gods (Jonah 1:5) and the repentance of Nineveh (Jonah 3:5ff). In light of this, Psalm 138:8c, “do not forsake the work of your hands” (Deut 4:31; 31:6, 8) is especially pertinent to Jonah’s case in his prayer. Jonah seems to be fine with international Yahwism as long

²²⁹ Bewer, *Jonah*, 8.

²³⁰ The Greek translator opts for a monotheistic translation, ἐναντίον ἀγγέλων (before angels), and 11Ps^a adds the divine name to the text to make אלהים refer to Yahweh instead. For a discussion of the different possibilities of interpretation, see Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 507. Gillingham, *Psalms 3*, 3:372–73.

²³¹ Hakham, *Psalms*, 3:138. Hossfeld’s comments on this are helpful: “The petitioner, in stating this place, describes the reality of his Diaspora situation ‘on foreign soil, in the presence of other gods.’” Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 528. This lines up with the author of Jonah’s own exilic perspective.

²³² Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 528.

²³³ Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 506. Cf. Gerstenberger, *Psalms 2*, 398.

as Yahweh does not forsake his people. And what better way to remind Yahweh of that than to use the words of Psalm 138 in his prayer?

2.7.2.3 Intertextual resonance with Psalm 11: The upright will see God in the temple

Psalm 11:4 presents another relevant use of **היכל קדש** (cf. Mic 1:2; Hab 2:20; Ps 79:1): **יהוה בהיכל קדשו יהוה בשמים כסאו עיניו יחזו עפעפיו יבחנו בני אדם** (The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord, his throne is in the heavens and his eyes watch, his eyelashes test the sons of man). The focus on God's sight is complemented by the end of the psalm in Psalm 11:7 which says, **כי־צדיק יראה פניו** (for the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright will see his face). The same kind of parallelism is at work in Jonah 2:5 where the first line laments being cast away from God's *eyes* and the second line hopes to *see* God's holy temple. This interplay between sight and righteousness reflects Jonah's (the character's) unspoken belief that only the upright can see God in the temple. Furthermore, it is enticing to see a further connection to Psalm 11:1 where the psalmist says, **בִּיהוָה חֲסִיתִי אֵיךְ תֹאמְרוּ לְנַפְשִׁי נוֹדֵי הָרֶכֶס צָפוּר** (I take refuge in the Lord; how can you say to my soul, 'Flee like a bird to your mountain?') Jonah's name, which means 'Dove,' and his actions in fleeing from God make for a riveting comparison of these two texts.

2.7.2.4 Intertextual resonance with Psalm 79: The nations' relationship to the temple

Psalm 79:1, the only other psalm containing **היכל קדש**, laments the nations defiling the Jerusalem temple during the Babylonian conquest: **אלהים באו גוים בנחלתך טמאו את־היכל קדשך** (O God, the nations have come into your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple; they have made Jerusalem into a heap of ruins). Thus, not only are the nations unqualified to enter the temple but they pose a danger to its sanctity. Using this terminology for the temple in Jonah's prayer not only casts him in positive light but also works to undermine the

standing of the nations in relation to it. If Jonah 2:5b is reminiscent of Psalm 79:1, it will also recall the psalmist's call for divine justice against the nations,

Pour out your anger on the nations that do not know you, and on the kingdoms that do not call on your name. For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his habitation...Return sevenfold into the bosom of our neighbors the taunts with which they taunted you, O Lord. Then we your people, the flock of your pasture, will give thanks to you forever. (Ps 79:6–7, 12–13) (NRSV).

This resonates with Jonah's frustration over God's mercy toward Nineveh (Jonah 4:2).

Yet, Jonah's use of this phrase also raises the irony (created by the author) of his own disobedience, subtly inviting the readers to reflect on the true qualifications for standing in God's presence. In this vein, the same phrase leads us to Micah 1:2 where the Lord bears witness to the sin of Samaria and Judah from his holy temple:

שמעו עמים כלם הקשיבי ארץ ומלאה ויהי אדני יהוה בכם לעד אדני מהיכל קדשו

Hear, you peoples, all of you; listen, O earth, and all that is in it; and let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple (NRSV)

Similarly, Habakkuk uses this epithet in 2:20 where God promises to send Judah into exile because of their sins:

יהוה בהיכל קדשו הס מפניו כל-הארץ

But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him (NRSV)

But perhaps that is not what Jonah (the character) wants to remind God of. The references to the temple in the Psalms seem more fitting to make Jonah's case. But at the same time, the literary context of the Minor Prophets ensures that the reader cannot escape them.

In summary, Jonah 2:5b is a creatively and originally composed poetic line, part of which resonates with Psalms 5, 11, 79, and 138. Reading it alongside these psalms enriches Jonah's prayer by filling in the subtleties of Jonah's case for his deliverance and by extension his case for

the preservation of God's people over against those who do not qualify to ascend to the mountain of the Lord. Hunter's observation on the specific choice of the phrase *היכל קדש*, evocative of the texts we discussed above, is valuable, "All of these are part of the subterranean thought patterns of the psalm in Jonah, and indicate that the choice of this particular phrase, and its reiteration in v. 7 is no accident."²³⁴ This rich and evocative line amplifies the tensions in the book of Jonah rather than detract from it.

²³⁴ Hunter, *The Judgement of Jonah*, 142.

2.8 Encircled by Depths, Bound by Reeds, and Submerged in the Psalms (Jonah 2:6)

Some scholars think Jonah 2:6 is the center of Jonah's psalm where the author describes the waters and the deep closing in on him, making this line significant in lamenting the plight of the prophet.²³⁵ The MT of Jonah 2:6 reads:

אֶפְפוּנִי מִיָּם עַד־נֶפֶשׁ תְּהוֹם יִסְבְּבֵנִי סוּף חָבוּשׁ לְרֹאשִׁי

Waters encompassed me, even up to my soul; the deep surrounded me; reed wrapped around my
head

This line is represented with one slight change in 4Q82 where the first verb is singular rather than plural:²³⁶

אֶפְפוּנִי מִיָּם ׀ נֶפֶשׁ תְּהוֹם יִסְבְּבֵנִי סוּף חָבוּשׁ לְרֹאשִׁי

Mur88, on the other hand, conforms to MT:

אֶפְפוּנִי מִיָּם עַד [נֶפֶשׁ תְּהוֹם יִסְבְּבֵנִי סוּף חָבוּשׁ לְרֹאשִׁי]

Interestingly, the same change 4Q82 makes is reflected in the Greek traditions along with a few more differences. The OG reads:

περιεχύθη μοι ὕδωρ ἕως ψυχῆς, ἄβυσσος ἐκύκλωσέ με ἐσχάτη, ἔδυσ ἡ κεφαλὴ μου εἰς σχισμὰς ὀρέων

Water was poured around me to the soul; the Abyss encircled me to the end, my head plunged to
the clefts of the mountains

מים (water) is translated with a singular noun, ὕδωρ (water) and thus a third person singular verb, περιεχύθη (it was poured around) for the third person plural אֶפְפוּנִי (they encompassed me). This

²³⁵ Weimar, *Jona*, 219.

²³⁶ Lange agrees with my observation whereas Gelston suggests that this is merely an orthographic variant of a plural verb form in which a *qibuts* under the second פ could represent the third plural ending. Lange, "4QXIIg (4Q82) as an Editorial Text," 111. Gelston, *BHQ*, 62.

reading matches the singular verb in 4Q82, אפפני (it encompassed me). However, the OG has a passive verb instead of active, defying any explanation. The Greek translator also makes a few more changes that can be explained. He breaks up the syntax of סוף חבוש לראשי (reed wrapped around my head) and expands this line by borrowing the next two words from the next poetic unit in the MT, לקצבי הרים (to the clefts of the mountains). Levine thinks there was a “corrupt” *Vorlage*,²³⁷ but it is more likely that the translator might have had to do this because of mistranslating the word סוף, which is pointed as סוף (reed) by the MT but was understood by its alternative vocalization/reading tradition סוף (end) as an adjective.²³⁸ The Old Latin also takes this word to be an adverb (“postremo” meaning “afterwards”) instead of a noun. The Nahal Hever Greek text, on the other hand, is somewhat closer to the MT:

π[ερι] ἐχύθησάν] με ὕδατα ἕως ψυχῆς Ἀβυσσος ἐκύκλω[σέν με ἐσχά]τη, ἔλος περιέσχ[ε]ν τὴν
κεφαλὴν μου.

Waters [were poured over] me up to the soul; the abyss surround[ded me to the utmo]st; reed
encircled my head

First, it translates מים with a plural ὕδατα, which likely took a plural verb as seen in the reconstruction.²³⁹ Second, even though סוף is read similarly as meaning “end,” it is also translated by its other meaning with the word, ἔλος (“marsh-meadow”), which also pours around (περιχέω) the psalmist. This allows the translator to keep סוף as the subject of the sentence rather than make

²³⁷ Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Jonah*, 76.

²³⁸ Gelston, *BHQ*, 62.

²³⁹ Lange chalks this up to the “very literal character of the recension.” Lange, “4QXIIg (4Q82) as an Editorial Text,” 111.

לראשי the subject as the OG does. So, this Kaige text tries to wrestle with both meanings of the word and preserves both traditions. Third, while the OG translates חבוש with ἔδω, the Nahal Hever text repeats the verb, περιχέω, from the beginning of the sentence and does not recognize the passive participle. But since the Hebrew text is practically unaltered, we can assume that the later versions were working off the same text rather than a different *Vorlage*.²⁴⁰ In support of this is the Targum which attests to the MT with אֶקְפוּנִי מֵיָא עַד מוֹתָא תְּהוּמָא סְחוּר־סְחוּר לִי יִמָּא דְסוּף תְּלִי עֵיל מִן רִישִׁי (The waters encompassed me to the point of death, the deep surrounded me. The Reed Sea hung over my head). So, despite the multiple attempts of early translations to render this line differently, their reasoning from a stable consonantal text can be deduced with sensible confidence, leading to the conclusion that the MT of this line represents an ancient consonantal tradition that can be read differently than how the Masoretes read it. The consonantal text remains stable through the different readings.

2.8.1 אֶקְפוּנִי ([waters] encompassed me)

The first four words of Jonah 2:6 reflect a connection to the psalms, as the verb אֶקְפֵּי appears exclusively in psalmic texts (2 Sam 22:5; Pss 18:5; 40:13; 116:3). This rare and fixed verb form is commonly associated with lament psalms, suggesting that its presence in Jonah's psalm may be an intentional imitation of psalmic language rather than a direct allusion to a specific psalm.²⁴¹ Notably, this verb appears only two times in the Qumran Scrolls both of which in the Hodayot (1QH^a 11:29 and 13:41), where it retains its psalmic form (אֶקְפֵּי) but without the pronominal suffix.

²⁴⁰ Martin Mulzer, "Satzgrenzen im Jonabuch im Vergleich von hebräischer und griechischer Texttradition," *BN* 113 (2002): 66–67.

²⁴¹ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 52.

This flexibility in the Hodayot highlights their free adaptation of psalmic material compared to Jonah, whose use of אפפוני closely mirrors the Psalms.

In Jonah 2:6, the verb אפפוני gives explicit agency to the waters that overwhelm Jonah, entirely distancing Yahweh's involvement. This use contrasts sharply with Jonah 2:4a, where Yahweh's role is more evident.²⁴² Jonah now experiences the complete absence of Yahweh's presence, a reality also expressed by this verb in the psalms where אפף conveys the threat of overwhelming forces and the perceived absence of divine intervention.

2.8.1.1 Verbal Resonance

The exact form אפפוני appears in three psalmic texts—2 Samuel 22:5, Psalm 18:5, and Psalm 116:3—all of which share verbal and thematic elements with Jonah's psalm. The strong influence of Psalms 18 and 2 Samuel 22 on Jonah 2 has already been established in Jonah 2:3b. This section now considers whether Psalm 116 participates in the same network of psalms that shape Jonah's prayer.

On first impression, it seems as though Psalm 116:3 merely echoes Psalm 18:5 and therefore does not necessarily feature in Jonah 2. After all, it repeats the next two words from Psalm 18:5:²⁴³

The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish (NRSV)	אפפוני חבלי־מות ומצרי שאול מצאוני צרה ויגון אמצא	Psalm 116:3
The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of perdition assailed me (NRSV)	אפפוני חבלי־מות ונחלי בליעל יבעתוני	Psalm 18:5

²⁴² Weimar, *Jona*, 251.

²⁴³ Hossfeld thinks that Psalm 116:2 borrows from Psalm 18:5 here. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 217.

The repetition of these phrases suggests a shared thematic framework, with Psalm 116 drawing on the language of Psalm 18. Consequently, Jonah 2 may indirectly echo Psalm 116 through its relationship with Psalm 18.

Interestingly, Psalm 116 also has another phrase from Psalm 31:23a which we discussed in an earlier section, hinting at the possibility that this psalm reflects shared themes and concerns of the psalms which the author of Jonah’s psalm made use of:

I said in my consternation, “Everyone is a liar.” (NRSV)	אני אמרתי בחפזי כל־האדם כזב	Psalm 116:11
I had said in my alarm, “I am driven far from your sight.” But you heard my supplications when I cried out to you for help. (NRSV)	ואני אמרתי בחפזי נגרזתי מנגד עיניך	Psalm 31:23a

This shared language hints at deeper thematic overlaps between Psalm 116 and other psalms that influence Jonah’s prayer. While there is only one word directly linking Psalm 116 and Jonah 2, a broader reading reveals shared concerns and themes, such as lament, divine absence, and the psalmist’s struggle with overwhelming forces.

At this stage, we will explore whether Psalm 116 as a whole could serve to amplify the prayer of Jonah. For now, I am not positing a direct literary relationship between the two texts, as the immediate overlap is limited to a single shared word. Instead, I approach Psalm 116 as a potential participant in the broader thematic and conceptual framework we have observed in psalms more directly connected to Jonah’s prayer. Using intertextual markers such as multiplicity and thematic correspondence, we can assess whether this psalm contributes to the shared theological and poetic tradition that informs Jonah 2. Notably, a stronger argument for literary dependence on Psalm 116 will emerge later in this study, particularly in the examination of Jonah 2:10.

2.8.1.2 Multiplicity between Jonah and Psalm 116:

The psalmist in Psalm 116:1 opens with the declaration that he loves Yahweh because Yahweh heard (שמע) his voice of supplication (קולי תחנוני). Something similar is found in the opening of Jonah's prayer in 2:3 where he states that Yahweh had heard his voice (שמעת קולי). These formal features continue as they both recount the distress of the psalmists following the initial declaration that God had already heard his prayer and answered him (Ps 116:3–11; Jonah 2:4–8).²⁴⁴ In Psalm 116:3, the cords of death and the pangs of Sheol encompass the psalmist whereas Jonah's distress is related to drowning in chaotic waters. Importantly, Jonah does equate this with the womb of Sheol (Jonah 2:3b). Death is the primary force from which the psalmist was delivered in Psalm 116 (vv. 3, 8, 9, 15). Jonah's "death" in his prayer is more vividly and contextually water related. They both end with vows of thanksgiving rituals in the temple (Psalm 116:12–19; Jonah 2:10). A similar stock of vocabulary appears in these expressions of thanksgiving in both texts. Psalm 116:14a and 17a mention fulfilling vows to Yahweh and offering sacrifices of thanksgiving in language that is very close to Jonah 2:10:

To you I will sacrifice thanksgiving
sacrifices, and the name of YHWH I will
call. I will pay my vows to the Lord in the
presence of all his people

But as for me, I will sacrifice to you with a
voice of thanksgiving; what I vowed I will
pay

לך-אזבח זבח תודה ובשם יהוה אקרא Psalm
נדרתי ליהוה אשלם נגדה-נא לכל-עמו 116:17–18

ואני בקול תודה אזבחה-לך אשר נדרתי Jonah 2:10a
אשלמה

A more ambitious case of multiplicity, I propose, is found in Psalm 116:16 where the psalmist asserts that he is אני-עבדך בן-אמתך (I am your servant, the son of your maidservant). The

²⁴⁴ J. A. Emerton, "How Does the Lord Regard the Death of His Saints in Psalm CXVI. 15?," *JTS* 34, no. 1 (1983): 147.

consonantal text as it stands can also be read “I am your servant, your faithful son.”²⁴⁵ This allows for word play with Jonah 1:1 which introduces Jonah as בן־אִמְתַּי (son of Amittai), prompting us to imagine the prophet freely drawing from this psalm in his own prayer. The following thematic correspondence between the two texts further brings them two closer together.

2.8.1.3 Thematic Correspondence between Psalm 116 and Jonah 2

❖ 2.8.1.3.1 *The Petitioner’s Perspective: Longing for the temple in exile*

Psalm 116 and Jonah 2 share thematic similarities in the perspective of their petitioners, particularly in their movement from peril to divine deliverance and hope. A cluster of what Gary Rendsburg persuasively argues are northern Israelian features suggest a northern origin of Psalm 116.²⁴⁶ But, curiously, the psalm ends with a very explicit reference to worship in the courts of the Jerusalem temple: בַּחֲצֵרוֹת בֵּית יְהוָה בְּיִרוּשָׁלַם הַלְלוּ־יָהּ (in the courts of the house of YHWH, in the midst of Jerusalem; Hallelujah). How can this be if the psalm originates in the northern part of Israel?²⁴⁷ As Rendsburg notes, “Obviously there were northerners who accepted the official

²⁴⁵ More literally, “the son of your faithfulness/truth,” understanding that the expression “son of...” is meant to communicate the quality of the absolute noun. Dahood opts for this reading both in Psalm 116:16 and in 86:16, citing contextual reasons, a similar Akkadian expression in one of the Amarna Letters, and a line from the Hodayot. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II: 51–100*, AB 17 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 296. Cf. Menahem Mansoor, “Studies in the Hodayot IV,” *JBL* 76, no. 2 (1957): 145. Whatever criticism remains of Dahood’s broader methodology and on this particular point, Mansoor’s argument from the Hodayot still stands to support my reading of Psalm 116:16. For an extensive discussion of this phrase and a defense of its traditional translation against Dahood’s position, see F. Charles Fensham, “The Son of a Handmaid in Northwest Semitic,” *VT* 19, no. 3 (1969): 312–21.

²⁴⁶ Indeed Psalm 116 contains the highest concentration of these features in the entire Hebrew Bible. For a list of those features, see Gary A. Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms*, SBLMS 43 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 83–86; Gary A. Rendsburg and J. P. Fokkelman, “נִדְרֵי לַיהוָה אֲשֶׁלֶם נִגְדָה־” (Psalm 116:14b, 18b), *VT* 53, no. 3 (2003): 334. See also Dahood’s observations on this topic. Mitchell J. Dahood, *Psalms III: 101–150*, AB 17A (New Haven: Yale University, 1970), 145. This makes Psalm 116 most likely pre-exilic rather than post-exilic as most commentators think. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:114. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 386. For this reason, I do not think it is likely that Psalm 116 borrowed from Jonah 2 as Potgieter argues. Henk J. Potgieter, “I Love Yahweh and I Believe in Him - Therefore I Shall Proclaim His Name’: How Psalm 116 Integrated and Reinterpreted Its Constituent Parts,” *OTE* 32, no. 2 (2019): 406–8.

²⁴⁷ The Greek translation divides Psalm 116 into two different psalms (Pss 114 and 115), which slightly mitigates this problem. But there were probably different reasons why this division happened in the OG of Psalm 116

Israelite position concerning the centrality of Zion and Jerusalem.”²⁴⁸ Considering this, the northern provenance of Jonah the prophet is not at odds with his hope to see the Jerusalem temple in his prayer.

Both Jonah and the psalmist depict a spiritual journey that Bernd Janowski describes as their “religiösen Topographie,” (religious topography) moving from the depths of Sheol (Ps 116:3), through the lands of the living (116:9), to the temple as the ultimate destination (Ps 116:19).²⁴⁹ Thus, the perspective of the petitioner is not only from outside the land of Judah but also from the deadly pangs of Sheol. This roughly matches Jonah’s call from the belly of Sheol (Jonah 2:3), to God bringing him up out of the pit (Jonah 2:7), to the temple (Jonah 2:8, 10).²⁵⁰ Moreover, the psalmist, as a result of divine deliverance from death (116:8), hopes to walk in the presence of Yahweh in the lands of the living (116:9). The phrase *לפני יהוה* (the presence of YHWH) reminds us of Jonah’s fleeing from Yahweh, *מלפני יהוה* (from the presence of YHWH [Jonah 1:3]). While Psalm 116 lacks an explicit exilic motif, as seen in other psalms, it still presents the tension between Sheol and the temple, a thematic polarity also central to Jonah’s prayer.

which had little to do with the mention of Jerusalem temple. Cf. Hubert Tita, *Gelübde als Bekenntnis: Eine Studie zu den Gelübden im Alten Testament*, OBO 181 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 118–20.

²⁴⁸ Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence*, 27.

²⁴⁹ Bernd Janowski, “Dankbarkeit: Ein anthropologischer Grundbegriff im Spiegel der Toda-Psalmen,” in *Ritual und Poesie: Formen und Orte religiöser Dichtung im Alten Orient, im Judentum und im Christentum*, Herders Biblische Studien (Freiburg: Herder, 2003), 106.

²⁵⁰ Janowski, “Dankbarkeit,” 107.

❖ 2.8.1.3.2 *The Presumption of Innocence:*

Psalm 116 suggests a presumption of innocence on the part of the psalmist, emphasizing divine deliverance rather than personal guilt. Commenting on what may be a sustained reflection on Exodus 32–34, especially on the creed of Exodus 34:6, in Psalm 116:5, Hossfeld wonders:²⁵¹

As regards the connections to Exodus 32–34, there remains the debatable question whether knowledge of his or her own sins is part of the petitioner’s distress; this is constitutive for Exodus 32–34 (the sins of the people), but is not elsewhere a theme in thanksgiving songs

There is no reference to the psalmist’s awareness of his own sin in the psalm. On the other hand, there are hints of his self-perception as righteous. In Psalm 116:10–11, the psalmist believes he is greatly afflicted because everyone else is a liar. The source of his affliction is located in כל־הָאָדָם (all of humanity) and not in himself. In Psalm 116:15, he identifies himself with the חֲסִידִים (faithful ones) whose death is precious in the eyes of Yahweh, referencing his own near-death experience earlier (116:8).²⁵² He then very emphatically declares that he is Yahweh’s servant: אֲנִי יְהוָה כִּי־אֲנִי (O YHWH, for I am your servant, I am your servant, son of your maidservant; you have loosened my fetters [116:16]). This positive self-characterization, coupled with the absence of a specified cause for his suffering, suggests a presumption of innocence.

In conclusion, it is not entirely clear at this point whether Psalm 116 was one of the psalms that assisted in the composition of Jonah’s psalm. However, a fixed verb form from lament psalms (except Psalm 116, which is a thanksgiving psalm), a few shared locutions, and two general themes

²⁵¹ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 217. But Hossfeld does think there is a hint of the psalmist’s self-awareness as sinful in Psalm 116:6.

²⁵² Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 389. Psalm 116:15 is fraught with difficulties. Barré suggests a different reading of this verse that radically alters its meaning. Michael L. Barré, “Psalm 116: Its Structure and Its Enigmas,” *JBL* 109, no. 1 (61–78): 71–73.

in the psalm do feature in Jonah 2. Of note is the fact that Psalm 116 has nothing directly to say about the Other in relation to the psalmist—no characterization of enemies and petition to mete out justice for their wicked deeds like we have seen in other psalms. It is possible that Psalm 116 was composed in a similar fashion to Jonah’s psalm with no real contact with it. Or there might be contact between them but it is not very easily discernible. Whether Psalm 116 influenced Jonah’s psalm or developed independently, reading the two together highlights their participation in a common theological tradition, enriching our understanding of Jonah’s prayer within the broader psalmic and liturgical context.

2.8.2 מים עד־נפש (water up to the neck/soul)

2.8.2.1 Verbal Resonance

The phrase מים עד־נפש (waters up to the soul) in Jonah 2:6 is an exact match with one other psalm in the Hebrew Bible, Psalm 69:2: הושיעני אלהים כי באו מים עד־נפש (save me, O God, for waters have come up to my neck). Immediately following this, the psalmist introduces a flood of water imagery in 69:3, making this psalm a very likely candidate for intertextuality in Jonah 2:6.²⁵³ טבעתי בין מצולה ואין מעמד באתי במעמקי־מים ושבלת שטפתי (I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. [NRSV]). To determine the nature of the connection, we will first examine the availability and textual characteristics of Psalm 69 and then assess potential signs of literary dependence.

2.8.2.2 Availability

Psalm 69:1–19, with some lacunae, is preserved in 4Q83. It contains part of our verse:

הוש[יעני אלהים כי באו מים עד־נפש]

²⁵³ Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 47.

The OG gives a straightforward translation of the MT with Σῶσόν με, ὁ θεός, ὅτι εἰσέληθον ὕδατα ἕως ψυχῆς μου (Save me, O God, for waters have come up to my soul). The one slight difference is the way שׁוֹנֵן is rendered ψυχῆς μου (my soul) with the personal pronoun which is missing in the Hebrew. Rather than positing a different *Vorlage* for this, I would suggest that this is part of a smooth translation that does not always match word-for-word rendering of phrases. The tradition preserved by MT in Psalm 69:2 probably lies behind the Greek tradition too, strengthening the probability of the connection between Jonah 2:6 and Psalm 69:2.

But what of the shape of the psalm and its possible availability to the author of Jonah's psalm? This is something one cannot answer with any level of certainty. The closest we can approximate to this issue is to consider the unity of the psalm, which is debated amongst scholars. Allen argues for unity of the majority of the psalm (69:2–30) based on how the two main units (vv. 2–14a and 14b–30) relate to each other and the internal cohesion of verses 31–37.²⁵⁴ On the other hand, Gerstenberger dismisses Allen's argument as seeming "partially artificial."²⁵⁵ However, Gerstenberger's case for the composite nature of the psalm is not without problems. His argument boils down to the fact that there are different, not necessarily contradicting, portrayals of the supplicant in the psalm, which for him means that there was an original complaint psalm about the psalmist going down to hell and a later layer by a Yahweh worshipper who is concerned about temple worship and the confession of a universal God. He does not offer a compelling case for why those two portrayals could not exist simultaneously as they do in the current form of the psalm. He also relies on what he claims is the average number of poetic lines in the old complaint prayers of Babylonia to make the division between the original and later layers of the psalm.

²⁵⁴ Leslie C. Allen, "The Value of Rhetorical Criticism in Psalm 69," *JBL* 105, no. 4 (1986): 585.

²⁵⁵ Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 52.

Ultimately, assumptions about the evolution of Israelite religion inform Gerstenberger's atomization of Psalm 69 rather than any textual indicators. On the other side of the debate with Allen is Kraus who plainly says, "There ought to be no doubt about the unity of the psalm. Attempts to divide the song into two different poems should be thought of as miscarried."²⁵⁶

One does not need to take Kraus' position to acknowledge that the psalm came to be in its current form at some point in its transmission which probably antedates the book of Jonah.²⁵⁷ This is because of the hope of rebuilding the cities of Judah and inheriting the land in verses 36–37, a hope that would have resonated with early post exilic communities and Jonah's psalm.²⁵⁸

2.8.2.3 Modification

As we saw in the earlier discussion, אַפְפוֹנִי in Jonah 2:6 is a fixed psalmic verb form which the author of Jonah's psalm uses to give the psalm an overall psalmic character. But he joins the verb with another phrase from Psalm 69:2 even though that phrase comes with its own verb, בָּאֵן, and would have perfectly fit Jonah's psalm.²⁵⁹ Syntactically, this modification in Jonah 2:6 makes the phrase עַד־נַפְשׁ (up to the soul) a "fakultatives Syntagma" (optional syntactic unit) rather than a needed complement in Psalm 69:2 because Jonah 2:6 can just say that the waters encompassed

²⁵⁶ Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 60. More evenhandedly, Gillingham says, "Unlike Psalm 68, the psalm is in quite good textual tradition and its structure, although comprising of some apparently unconnected verses, is quite typical of a lament." Susan Gillingham, *Psalms Through the Centuries: A Reception History Commentary on Psalms 1–72*, vol. 2, Wiley Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 374.

²⁵⁷ For a good summary of views on how the psalm came to be, see Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100*, ed. Klaus Baltzer, trans. Linda M. Maloney, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 174–75. For a critical evaluation of the apparent contradictions in the psalm that led to redactional speculations, see Christiane de Vos and Gert Kwakkel, "Psalm 69: The Petitioner's Understanding of Himself, His God, and His Enemies," in *Psalms and Prayers: Papers Read at the Joint Meeting of the Society of Old Testament Study and Het Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap in Nederland En België, Apeldoorn August 2006*, ed. Bob Becking and Eric Peels, OtSt 55 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 163–65.

²⁵⁸ Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 62. Adele Berlin, "Psalms and the Literature of Exile: Psalms 137, 44, 69, and 78," in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception*, ed. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller, VTSup 99 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 74.

²⁵⁹ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 52.

him (אפפוני מים) whereas Psalm 69:2 cannot simply say that waters came (באו מים) without עד־נפש. So, why does the author of Jonah's psalm replace the verb with another and still keep the optional עד־נפש? I propose that this modification allows Jonah's psalm to engage simultaneously with multiple psalms, expanding its intertextual reach. The result is a fusion of themes and images from Psalms 18, 116, and 69, creating a richly layered expression of distress.

Another change is found in the way עד־נפש is placed at the center of the verse in Jonah 2:6 rather than at the end like in Psalm 69:2. This poetic technique visually illustrates how Jonah is surrounded by threatening waters all around him:²⁶⁰

אפפוני מים עד־נפש תהום יסבבני

The chiastically organized verbs on either side of the verse capture this point very artistically (both visually and aurally). Thus, being at the center of the prayer, verse 6 also centers the phrase from Psalm 69:2 to fit its own literary purposes.

2.8.2.4 Partial Integration: The challenges of נפש in Jonah 2:6

The noun נפש in Jonah 2:6 has puzzled interpreters throughout history, leading to varied understandings of its meaning and function. Simon summarizes the issue well when he says:²⁶¹

As in Ugaritic and Akkadian, in biblical Hebrew *nefesh* also has the sense of mouth and throat (e.g., “Sheol has opened wide its *gullet* and parted its jaws in a measureless gape” [Isa. 5:14]; see also Eccles. 6:7) and of neck (e.g., “His feet they hurt with fetters; his soul was laid in iron” [Ps. 105:18]; see also Prov. 3:22). The medieval commentators, who did not know that this passage (and the similar phrase in Ps. 69:2) could be understood as a physical description of water reaching the organ of swallowing and breathing, had to assume that the language here is elliptical and must be filled in (e.g., Abraham ibn Ezra's “until my soul was about to die”).

²⁶⁰ Weimar, *Jona*, 251.

²⁶¹ Simon, *Jonah*, 21.

However, Simon's assumption that the medieval commentators were incorrect in translating the phrase elliptically is not entirely fair. To begin with, retaining the meaning of "throat" in Jonah 2:6 from Psalm 69:2 would be inconsistent with Jonah's (the character's) overall portrayal of his tragedy. He is said to be in the "belly of Sheol" (2:3b), cast into the depths of the sea where the underwater river surrounded him, and the breakers and waves passed over him (2:4). He descended into the bottom of the underwater mountains (2:7). The picture is that of complete immersion, not someone with their head still out of the water. So, the medieval commentators, along with the versions (the Targum has עַד מוֹתָא [unto death]), are on firmer ground than they may appear.²⁶² But to Simon's point, the language of Psalm 69:2 is more indicative of "throat" (cf. Ps 69:4). As Dahood points out, Ugaritic and Hebrew consistently remove pronominal suffixes on nouns referring to body parts.²⁶³ The absence of a possessive suffix on נַפֶּשׁ in Jonah 2:6, then, creates a sort of partial integration because the meaning transfers over only partially. This is more characteristic of allusive language as it denotes two things at the same time, existing in liminal space, not entirely at home in one of the texts. So, the phrase in Jonah 2:6 invites comparison to Psalm 69 and opens a dialogue with it, allowing us to see if there are other verbal contacts between the two texts in the next section.

2.8.2.5 Multiplicity between Jonah and Psalm 69

Psalm 69 provides a broader context for understanding Jonah 2:6, as several phrases and concepts from the psalm appear to have inspired the composition of Jonah 2. Weimar suggests that Psalm 69:3 and 16 inspired the composition of מְצוּלָה (depth) in Jonah 2:4a, comparing its citation

²⁶² Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 126. Weimar, *Jona*, 253. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 52.

²⁶³ Dahood, *Psalms* 2, 156.

character to that of Jonah 2:3a and 4b.²⁶⁴ His observation gains merit with the more explicit phraseology of Psalm 69:2 in Jonah 2:6. There might also be a faint reflection of the psalmist's fasting (69:11) and being clothed in sackcloth (69:12) in the king of Nineveh's calling of a fast and donning of sackcloth (Jonah 3:5). While direct verbal overlap is limited, the thematic alignment between Jonah's psalm and Psalm 69 creates a fertile ground for exploring their shared motifs, which will be developed in subsequent analysis.

2.8.2.6 Thematic Correspondence between Psalm 69 and Jonah

❖ 2.8.2.6.1 *The Petitioner's Perspective: Longing for the temple in watery exile*

The psalms we have examined thus far consistently present a dual perspective: watery death symbolizing exile and the temple as a place of restoration and orientation. Does Psalm 69 align with this perspective, and if so, how does it help clarify Jonah's situation?

Psalm 69 depicts the psalmist calling out to God from a miry pit, fearing he is in danger of drowning (69:2–3). The psalmist describes sinking into a deep mire where there is no place to stand; he is in deep waters and the flood has swept over him (69:3). This imagery is revisited in verses 15–16 where the psalmist pleads to be rescued from the deep waters, asking God to prevent the deep from swallowing him or the pit from closing its mouth over him. This language closely parallels Jonah's description of being enclosed by the bars of the underworld (Jonah 2:7). Whereas the psalmist in Psalm 69 might be describing his ordeal metaphorically, Jonah is literally in the sea of despair. This alignment in imagery raises the question: does Psalm 69 also reflect the theme of exile seen in other psalms, as Jonah's plight does?

A Targumic interpretation of Psalm 69:15 equates drowning with exile, **פצא יתי מן גלותא** (Deliver me from the exile, which is like the

²⁶⁴ Weimar, *Jona*, 245.

mire, and I will not sink; let me be delivered from my enemies who are like the depths of waters).²⁶⁵

For the Targumist, death caused by drowning in Psalm 69 is akin to exile. This is not without basis in the psalm itself, for verse 5 concretizes the metaphorical language of chaotic waters from verses 2–3 by describing the numerous enemies of the psalmist and their unjust persecution of him:

Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. (NRSV)

הושיעני אלהים כי באו מים עד-נפש
טבעתי בין מצולה ואין מעמד באתי
במעמקי-מים ושבילת שטפתי

Psalm
69:2–3

More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; many are those who would destroy me, my enemies who accuse me falsely. What I did not steal must I now restore? (NRSV)

רבו משערות ראשי שנאי חנם עצמו
מצמיתי איבי שקר אשר לא-גזלתי אז
אשיב

Psalm 69:5

As Groenewald explains, “the chaos-waters is a motif for the enemies which are a threat to his life and existence.”²⁶⁶ Thus, the Targumist is not just creative but also contextual in his reading of Psalm 69.²⁶⁷ Similarly, Jonah’s “death” in the sea can be read with exilic overtones as seen in the previous sections.

Psalm 69 also reflects a unique relationship to the temple as seen in verse 10, כִּי-קִנְאָתָא בֵּיתְךָ (For zeal for your house has consumed me and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me). Rather than being the nexus of redemption, the temple becomes a place of contention for the psalmist; it is because of his zeal for the temple he becomes

²⁶⁵ Gillingham points to Midrash Tehillim which also reads this psalm as referring to exile. Gillingham, *Psalms 1–72*, 2:375. Goldingay points to Theodoret who also interprets it in reference to exile. John Goldingay, *Psalms 42–89*, vol. 2, BCOT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 339.

²⁶⁶ Alphonso Groenewald, *Psalm 69: Its Structure, Redaction, and Composition*, ATM 18 (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2003), 47. Likewise, Goldingay, *Psalms 42–89*, 2:341.

²⁶⁷ Even if the psalmist is not in literal exile in the psalm, he at least feels like he is in exile. Berlin, “Psalms and the Literature of Exile,” 74.

estranged from his own family (69:9), taking on the reproach of God upon himself (69:10).²⁶⁸ Because of his zeal for God's house, the psalmist prays to God (69:14) and asks that he be delivered from his enemies who are like the deep waters. The poetic parallelism between those who hate the psalmist, and the deep waters brings this connection to the surface in Psalm 69:15, confirming my previous point that the water imagery in this psalm signifies the psalmist's enemies:

Save me from the mire, and let me not sink הצילני מטיט ואל־אטבעה

Let me be saved from those who hate me אנצלה משנאי

And from the deep waters וממעמקי־מים

Salvation from his enemies, the deep and chaotic waters, materializes in God's answer to him (69:17), more specifically in God's shining face upon his servant, the psalmist (69:18 cf. Num 6:24). The temple connection in this verse is unmistakable as conveyed by the priestly language. Verses 31–33 also place the psalmist in the temple in a sort of a thanksgiving procession with other oppressed and suffering members of the community. To sum up the message of the psalm, even though the psalmist's zeal for the temple landed him in the watery pit symbolizing his enemies, his hope is that he would once again worship Yahweh at the temple with those who love his name (69:37). He expresses this hope in the context of a divine rebuilding of Zion and the cities of Judah. The temple looms large over this verse. After all, what are cities but "temples writ large"?²⁶⁹ This longing for restoration resonates with Jonah's hope to return to God's holy temple from his own watery pit, a sign of exilic suffering.

²⁶⁸ Here, ביתך can also be read as a reference to God's people rather than the temple (cf. Hos 8:1). which would further intensify Jonah's case for fleeing from God. de Vos and Kwakkel, "Psalm 69," 166.

²⁶⁹ Mark S. Smith, *Where the Gods Are: Spatial Dimensions of Anthropomorphism in the Biblical World*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 103.

❖ 2.8.2.6.2 *The Presumption of Innocence*

Psalm 69:5 characterizes the psalmist's suffering as unjust, caused by enemies who hate him without reason (חנם) and falsely accuse him. The psalmist's rhetorical question in the same verse, לֹא־גִזְלָתִי אֶזְאָשִׁיב (what I have not stolen, should I now restore?), emphasizes the perceived injustice of his plight. However, the very next verse seems to undermine this claim of innocence, "O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you" (Ps 69:6, NRSV). Are these contradictory statements? Is the psalmist confessing his guilt in this verse? That would, of course, undermine the case I have been making up until this point. But verse 6 is not so straightforward. It is an acknowledgement of the general imperfection of humanity before God just like we have seen in a previous section where Hodayot 12:30–31 admits the sinfulness of all people before God (see 2.6.6.2). It is not a statement related to the current suffering of the psalmist. If anything, he bears reproach because of God, כִּי־עֲלִידְךָ נִשְׁאַתִּי חֲרָפָה כִּסְתָהּ כָּל־מָה פָּנִי (because for your sake I have borne reproach. Insult has covered my face [Ps 69:8]). This is clarified in 69:10 where he says that the zeal for God's house, the temple, overcame him and the insults of those who reproach God have fallen on him. So, the psalmist is not suffering punishment for his sins, enabling him to ask for deliverance rather than forgiveness.²⁷⁰ Groenewald makes this point clearly,²⁷¹

These cola (6ab) moreover function as a declaration of innocence. That means this confession of foolishness and guilt-liability can actually function in the following manner: 'I am completely without guilt before my enemies, I am sinless *coram hominibus*.'

²⁷⁰ Jerry Hwang, "'How Long Will My Glory Be Reproach?' Honour and Shame in Old Testament Lament Traditions," *OTE* 30, no. 3 (2017): 691.

²⁷¹ Groenewald, *Psalm 69*, 52–53. See also the discussion in de Vos and Kwakkel, "Psalm 69," 168–69.

This innocence in suffering is hard to maintain when in the common understanding of the ancient world, “the causal connection between guilt and suffering operates as a primal religious dogma that conjured up incalculable distresses and conflicts.”²⁷² Perhaps that was the slander of the enemies (Ps 69:5), which the psalmist is reacting against.

Psalm 69, and Jonah’s psalm by extension, participates in traditions that disconnected suffering from guilt within the dogma of retribution, something that the book of Job is known to advance.²⁷³ This point is buttressed further by God’s active role in the suffering of the psalmist (Ps 69:27): “For they persecute those whom you have struck down, and those whom you have wounded, they attack still more” (NRSV). The same kind of suffering inflicted by God is seen in Jonah 2:4, Isaiah 53, Lamentations 3, Jeremiah 15:15–21; 20:7–8, and Job. The overlap with the other related texts points to the existence of a common stock of language that signified divinely inflicted innocent suffering. By invoking Psalm 69, Jonah’s psalm aligns with this tradition, portraying the prophet as an innocent sufferer seeking restoration through divine intervention.

❖ 2.8.2.6.3 *The Perception of the Other*

As we have already seen in an earlier section, the water imagery in Psalm 69 represents the foreign enemies of the psalmist who threaten to exile him. This is in line with what we saw in Psalm 42 when considering Jonah 2:4b and is consistent with other parts of the Hebrew Bible where the enemies of Israel (usually non-Israelites) are envisioned metaphorically as chaotic waters which threaten to engulf them and drown them (Ps 69:16). The same reality extends to Jonah’s distress at sea. Weimar suggests that the waters overwhelming Jonah signifies the Assyrian

²⁷² Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 60.

²⁷³ Cf. Joel S. Kaminsky, “Would You Impugn My Justice? A Nuanced Approach to the Hebrew Bible’s Theology of Divine Recompense,” *Interpretation* 69, no. 3 (2015): 299–310. Katherine E. Southwood, *Job’s Body and the Dramatised Comedy of Moralising*, RSBW (London: Routledge, 2021).

threat to Jerusalem as seen in Psalm 124:4.²⁷⁴ Nineveh being in Assyria could very well conjure up the image from Psalm 124 for the early readers of Jonah's psalm, creating a thematic link between Jonah's plight and the psalmist's experience.

❖ 2.8.2.6.4 *Petition for Retribution*

Identifying the psalmist's enemies as foreigners, much like the Ninevites in Jonah, provides insight into why Psalm 69 offers fitting language for Jonah's perspective. In Psalm 69, the psalmist petitions for divine retribution against his enemies, who have wronged him unjustly. The psalmist is given poison for food and vinegar for drink (69:22). In his pleas for retaliation, he wishes that his enemies' table become a snare for them and their sacrificial feasts a trap (Ps 69:23); their eyes would be darkened and their loins tremble (Ps 69:24). He calls upon God's anger to burn against them (Ps 69:25), so that their camps would be desolate (Ps 69:26) because they pursue and attack those whom God has struck (Ps 69:27). In other words, he is asking for a just retribution upon his enemies. He does not want their guilt to be forgotten. Rather, he asks for God to add to their guilt so that they would not be acquitted by God (Ps 69:28). Even more, he wishes that they be blotted out of the book of the living and not be enrolled among the righteous (Ps 69:29).²⁷⁵ Perhaps he wants more than just retribution here, but it is "remarkable that the petitioner leaves all the vengeance to God."²⁷⁶ Wouldn't this make for a compelling case for the destruction of Nineveh if applied to their evil in the book of Jonah? After all, Jonah protests God's relenting from punishing Nineveh for their evil (Jonah 4:1ff). In his view, God should overturn Nineveh much like Sodom

²⁷⁴ Weimar, *Jona*, 253. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 357.

²⁷⁵ On this concept of the book of life, see de Vos and Kwakkel, "Psalm 69," 175.

²⁷⁶ de Vos and Kwakkel, "Psalm 69," 176.

and Gomorrah (Jonah 3:4). The distance between the enemies of the psalmist in Psalm 69 and the Ninevites in the book of Jonah becomes negligible when seen in this new light.

❖ 2.8.2.6.1 *Collective Identity*

Psalm 69 gives a distinct sense that the psalmist is someone who acts as an intermediary between a group of people and God. Psalm 69:7 is key in this regard, אֲלֵיבְשׁוּ בִי קוֹיֵךְ אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה (Do not let those who hope in you be put to shame because of me, O Lord GOD of hosts; do not let those who seek you be dishonored because of me, O God of Israel [NRSV]). Gerstenberger thus concludes,

Together with the two negative wishes or petitions (v. 7), which in essence mean to intercede for other members of the congregation, we get the impression that someone of central importance for the people, like Moses himself (cf. Exod 32:30–32) or the servant of Yahweh (cf. Isa 53:4–12), has been offering this prayer to God.²⁷⁷

Perhaps this is the reason the superscription connects this psalm to king David, for kings were collective personalities. Similarly, the story of Jonah portrays the prophet in the role of a mediator like Moses and Abraham (cf. Jonah 3:4). Thus, Psalm 69 proves very useful to Jonah.

In summary, even if the small phrase from Psalm 69:2 does not conjure up all of the multifaceted theology of the psalm in Jonah's prayer, it associates Jonah's watery misery with that of the psalmist in Psalm 69. In both cases the water imagery symbolizes being surrounded by foreign enemies and the existential threat of exile. When considered alongside other psalms used in Jonah's prayer, the thematic and verbal correspondences with Psalm 69 reinforce its significant influence, lending Jonah's prayer a rich intertextual foundation.

²⁷⁷ Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 47–48.

2.8.3 תהום יסבבני (the deep surrounded me)

The phrase תהום יסבבני (the deep surrounded me) comes immediately after the borrowed phrase from Psalm 69:2 in Jonah 2:6, adding mythological depth to the description of Jonah's predicament. Here, תהום (the deep) replaces נהר (river) from Jonah 2:4a, presenting a stark, asyndetic shift.²⁷⁸ Thus far in the prayer, Jonah's prayer has drawn from a rich lexicon of primeval chaotic waters and depths—שאול (Sheol), מצולה (depth), ימים (seas), נהר (river), משבר (breaker), גל (wave), and מים (water). The inclusion of תהום, a term laden with mythological connotations in the Hebrew Bible, intensifies Jonah's portrayal of his suffering. Perhaps it is already anticipated by the quotation of Psalm 42:8 in Jonah 2:4b where the full verse reads: תהום-אל-תהום קורא לקול: צנוריד כל-משבריד וגליד עלי עברו (Deep calls to deep at the thunder of your fountains; all your breakers and your waves passed over me).

The term, תהום, appears 36 times in the Hebrew Bible to refer in multifaceted ways to oceanic depths and primeval waters that continually threaten the order of creation.²⁷⁹ Its inclusion in Jonah's prayer echoes these themes of chaos and danger, highlighting the intensity and inescapability of Jonah's suffering in familiar mythological terms.

2.8.3.1 Possible Intertextual Inspirations

Although תהום יסבבני does not need to borrow directly from a specific text, it may draw on language and imagery from Exodus 15:5 and Psalm 18:5. As we observed earlier in Jonah 2:6, Psalm 18:5 informs at least the first word of this line. Jonah 2:6a unfolds in the same poetic manner

²⁷⁸ Almbadh wonders if the singular here is a result of the weakening of the mythological sense, but there does not seem to be much evidence of that in light of the other mythological elements in the prayer. Almbadh, *Studies in the Book of Jonah*, 28.

²⁷⁹ Nicholas J. Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament*, BibOr 21 (Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 59–62.

as Psalm 18:5 with the first word being the same *qatal* verbs and the last words being *yiqtol* verbs which denote past tense rather than future.²⁸⁰ Furthermore, the next verse in Psalm 18:6 contains a similar expression to Jonah 2:6, שְׂאוֹל סָבְבוּנִי (Sheol surrounded me). In Jonah's prayer, this preterite feature of the *yiqtol* is only found in the two instances of the verb יִסְבְּבוּנִי (Jon 2:4a and 6a). Cross assumes this is a remnant of an earlier version of the psalm that was composed in archaic Hebrew.²⁸¹ But I propose that it is rather the result of an intertextual dialogue with Psalm 18:5–6 and Exodus 15:5.

The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish (NRSV)	תִּהְיֶה יָסְמוּ יָרְדוּ בַּמְצוֹלָה כְּמוֹ-אֲבָן Exodus 15:5
The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of perdition assailed me. The cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. (NRSV)	אֶפְפוּנִי חֲבִלֵי-מוֹת וְנַחֲלִי בִלְעָל יִבְעֶתוּנִי Psalm 18:5–6 חֲבִלֵי שְׂאוֹל סָבְבוּנִי קִדְמוּנִי מוֹקְשֵׁי מוֹת
Waters encompassed me; the deep surrounded me	אֶפְפוּנִי מִיַּם עַד-נֶפֶשׁ תִּהְיֶה יָסְבְּבוּנִי Jonah 2:6a

Considering the overall characterization of Jonah, this archaic feature in his prayer serves to elevate his diction by means of the imitation of the ancient psalms of Israel. In Psalm 18:5–6, the psalmist is terrified by the torrents of destruction such that Sheol itself encircled him. Jonah's psalm describes Jonah's situation in a similar way to what we saw earlier. Likewise, in Exodus 15, the Pharaoh and his army was thrown into the Red sea (יַם-סוּף) in 15:4; then in 15:5, the floods

²⁸⁰ The combination of *qatal* and *yiqtol* in poetic verse both of which denote past tense is a feature of archaic biblical Hebrew. We find a cluster of these syntagms first in Exodus 15 (vv. 12, 14 [SP], 15), then in Deuteronomy 32 (8–13), 33 (vv 3, 8), in Judges 5 (vv. 6, 17), in a brief poetic piece in 2 Samuel 1:22 (although here we find a long imperfect form which might have been a later scribal adaptation of the short *yaqtul* form), and in the psalm at the end of Samuel (2 Sam 22:5, 44). For a more in-depth discussion on the possible *yaqtul* form behind the short imperfect in the Hebrew Bible, see Anson F. Rainey, "The Ancient Hebrew Prefix Conjugation in the Light of Amarnah Canaanite," *Hebrew Studies* 27, no. 1 (1986): 4–19. Edward L. Greenstein, "On the Prefixed Preterite in Biblical Hebrew," *Hebrew Studies* 29 (1988): 7–17. Tania Notarius, *The Verb in Archaic Biblical Poetry: A Discursive, Typological, and Historical Investigation of the Tense System*, SSSL 68 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 306–17.

²⁸¹ Cross, "Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Verse."

(תהמת) covered them, and they went down (ירדו) into the depths (במצולת) like a stone. The closeness of Jonah's account and Exodus 15 is never clearer than here. Just like the depths covered the Pharaoh and the Egyptians, Jonah was also surrounded by the deep. The synergy between these texts suggests that the archaic use of the *yiqtol* in Jonah 2:6a seems like a deliberate rhetorical move on the part of the author of Jonah's psalm rather than a sign of different layers of redaction. Moreover, it anticipates the additional Exodus connotations in the next phrase, which the Targum picks up (see the discussion on the next line of Jonah 2:6).

The relationship between Jonah's prayer, Psalm 18, and Exodus 15 transcends linguistic borrowing, reflecting shared modes of thought and theological reflection. Jonah's psalm uses established imagery and concepts to compose a new text while performing and reinterpreting earlier traditions. This process demonstrates how intertextuality is not merely a mechanical transfer of language but a dynamic engagement with theological and poetic traditions. The phrase תהום in Jonah 2:6 draws on the mythological and theological depth of earlier texts like Psalm 18 and Exodus 15, recasting the prophet's plight as ironically aligning with the Egyptians rather than the Israelites. Through its poetic structure and strategic inclusion of תהום (deep), Jonah's psalm situates his plight within the broader biblical narratives of chaos and deliverance. By creatively engaging with these earlier texts, Jonah's prayer not only amplifies his suffering but also reinforces his connection to Israel's shared theological heritage.

2.8.4 סוף חבוש לראשי (reed wrapped around my head)

The Targum expands on סוף with יַמָּא דְסוּף (the Reed Sea), explicitly connecting Jonah's experience to the Exodus narrative. The term סוף itself is not a Semitic word but a loanword from

Egyptian, which appears 28 times in the Hebrew Bible.²⁸² Everywhere it is used, סוף carries with it connotations of Egypt and the Exodus. Consequently, its use in Jonah 2:6 naturally evokes the imagery of the Red Sea and the traditions associated with it. Given this consistent association, the Targum's elaboration is not fanciful but contextually grounded, aligning with the broader Exodus themes already present in Jonah's prayer.

2.8.4.1 The Dual Purpose of Recalling the Red Sea

The mention of סוף invites readers to consider the connection between Jonah's experience and the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea. At first glance, one might agree with Weimar's interpretation that this serves as a positive reminder of God's power to deliver Jonah from the waters.²⁸³ However, this perspective does not fully explain why Jonah is submerged under the waters rather than crossing through them, as the Israelites did.

Instead, Jonah's predicament appears to invert the Exodus narrative as I suggested earlier in this thesis (see the discussion on Jonah 2:4b). While the Israelites were delivered through the sea, the character of Jonah is identified more closely with Pharaoh's forces, who were submerged beneath the waters (Exod 15:5). The phrase סוף חבוש לראשי (reed wrapped around my head) highlights this reversal, casting Jonah in the role of the Egyptians rather than the Israelites. This inversion is consistent with Jonah's overall portrayal in the psalm, where his experiences are presented in a topsy-turvy manner, further distancing him from his claim in Jonah 1:9 of being a "Hebrew who fears YHWH."

²⁸² Benjamin J. Noonan, *Non-Semitic Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible: A Lexicon of Language Contact*, LSAWS (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2019), 160–61. For an alternative explanation of the etymology of סוף, see Niditch's discussion of Batto's argument in Niditch, *Jonah*, 75.

²⁸³ Weimar, *Jona*, 254.

Jonah's descent beneath the waters suggests a rhetorical purpose beyond mere inversion. By stepping into the shoes of the primeval antagonists of Israel, Jonah's plight may serve to create an unexpected pathway of empathy, at least for a moment. His identification with those who were traditionally opposed to Israel—such as Pharaoh's army—foreshadows his eventual mission to Nineveh, where he must confront and engage with Israel's enemies. This narrative subversion aligns with the book's broader themes of challenging boundaries, subverting expectations, and inviting a deeper reflection on the nature of God's relationship between Israel and the nations.

In summary, the use of סוף חבוש לראשי in Jonah 2:6 artfully evokes the Exodus narrative while simultaneously subverting it. By aligning Jonah's experience with the Egyptians rather than the Israelites, the psalm underscores the upside-down nature of Jonah's plight and his disconnection from his own self-proclaimed identity. This inversion serves a broader rhetorical purpose in the book, encouraging empathy for Israel's enemies and preparing the reader for the broader themes of repentance and divine mercy that unfold in Jonah's mission to Nineveh. Consequently, the Targum's expansion to ימא דסוף proves to be a contextually sensitive interpretation that aligns with the text's deeper theological resonances.

2.9 Descending to the Depths: Temple-Oriented Cosmology (Jonah 2:7a)

Jonah 2:7 has three constituent parts according to the Masoretic accents. The first part describes Jonah's descent to the bottom of the underwater mountains, which will be the focus of this section:

לְקַצְבֵּי הָרִים יִרְדֹּתִי

I descended to the bottom of the mountains

This line is represented in 4Q82 as follows:

לְקַצְבֵּי הָרִים יִרְדֹּתִי

The scrolls at Wadi Murabba'at (Mur88) also have the same line:

לְקַצְבֵּי הָרִים יִרְדֹּתִי

The OG, as we have seen, understands the first two words of this line to be part of the last verse and begins this line with the verb, יִרְדֹּתִי, connecting it with the following word aided by an added preposition, הָאָרֶץ: κατέβην εἰς τὴν γῆν (I descended into the earth). The BHS suggests emending the difficult expression, לְקַצְבֵּי (to the [uncertain meaning]), to the more comprehensible לְקַצְבֵּי (to the ends of [from קָצוֹ instead of קָצֶב]) transposed after the word, הָרִים (mountains). However, no other ancient version supports this emendation.²⁸⁴ All in all, this line in Jonah 2:7 represents a stable text, which we can inspect for possible intertexts.

2.9.1 *The Elusive Meaning of לְקַצְבֵּי: Associations with מוֹסְדֵי הָרִים*

In Jonah 2:6, the prophet is engulfed by the waters up to his neck, with the deep surrounding him and the underwater seaweed wrapping around his head. Verse 7 continues this picture by casting him further down into the depths of the sea. Something related to the mountains in the sea

²⁸⁴ Gelston, *BHQ*, 62.

makes an appearance in this line. Scholars are puzzled by the phrase, לקצבי הרים. Most interpreters take the Vulgate's *ad extrema montium* (at the base of the mountains) to be the best guess. There is an exact parallel of this phrase in Sirach 16:19, further confirming this meaning:

Even the peaks (?) of the mountains and the foundations of the world, when he looks upon them, tremble and quake.	אף קצבי הרים ויסודי תבל בהביטו אליהם רעש ירעשו	Sirach 16:19
At the same time, the mountains and the foundations of the earth, when he looks upon them, are shaken with trembling	ἅμα τὰ ὄρη καὶ τὰ θεμέλια τῆς γῆς ἐν τῷ ἐπιβλέψαι εἰς αὐτὰ τρόμῳ συσσεύονται	Sirach 16:19
I descended to the bottom of the mountains	לקצבי הרים ירדתי	Jonah 2:7a

The Greek translation of Sirach 16:19 does not entirely translate the phrase in question because the exact meaning of the Hebrew phrase is hard to discern, even for the Greek translators in antiquity.²⁸⁵ Despite this, the general sense of the phrase meaning “foundations of the mountains” makes sense in Sirach 16:19, for in the previous verse the poet describes God scanning the heavens and earth—הן השמים ושמי השמים ותהום וארץ (behold, heaven and the highest heaven, the deep and the earth). Then in 16:19, he moves on to what is below the earth at the base of the mountains that undergird the earth. This phrase fits both contexts in Jonah and in Ben Sira since they both describe a cosmological descent to the underworld.

While there may not be literary dependence between these texts, these texts reflect a shared conception of the world found in other parts of the Hebrew Bible, which will help us explore the composition of this line.²⁸⁶ A more comprehensible phrase is seen in Deuteronomy 32:22 and Psalm 18:8—מוסדי הרים, the foundations of the mountains which go all the way down to the

²⁸⁵ The authors of the new Anchor Bible Commentary on the book of Jonah suggest that the phrase לקצבי הרים is rendered by τὰ θεμέλια τῆς γῆς (“the foundations of the earth”). But clearly, the next phrase תבל ויסודי fits that translation like a glove. לקצבי is simply left untranslated in the Greek version. Graybill, Kaltner, and McKenzie, *Jonah*, 199.

²⁸⁶ Simon seems to think Jonah 2:7 is echoed in Ben Sira 16:19, influenced by Deuteronomy 32:22. Simon, *Jonah*, 22.

underworld, further solidifying Jonah's connection to Psalm 18 and its attempt to imitate archaic poetry.²⁸⁷ These foundations of the mountains are part of the מוסדי ארץ (foundations of earth) in other parts of the Hebrew Bible (Isa 24:18; Jer 31:37; Ps 82:5; Prov 8:29). The phrase in Jonah 2:7a, in a very original way, echoes that same concept, even extending it with the idea of temple as cosmic mountain.²⁸⁸

2.9.2 Temple Orientation in Jonah's Descent

Even in this brief poetic line, we find an orientation to the temple, a dominant theme throughout Jonah's prayer. Imagining the base of the mountains in this line as the bottom of the temple mount is not entirely out of place when we consider the context of Jonah's psalm (vv. 5, 8) and the broader ideas in the Hebrew Bible.

Mountains in ancient Hebrew cosmology serve as a connection between heaven and earth. They were thought of as extending from the heights of the heavens where God can manifest himself (Exod 19:16; 1 Kings 19:11; Isa 24:23) to the depths of the abyss (Deut 32:22; Ps 46:3; 95:4). This cosmological axis is crystalized in the idea of the temple which sits on a specific mountain, mount Zion (Ps 68:16–17).²⁸⁹ Zion is the sacred space for God's temple which he built "like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever" (Ps 78:69). The temple, thus, represents the whole universe, connecting heaven and earth like a mountain (Ps 48:1–2). Notably, the Sons of

²⁸⁷ Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 57. Graybill, Kaltner, and McKenzie, *Jonah*, 199.

²⁸⁸ Why does the poet use an obscure word here instead of מוסד? Perhaps Cross is right in suggesting that קצב counterbalances the previous word לראשי (to my head), with its more common root meaning "end." Cross, "Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Verse," 165. But the antonym of ראש (head/first) is typically זנב (tail [Dt. 28:13; Isa 9:13–14]). Or more apropos to the current context is the word קרקע (bottom) which Amos 9:3 uses as the opposite of ראש. Nevertheless, Cross's suggestion is creative. But a satisfactory explanation for the poet's choice of the word here remains elusive.

²⁸⁹ Shemaryahu Talmon, "הַר," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 3:446–47.

Korah are associated with Psalm 48 which advances the idea of the temple as a lofty mountain. Jonah, in his running away from God's presence, has descended to the other end of the temple mountain, so to speak.²⁹⁰ So, Jonah's descent to the base of the mountains carries with it a tacit reference to the temple, which is made explicit in other parts of Jonah's prayer (Jonah 2:5, 8).

2.9.3 *Continuing the Descent of Jonah: ירדתי as Leitwort*

So far in the psalm, only the verb קרא ("I called") in Jonah 2:3 explicitly links the psalm to the narrative. Even in Jonah 2:4a, an opportunity to reuse a recurring verb from chapter 1 is forfeited. Here, however, the pivotal verb ירדתי (I descended) bridges the narrative and the poetry seamlessly. In Jonah 1:3, Jonah descends (ירד) to Joppa, and his descent continues into the lowest parts of the ship (1:5). Subsequently, however, the narrative does not make much of the fact that Jonah descends lower than the ship by being plunged into the sea. The reader has to wait until Jonah 2:7 for a continuation of that theme. Jonah continued his descent from Israel to the very edge of civilization, even into the underworld. This verb intricately ties Jonah's situation in the narrative to the psalm, leading to the speculation of whether this was composed specifically for the book rather than being a free-floating psalm which found its home in the book later.²⁹¹ The use of this word ensures that the psalm, rather than pause the narrative, continues it using the same *Leitwort*.

This line is one of the original creations of the author of Jonah's psalm. Yet, it is carefully composed to reflect the temple-oriented journey of the prophet, just as much as the other lines matching other psalms in the Hebrew Bible more closely. So, perhaps we should critically re-

²⁹⁰ Y Steenkamp and G T M Prinsloo, "Another Look at Jonah 2," *OTE* 16, no. 2 (2003): 439.

²⁹¹ McKenzie, Graybill, and Kaltner argue that the psalm has different redactional layers which were completed before being inserted into the book of Jonah later. Steven L. McKenzie, Rhiannon Graybill, and John Kaltner, "Underwater Archaeology: The Compositional Layers of the Book of Jonah," *VT* 70, no. 1 (2020): 101–2.

evaluate Magonet's claim that the deeper Jonah goes into the sea, the less his psalm reflects familiar sayings from the Hebrew Scriptures.²⁹² It is true that an exact correspondence of language breaks down in this verse. However, it is too bold a conclusion to say that this implies "that just as Jonah must break out of his traditional attitudes to face a new situation, so the use of unfamiliar language at this point in the 'psalm' underlines the unfamiliarity of the situation."²⁹³ But as we have seen in this section, the creativity of this verse lies not in its theological innovation but only in its locution because the ideas conveyed by the innovative phrase are far from innovative in the rest of the Hebrew Bible. So, we should resist the temptation to confuse the latter with the former. Opgen-Rhein's observations on this are remarkably apposite:²⁹⁴

Die in Jona 2, 7a entwickelte Vorstellung vom Abstieg eines todgeweihten Einzelnen zu den Gründen der Berge ist zwar innerhalb des AT offenbar singulär, steht deswegen aber nicht am Rand der atl Überlieferungen zum Weltganzen. Vielmehr setzt sie ein erütteltes Maß an kosmologischer Spekulation voraus.

The concept in Jonah 2:7a of the descent of a doomed individual to the foundations of the mountains is indeed unique within the Old Testament, yet it does not stand on the periphery of Old Testament traditions regarding the cosmos as a whole. Rather, it presupposes a profound level of cosmological speculation.

Jonah 2:7a is a creative yet deeply traditional articulation of Jonah's descent and orientation toward the temple. By tying the psalm's language to its narrative context and broader biblical themes, the verse reinforces Jonah's alienation from God while simultaneously pointing to the possibility of restoration. Far from being an outlier, it embodies the cosmological and theological depth of the Hebrew Bible in an innovative yet traditional manner.

²⁹² Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 49. Bolin also notes this weakness in Magonet's argument. Bolin, *Freedom Beyond Forgiveness*, 110.

²⁹³ Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 62.

²⁹⁴ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 161.

2.10 Trapped in the Underworld: Exile as Inverse of Promised Land (Jonah 2:7b)

Having gone down to the bottom of the mountains, Jonah describes his entrance into the netherworld with these words:²⁹⁵

הארץ ברחיה בעדי לעולם

The underworld with its bars was around me forever²⁹⁶

We can find the last two words of this line in the severely damaged fragment of 4Q82:

בעדי לע[ו]לם

Likewise, in Mur88:

ירד[תי הארץ ב]רח[יה] בעדי לע[ולם ותעל משח]ת

The Nahal Hever Greek scroll has the following:

κατέβην ἢ [γῆ, μοχλο]ι αὐτῆς κατ' ἐμοῦ εἰς [αἰῶνα --]

I went down; the [earth, its bars] were against me [forever--]

From this Greek scroll, we can reconstruct the base text to be:

ירדתי ה[ארץ ברח]יה בעדי ל[עולם]

This line is interesting for its lack of a verb, which some of the versions supply in their rendering.

The Vulgate adds that the bars of the earth *concluserunt me* (shut me in). The Targum likewise adds that the earth stretched itself (נגדת) over him. The OG translators might have read a slightly different word in this line—בדים (barriers) instead of בעדי (around me) hence the reading ἡς οἱ μοχλοὶ αὐτῆς κάτοχοι αἰώνιοι ([the earth] whose bars are the eternal barriers).²⁹⁷ Or it could have

²⁹⁵ For a discussion about the syntactical divisions of this verse, especially the relationship of הארץ with the previous line, see Sasson, *Jonah*, 186–87.

²⁹⁶ Here, I am following HALOT in translating הארץ as “the underworld” (cf. Ex 15:12; Jer 17:13; Ps 22:30; 71:20; Sir 51:9).

²⁹⁷ Gelston, *BHQ*, 62.

been a result of misreading בעדי. Either way, this line does not vary too much in its meaning or wording from the earliest textual evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Masoretic text. Having established the text with reasonable certainty, we can move on to ask what the intertextual import of this line is and how it was composed.

Just like the previous line, this one also seems to be an original creation by the poet but not without thematic resonances from other parts of the Hebrew Bible. The sense of the word הארץ here is “underworld” because Jonah is said to be already under the earth at the bottom of the mountains in the sea (cf. Ps 22:30; 71:20; Isa 26:19).²⁹⁸ When we consider the other use of ארץ in the book of Jonah, we are led to a fascinating speculation. The sailors ask Jonah מה ארצך (what is your land?) in 1:8. On one level, this is a question about Jonah’s nationality. But when we read it in light of Jonah 2:7b, the sailors’ question takes on a more intensely subjective orientation, “what is the meaning of land for *you*?” Jonah’s home transforms into a fortified, eternal realm of the dead, impervious and inescapable. Weimar picks up on this and makes an enlightening point²⁹⁹:

Anders als die Frage nach seiner Volkszugehörigkeit bleibt die dazu parallele Frage nach seiner Heimat ohne unmittelbare Antwort, bringt so eine erzählerische Spannung in die Erzählung und lässt fragen, wie eine Antwort ausfallen mag. Diese ist unerwartet und überraschend zugleich, nicht unmittelbar an die Fragenden gerichtet, sondern an JHWH selbst. Als Land, das Jona für sich als Heimat ansieht, erscheint angesichts dessen gerade die Unterwelt, die er »für immer« (לעולם) als Heimat betrachtet. Es ist eine mehr als erschreckende und schockierende Antwort. Nicht das den Vätern verheißene Land ist es, das Jona als seine Heimat ansieht, vielmehr das außerhalb von JHWHs Einflussbereich liegende »UnLand« der Scheol. Jonas Verhalten kennzeichnet so ein tiefer Riss, der ihn gespalten sein lässt. Obgleich er sich in seiner Not unmittelbar an JHWH wendet (V 3a) und ihn auch als Retter bekennt (V 11b), ist Jona nach wie vor unverändert auf der Flucht vor ihm, sieht auch nach wie vor das Abgeschnittensein in der Unterwelt als die große Alternative für sich an (V 7a).

²⁹⁸ Weimar, *Jona*, 256. Simon, *Jonah*, 22.

²⁹⁹ Weimar, *Jona*, 256–57.

Unlike the question regarding Jonah's ethnicity, the parallel question about his homeland remains unanswered, introducing narrative tension into the story and prompting the question of what such an answer might be. The answer, when it comes, is both unexpected and surprising. It is not directed immediately at those asking the question but rather at Yahweh himself. Jonah identifies the underworld as his homeland, declaring it as his dwelling “forever” [לְעוֹלָם]. This is a response that is more than unsettling and shocking. It is not the land promised to the patriarchs that Jonah considers his homeland, but rather the “un-land” of Sheol, lying outside of Yahweh's sphere of influence. This behavior reveals a profound rupture within Jonah, leaving him divided. Despite turning to Yahweh in his distress [v. 3a] and acknowledging him as savior [v. 11b], Jonah remains fundamentally unchanged in his flight from Yahweh. He still views separation in the underworld as a significant alternative for himself [v. 7a]

The connection to the idea of a promised land here is suggestive of the broader concerns of the exiles that this psalm seems to address and represent. Rather than experience God's presence at the temple in the promised land, the exiled prophet, who can be identified with the exiled people of Israel, is shut up far from the temple in a foreign “land” forever.

In this “land,” Jonah is shut in by the bars that close behind him, signifying the impossibility of escape from the realm of the dead.³⁰⁰ The idea of the underworld having doors and bars that lock the doors is not uncommon in the Hebrew Bible. Hezekiah says he was consigned to the שַׁעַר שְׁאוֹל (gates of Sheol [Isa 38:10]). The Psalms repeatedly make use of this image (Ps 9:14; 107:18; cf. Job 38:17). Psalm 107:18 speaks of the gates of death in the context of exile, further confirming the association with the exilic community in Jonah 2:7 and the prayer more broadly.

The specific choice of the word בַּרְחִיָּה (its bars) here in Jonah's psalm has led to an interesting speculation in scholarship that it may be hinting at Jonah's *fleeing* (בָּרַח) from God's presence in chapter 1 (1:3, 10).³⁰¹ Certainly, it fits the polysemous linguistic profile of the book.

³⁰⁰ Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 136.

³⁰¹ Sasson, *Jonah*, 190. Erickson, *Jonah*, 336. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Jonah*, 78.

Moreover, such a word play in the psalm with the narrative portion of the book binds the two sections closer together, generating a hermeneutical dialogue between the two while also advancing and complicating the plot of the book.

What is the effect of the language of the netherworld and its bars enveloping the prophet in this psalm? A verse from the Hodayot proves illustrative here. We have already seen a close relationship between Jonah's psalm and 1QHa 11:6–19 in earlier sections (cf. Jonah 2:3–4). Relevant to our discussion here is 1QHa 11:19³⁰²:

ויסגרו דלתי שחת בעד הרית עול ובריחי עולם בעד כול רוחי אפעה

Then the doors of the pit closed about the one who is pregnant with iniquity and the bars of
eternity *closed about* all the spirits of the serpent

The use of the preposition בעד along with ובריחי עולם in this Hodayah reminds the reader of Jonah's psalm. Considering the Hodayah in its entirety sheds even more light on the significance of this language. The Hodayah begins with the description of the speaker as a pregnant woman who gives birth to a son in the midst of extreme distress at sea (11:8–12). Halfway through the hymn, we encounter another character, an “evil twin” of the speaker—one who is pregnant with a serpent (11:13).³⁰³ The fate of this character is described in terms of a ship breaking upon the water (11:14), as sailors in that ship who *go down to the seas* (כיורדי ימים 11:15), being terrified by the roar of the water, *as sailors on the deeps* (כמלחים במצולות), for all their wisdom is *swallowed* up by the roar of the seas (תהום 11:16). They are said to step into the deep (11:18) in the process of which the doors of the pit, the eternal bars, close behind them. This is very

³⁰² Mansoor, *The Thanksgiving Hymns*, 116.

³⁰³ Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space*, 245.

similar to the story of Jonah in which the prophet begins a journey of multiple descents, ultimately ending in the bottom of the sea, having been swallowed up by a fish. The Hodayah, however, is very explicit about the moral status of the individual who is behind the eternal bars—one who is pregnant with injustice/iniquity and the spirits of the serpent.

If we let this Hodayah inform our reading of Jonah's psalm, we can read this line in Jonah's psalm as representing the prophet's status as someone deserving of the distress at sea, inverting his self-conception as innocent. The characterization of the prophet thus far in the book is inversed just as we suspected earlier in Jonah 2:4 where the prophet is thrown into the sea like the Pharaoh and his armies in Exodus 14–15. After all, as Opgen-Rhein insightfully remarks, this verse has a parallel in Exodus 15:12, נָטִית יְמִינְךָ תִּבְלַעְמוּ אֶרֶץ (You stretched out your right hand, the earth swallowed them).³⁰⁴ For a brief moment in the space and evocative language of the psalm, we are forced to reckon with the implications of such an inversion.

Jonah 2:7b encapsulates the prophet's descent into the depths—both physical and spiritual. His identification with the underworld as “land” symbolizes exile from God's presence, paralleling the experience of Israel in captivity. The psalm's use of בְּרַחֲיָה links Jonah's flight from Yahweh with his entrapment in Sheol, creating a profound literary and theological irony. The parallel with the Hodayot enriches this imagery, presenting Jonah as a liminal figure caught between innocence and guilt, life and death, Israel's covenant, and the un-land of Sheol. Through these vivid metaphors, Jonah's psalm invites reflection on themes of exile, divine justice, and the complexity of repentance and restoration.

³⁰⁴ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 162.

2.11 Surviving Sheol: The Pattern of Divine Deliverance (Jonah 2:7c)

This third constituent part brings resolution and acts as a counterbalance to the first unit which describes Jonah's descent to the bottom of the ancient Hebrew conception of the cosmos.³⁰⁵ We now see Jonah's impossible ascent in light of Job 7:9 which says, "As the cloud fades and vanishes, so those who go down to Sheol do not come up" (NRSV):

ותעל משחת חיי יהוה אלהי

But you lifted up my life from the pit, O YHWH, my God

4Q82 has an additional word נפשי (my soul) in this line:

ותעל משחת חיי נפשי יהוה [אלוהי].

Lange's explanation of this extra word is worth noting here: "The 4QXIIg-text found the use of חיי in Jonah 2:7 inconsistent in comparison with the use of נפשי in Jonah 2:8 and added the word נפשי to Jonah 2:7 resulting in the unique locution חיי נפשי ('the life of my soul')."³⁰⁶ So, this seems like an interpretive scribal addition rather than a different *Vorlage*.

Similarly, the OG adds an interesting twist to this line that has larger implications on the psalm:

καὶ ἀναβήτω φθορὰ ζωῆς μου, κύριε ὁ θεός μου

And O Lord my God, let the corruption of my life ascend *to you*[?]

By reading ותעל (you lifted up) as a jussive, the Greek translators have turned the psalm into a prayer for deliverance rather than a hymn of thanksgiving. In doing so, they are making full use of

³⁰⁵ The narrative's description of Jonah's descent (יִרַד) only has its reversal here in the psalm, further uniting the two together. Almbadth, *Studies in the Book of Jonah*, 29.

³⁰⁶ Lange, "4QXIIg (4Q82) as an Editorial Text," 111. Erickson suggests an interesting alternative, "it could be an expansion or a gloss provided to explain the partial nature of Jonah's restoration (i.e., his soul is brought up from Sheol, but his body remains in the fish)" Erickson, *Jonah*, 338.

the ambiguity of the consonantal text here, for וַתַּעַל can be read one of five different ways, as *Qal* or *Hiphil*, *wayyitol* or jussive, second masculine or third feminine. But reading this form as anything other than *Hiphil wayyiqtol* second masculine singular creates syntactical difficulties in this line because the verb here is transitive.³⁰⁷ The Greek translators seem to be deliberately making a point by choosing to translate וַתַּעַל as a jussive third feminine.³⁰⁸ To them, Jonah giving thanks before he is saved from the fish does not make much sense. Rather, they read it as Jonah's prayer for salvation from drowning. This interpretive choice by the Greek translators, likely among the earliest known, reflects a longstanding tradition of grappling with the text's chronology and logic.³⁰⁹

The Masoretic text, which we have found to have preserved a very ancient tradition, clearly has the prophet say that Yahweh his God has lifted his life up from the pit *before* it happens in the narrative of the book. How can we make sense of this compositionally? Is there a tradition of God lifting people out of the pit in the Hebrew Bible and beyond which is being invoked here? And does this pivotal line in the psalm also carry the themes of exile, temple, innocent suffering, etc. like we have found so far in other lines?

³⁰⁷ Sasson, *Jonah*, 190–91. Graybill, Kaltner, and McKenzie, *Jonah*, 200. It is also possible that the Greek translators read the line וַתַּעַל מִשְׁחַת חַיִּי as וַתַּעַל מִשְׁחַת חַיִּי with the additional mem on the verb as an enclitic mem and חַיִּי as being in construct. This suggestion avoids the syntactical problems created by taking the verb as jussive third feminine because שַׁחַת is a feminine noun. But it also assumes that the Greek translators were able to recognize enclitic mems.

³⁰⁸ Erickson, *Jonah*, 338. Of course, it is possible that the Greek translators had a different *Vorlage*. However, none of the textual evidence we have examined so far in the psalm warrants that possibility. We have too many early textual editions that seem to corroborate the MT. The Old Greek translation has its own take on the psalm as we have discussed earlier.

³⁰⁹ Tiemeyer, *Jonah*, 146–47. The Vulgate reads the verb as an imperfect, rendering it as a future verb, “And you will make my life rise up from corruption.” The Targum also tries to solve this chronological problem by turning this verse into a prophetic vision, “it is revealed before you to raise my life from destruction...”

2.11.1 Traditions evoked by ותעל משחת חיי

Whether we adopt the Greek reading of the verb as a jussive or the Masoretic reading of this as recollection in a thanksgiving psalm, the central theme of this line remains consistent: the psalmist's life being brought out of a fatal danger, often represented by a pit or a grave. This concept is fairly common in the Hebrew Bible and is associated with broader motifs and traditions.

2.11.1.1 Exodus and Exile

The theme first appears in the Joseph cycle in Genesis where the Midianite traders lift (עלה) Joseph out of the pit (Gen 37:28). Later, God assures Jacob that after he goes down (ירד) to Egypt, God himself will bring him up (עלה) out of Egypt back to Israel (Gen 46:4). As a confirmation of this promise, Joseph asks that his bones be taken up (עלה) to Israel (Gen 50:25). This idea of return to the promised land (or posthumous return in Joseph's case) is reiterated over and over again using the same *Hiphil* form of the verb, עלה.³¹⁰ Notably, the rescue of Joseph from the pit serves as a prototype of Israel's collective exodus from Egypt.

In the same vein, Israel's and Judah's return from Assyrian and Babylonian exiles were also expressed in the same language, using the same verb (Jer 16:14; 23:7, 8; 27:22; Ezra 1:11).³¹¹ Interestingly enough, the return from exile in the prophets is modelled after another Joseph-like figure, the prophet Jeremiah, who is rescued from the pit (Jer 38:10, 13). Just like the exodus from Egypt is connected to the rescue of Joseph from the pit, so is the second exodus connected to the

³¹⁰ Cf. Gen 50:24; Exod 3:8, 17; 17:3; 32:1, 7, 23; 33:1, 12; Lev 11:45; Num 14:13; 16:13; 20:5; 21:5; Deut 20:1; Josh 24:17; Judges 2:1; 6:8, 13; 1 Sam 10:18; 12:6; 2 Kings 17:7, 36; Isa 63:11; Jer 2:6; 11:7; 16:14, 15; Hosea 12:13; Amos 2:10; 3:1; 9:7; Micah 6:4; Ps 81:11.

³¹¹ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 168.

rescue of Jeremiah from the pit. These stories collectively suggest that an individual's deliverance can encapsulate the fate of the entire nation.

That *וּתַעֲלֵי* carries with it echoes of the exodus is noted by scholars like Wolff and Opgen-Rhein.³¹² After all, this verb in Jonah's prayer corresponds to God's initial action of casting Jonah into the deep *וּתַשְׁלִיכֵנִי* (you cast me) in Jonah 2:4a, which, I argued, has overtones of the Exodus.³¹³ We can take it even further and say that the Exodus motif gives way to exilic ideas in Jonah 2:7 where the prophet Jonah, like Joseph and Jeremiah, is rescued from the pit of Sheol, as a moniker of a broader national return from exile. This is more explicitly envisioned by Ezekiel in 37:12–13 where Israel's return to the land is described in terms of a resurrection from the grave:

Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up (*עֲלֶה*) from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up (*עֲלֶה*) from your graves, O my people.

Ezekiel's message to the exiles adds the dimension of death and resurrection to this concept of rescue from the pit which the stories of Joseph and Jeremiah lack. Jonah's psalm encapsulates all these ideas from the prophets, leading Ben Zvi to call it a "meta-prophetic book," wherein Jonah's ascent from Sheol serves as a symbolic touchstone, uniting themes of deliverance, exile, and restoration under a single, theologically rich narrative and poetic arc.³¹⁴

2.11.1.2 Innocent Suffering

What is even more fascinating is that both Joseph and Jeremiah were innocent sufferers in their respective stories, who were treated unjustly by others and were eventually vindicated. By

³¹² Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 137. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 167.

³¹³ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 58.

³¹⁴ Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah*, 80–98.

identifying with these two figures, Jonah also has grounds to plead innocence and expect rescue in a similar way.

The Psalms provide a theological framework for understanding innocent suffering, often portraying deliverance from the pit as a divine act of justice. The theme of innocent suffering is made more explicit in those psalms that describe deliverance from the pit. Interestingly, we find similar language of the exodus with the *hiphil* form of עלה in some of those psalms. For example, Psalm 30:4 says,

יהוה העלית מן־שאול נפשי חייתיני מיו־די־בור

O Lord, you have brought up my soul from Sheol; you have made me alive from those who go
down to the pit

In this psalm, the psalmist declares that Yahweh saved his life from the grave by *lifting him up* out of Sheol, distinguishing him from the Others whose journey *down* to the pit is irreversible. These contrasting verbs of going down and being lifted up are at play both here and in the book of Jonah. The psalmist in Psalm 30 very clearly distinguishes himself from his enemies even from the first verse, “I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up, and did not let my foes rejoice over me.” (Ps 30:1 [NRSV]). In contrast to his enemies, the psalmist is part of the חסידיו who sing praises to Yahweh for delivering the psalmist out of death (Ps 30:5). This is also the logic of Psalm 16:10: כי לא־תעזב נפשי לשאול לא־תתן חסידך לראות שחת (for you will not abandon my soul to Sheol; you will not let your holy one see corruption). These are the group of people who are afforded the ritual privilege of giving thanks to God’s holy name (Ps 30:5), perhaps in the temple (note the superscription, מזמור שיר־חנכת הבית לדוד [Mizmor, a song of dedication of the house of David]). The psalmist can therefore confidently say that he can never be moved (Ps 30:7), for Yahweh himself has established him like a strong mountain (Ps 30:8). While in this privileged

status before Yahweh, the psalmist recounts that for seemingly no reason, Yahweh hid his face from the psalmist (Ps 30:8b). But the psalmist cried out to Yahweh saying “What profit is there in my death if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?” (Ps 30:9).³¹⁵ In response to this prayer, Yahweh turns the psalmist’s mourning into dancing; the sackcloth is replaced with joy (Ps 30:11). This psalm gives no reason for the psalmist’s trouble. There is only positive characterization of the psalmist as he is established like an immovable mountain before Yahweh. From this evidence, we can only gather that the psalmist is represented as having gone through a period of suffering unto death innocently. Thus, Yahweh answered his prayer and restored him to health.

Psalm 40 deepens the theme of innocent suffering by portraying the psalmist as a faithful servant who delights in God’s law. Psalm 40:3 says:

ויעלני מבור שאון מטיט היון ויקם על-סלע רגלי כונן אשרי

He lifted me up from the desolate pit, from muddy clay. And he set my feet upon a rock,
establishing my steps

Psalm 40 contains praise (40:1–11) followed by lament (40:12–18).³¹⁶ The former recalls a time when God rescued the psalmist from death and the latter asks God for deliverance from another trouble. Yahweh lifted him up from the pit just like we saw in Psalm 30. But this psalm goes on to describe in more colorful terms the moral perfection of the psalmist: “Then I said, ‘Here I am; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.’” (Ps 40:7–8 NRSV). Here as in Psalm 30, there is no admission of guilt for which the

³¹⁵ King Hezekiah’s prayer strikes a similar chord (Isa 38:18–19) when he thanks God for holding his life back from the pit of destruction (Isa 38:17).

³¹⁶ For a critical evaluation of form-critical approach of deconstructing the psalm, see Phillip M. Lasater, “Psalm 40 and the ‘New Covenant’ of Jeremiah 31?: Contextualizing the Legal Anthropology of a Liturgical Text,” *VT*, 2024, 1–24.

psalmist went down to the pit. On the contrary, he obeys God and internalizes his law. This is probably the boldest statement concerning the law in all the psalter, for it rivals the eschatological expectation of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 31:33).

Psalm 71 reinforces the theme of deliverance for the faithful and righteous, contrasting them with the wicked. Psalm 71:20 uses the same verb to describe an innocent psalmist being rescued from death:

אשר הראיתנו צרות רבות ורעות תשוב תחיינו ומתהמות הארץ תשוב תעלני

you who have made me see many troubles and evils will make me alive again and from the
depths of the earth you will bring me up again

The psalmist asks God to rescue him from the wicked (רשע), the unjust (מעול), and the oppressor (חומץ) in verse 4. We can safely assume that the psalmist considers himself to be none of those. Instead, he is someone who has leaned upon God even from his mother's womb (Ps 71:6) and continues to do so in his old age (Ps 71:18). Therefore, he hopes that he will be rescued even from the depths of the earth (Ps 71:20).

Psalm 103 expands the concept of deliverance to include those forgiven by God, challenging Jonah's (the character's) exclusivist perspective. Psalm 103:4 comes very close to Jonah 2:7 in describing deliverance from the pit:

הגואל משחת חייכי המעטרכי חסד ורחמים

The one who redeems your life from the pit; the one who crowns you with steadfast love and
mercy

Wolff and Magonet are of the opinion that there might be a verbal connection between Psalm 103:4 and Jonah 2:7 with the phrase *משחת חיי*.³¹⁷ The notion of lifting up from the grave is embedded in the participle, *הגואל* (he who redeems [Hosea 13:14]).³¹⁸ However, it is difficult to say whether there is literary dependence here. Nevertheless, this psalm remains relevant to our discussion as it complicates our conception of innocence and adds a layer of theological reflection which is central to the book of Jonah. To the author of Psalm 103, God delivers not just the innocent when they cry out, but those whose sin he has forgiven for they *fear* him and keep his covenant and commandments (Ps 103:3, 13, 18). The idea of fearing Yahweh is especially relevant in the book of Jonah, which makes this connection even more productive. If it is true that God rescues those who fear him, then Jonah's own rescue from the pit gives way to the Ninevites' salvation in Jonah 4.³¹⁹ What Jonah seems to celebrate in his prayer is something he is not willing to extend to the Ninevites even if they repent. This is not to flatten Jonah's character as simplistic and xenophobic. Rather, as Psalm 103:3, 13, and 18 make clear, forgiveness is covenantal. Jonah's problem seems to be more complicated than the reception of Jonah over the centuries has created. He, as a Hebrew prophet, expects God to save him like Israel was saved from Egypt because of his covenant with the nation. But no such covenant exists with Nineveh. In fact, treating them as part of the covenant would put Israel's existence at stake (cf. Isa 10). Jonah's fear is that God might be unjust to his own covenant. How can it be that Jonah and the Ninevites together can receive God's beneficence if it means mutual destruction in the end?

³¹⁷ Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 137. Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 48.

³¹⁸ This root is used of Israel's exodus out of Egypt (Exod 6:6; 15:13; Ps 74:2; 77:16; 106:10). In Psalm 103:4, the personal redemption of the psalmist's life from the pit is placed in close conjunction with the events of the exodus (Ps 103:7–8).

³¹⁹ Weimar, *Jona*, 258.

The phrase **משחת חיי** in Hodayot 13:8 introduces a striking parallel to Jonah 2:7, with broader thematic resonances illuminating Jonah's predicament:

ותעזור משחת חיי

You have rescued my life from the pit

This is a remarkable parallel to our line in Jonah's prayer which only gets more fascinating when we consider the entirety of the hymn, at least what is materially available to us. The hymn thanks God for saving the protagonist from wicked people who are repeatedly represented by the metaphor of lions.

The hymnist equates his sojourning among foreign peoples with experiences of existential danger, evoking imagery of pits, lions, and storms. In the first available line to us (13:7), the hymnist thanks God for not abandoning him while he sojourned among foreign people:

אודכה אדוני כי לא עזבתני בגורי בעם נכר³²⁰

I praise you, O Lord, for you have not abandoned me when I sojourned among a foreign people. He equates his sojourning among a foreign people with being in the pit (13:8), being in the midst of lions which are destined for the guilty (13:9), and dwelling with many fishermen (13:10). He continues this theme by saying that God rescued him out of the den of lions (13:15) and adds that he was actually brought out of this distress as gold and silver come out refined from the fire (13:18), as sailors come out of a tempest, birds out of snares, and prey out of the power of lions (13:20–21). Here, pit, lions, fishermen, fire, tempest, and snare all represent non-Israelite people groups among whom the hymnist sojourned just like we saw in Psalm 120 at the beginning of this

³²⁰ On the reconstruction of **נכר** see Bonnie Pedrotti Kittel, *The Hymns of Qumran: Translation and Commentary*, SBLDS 50 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 88.

chapter. Strengthening this point is the word play in 13:7–8 between עֲזַבְתָּנִי and וַתַּעְזֹר which ties the sojourning among foreign people with the pit³²¹:

אֹדְכָה אֲדוֹנִי כִּי לֹא עֲזַבְתָּנִי בְּגוּרֵי בַעַם נִכְרִי [--] כְּאַשְׁמָתִי

שִׁפְטָתִי. וְלֹא עֲזַבְתָּנִי בְּזִמּוֹת יִצְרִי. וַתַּעְזֹר מִשַּׁחַת חַיִּי וַתִּתֵּן לִי [--] לֵט בְּתוֹךְ

I will praise you, O Lord, for you have not abandoned me in my sojourning among foreign people but according to my guilt you have judged me. And you have not abandoned me in the wickedness of my inclination. But you helped my life from the pit and you gave me...deliverance in the midst of...

Similarly, “sojourning among foreign people” (בְּגוּרֵי בַעַם נִכְרִי) is paralleled with “in the sojourning of the many fishermen” (בְּמִגְוֹר עִם דִּיגִים רַבִּים) in 13:10. Since Israelites did not venture out on the sea, they were not typically fishermen. So, fishermen here almost certainly signify non-Israelites just as it does in the story of Jonah.

Lions in the hymn symbolize foreign nations, emphasizing the divine rescue of the innocent from their midst. In 13:9, the hymnist says:

לְבִיָּאִים מוֹעֲדִים לְבְנֵי אֲשָׁמָה אֲרִיּוֹת שׁוֹבְרֵי עֶצֶם אֲדִירִים וְשׁוֹתֵי דָם גְּבוּרִים

lions, who are appointed for the sons of guilt, lions who break the bones of the mighty and drink the blood of warriors

Clearly, to the hymnist, being mauled to death by lions (representing foreign people) is reserved for guilty people. But he praises God for saving him out of the lion’s den just as he helped him out of the pit.

The hymnist’s imagery of God shutting the lions’ mouths recalls Daniel’s miraculous preservation, drawing parallels between their innocence and deliverance. In 13:11–12, he says:

³²¹ Kittel, *The Hymns of Qumran*, 88–89.

ותסגור פי כפירים אשר

כחרב שניהם ומתלעותם כחנית חדה

But you shut the mouths of young lions whose teeth are like a sword and their fangs as a sharp
spear

This is reminiscent of the story of Daniel who spends time in the lion's den and is not devoured.³²²

We can see the similarity of language even in the Aramaic text of Daniel:

אלהי שלח מלאכה וסגר פם אריותא ולא חבלוני כל-קבל די קדמוהי זכו השתכחת לי ואף קדמך מלכא

חבולה לא עבדת

My God sent his angel and he shut the mouth of the lions and they did not hurt me because I was
found blameless before him and also before you, O king, I have not done wrong

The Daniel connection does not end here; the hymnist says that God put him in the melting pot like gold in the fire (13:18), recalling the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3:19–27 who were thrown into a furnace but were not burnt up. Just like Daniel, who was blameless, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who were vindicated through fire, the hymnist also survives the lions' den and the melting pot of fire through his own blamelessness. In fact, he elaborates on the reason for his deliverance in 13:13:

כי אתה אלי סתרתי נגד בני אדם ותורתכה חבתה בִּי [עַד קֵץ

For you have hidden me from the sons of man and your law you have hidden in [me] until the
end

This is reminiscent of Psalm 40:9 and Jeremiah 31:33 where the law is internalized, leading to perfection and covenant loyalty. Clearly, the hymnist identifies himself with the righteous and

³²² Kittel, *The Hymns of Qumran*, 80. Harkins, "Thanksgiving Hymns," 2054.

innocent who went through suffering and exile blamelessly. Adding to these figures is Jonah with the phrase *משחת חיי* (Hodayot 13:8 cf. Jonah 2:7) and the language of calming a storm in 13:20:

ואתה אלי תשיב ³²³{{נפשי}} סערה לדממה

But you, my God, turn a storm to stillness

When the sailors pick up and throw Jonah into the sea, they see an immediate stillness of the storm (Jonah 1:12–15).

By using the example of Daniel in this hymn, along with possibly even Jonah, the hymnist identifies himself with exilic suffering of righteous individuals in foreign nations. Thus, Daniel and Jonah join the ranks of other faithful figures like Joseph and Jeremiah.

Psalm 9 adds to the motif of divine rescue, portraying deliverance from the gates of death and the judgment of foreign nations. Psalm 9:14 says,

חננני יהוה ראה עניי משנאי מרוממי משערי מות

Be gracious to me, O Lord. Look upon my suffering from those who hate me; you who lift me up
from the gates of death

Here, the psalmist invokes the idea of the realm of the dead being a city with gates, something similar to what we saw earlier in Jonah 2:7b. This is set in contrast to the *שעדי בת-ציון* (the gates of the daughter of Zion) in the previous verse, an antipole to the netherworld characterized by life and proximity to God.³²⁴ Using a different but synonymous verb to *עלה*, the author of this psalm depicts his rescue in the same way as all the other texts we have seen so far because the contrast between the two gates is also spatial, the lowest and highest points in the cosmos.³²⁵ More than

³²³ *נפשי* is corrected out of the text by a scribe. Kittel, *The Hymns of Qumran*, 84.

³²⁴ Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 1:195–96.

³²⁵ Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 44, nlebk.

any other text, Psalm 9 emphasizes the moral status of the psalmist as righteous: “For you have maintained my just cause; you have sat on the throne giving righteous judgment” (Ps 9:4 NRSV). Even more striking is the nature of the enemies in this psalm—foreign nations: “You have rebuked the nations, you have destroyed the wicked; you have blotted out their name forever and ever” (Ps 9:5 NRSV). Here, the “nations” are in parallel with the “wicked.” God’s judgment upon them means that “the nations have sunk in the pit that they made” (Ps 9:15). To the psalmist, only the wicked (i.e. the nations) go to Sheol (Ps 9:18):

ישובו רשעים לשאולה כל־גוים שכחי אלהים

The wicked return to Sheol; all the nations who forget God

This means that the psalmist does not belong in the gates of death, for he is righteous (Ps 9:4). For this reason, God lifts him out of the netherworld and puts the wicked in his place, proving himself to be the just judge (Ps 9:8).

We have surveyed all the texts in the Psalms that speak of the psalmist being lifted out of Sheol/pit. Having considered them in their context, we can start to see that the image of God lifting someone out of the realm of the dead is due to their innocence, or at least due to their loyalty to Yahweh in light of Psalm 103.

Jonah 2:7c stands as a climactic expression of divine deliverance, resonating with an array of biblical and liturgical traditions. This phrase encapsulates the central theme of the psalm: God’s power to rescue, even from the depths of Sheol, and to reverse the seemingly irreversible trajectory of death and despair. The verb **וַתַּעַל** (you lifted up) carries echoes of pivotal narratives, such as the Exodus, Israel’s return from exile, and the deliverance of righteous individuals like Joseph, Jeremiah, and Daniel. These stories collectively form a backdrop of hope and restoration, emphasizing God’s faithfulness to those who cry out to Him.

Because of the proliferation of the language of being rescued from Sheol/pit in the Psalms, we are hard pressed to argue for any possible relation to one text as opposed to the other. What we can find in this verse are perhaps “Erinnerungsspuren verschiedener Psalmen,” (memory traces of various Psalms) as Weimar puts it.³²⁶ Jonah (both the character and the author) is using what seems to be generally available liturgical language from the Psalms to highlight his rescue from the sea while evoking traditions related to the Exodus, exile, temple, and innocent suffering. At the same time, the usage of the key term *וַתַּעַל* (you lifted up) makes Jonah’s psalm critical to the book of Jonah as it counterbalances the repeated use of *יָרַד* (go down) in the book.

³²⁶ Weimar, *Jona*, 259. See also my discussion on orality and memory in 1.3 as suggested by Molly Zahn and David Carr.

2.12 Remembering YHWH and Reversing Exile (Jonah 2:8a)

Having turned the corner in the last verse, in a somewhat surprising move, Jonah goes back to recalling his distress and offers a different perspective on his salvation in this verse as represented in MT, emphasizing his own agency as opposed to the exclusive agency of God in the previous line:³²⁷

בהתעטף עלי נפשי את־יהוה זכרתי

when my life was fainting upon me, I remembered YHWH

4Q82 seems to have the same words despite the lacunae:

[בהתעטף] עלי נפש[י] את יהוה זכרתי[י]

Similarly, Mur88 does not show pluriformity of textual tradition in this line:

ב[התע]ט[פ] עלי נפשי את[י] יהוה זכרתי

The OG also reflects the same wording in its translation, even using the infinitive in Greek to match the Hebrew infinitive construct:

ἐν τῷ ἐκλείπειν ἅπ' ἐμοῦ τὴν ψυχὴν μου τοῦ κυρίου ἐμνήσθην

When my soul was failing upon me, I remembered the Lord

³²⁷ Rudolf thinks verse 8 describes how the salvation of verse 7c came about. Rudolf, *Joel - Amos - Obadja - Jona*, 353. Likewise, Sasson and Opgen-Rhein say the poet is recalling in this verse how he was saved. Sasson, *Jonah*, 191. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 60. Perhaps the two views are harmonious but it still seems odd that Jonah wants to highlight his own agency in this two-line verse when in the previous verse he admits that salvation is impossible without Yahweh's intervention. Neither is it especially helpful to cast this verse off as "secondary" with Graybill, Kaltner, and McKenzie, who take Cross' theory that verses 8–10 are later, more prosaic addition to the earlier psalm and hence think that this later layer contradicts the earlier psalm. Graybill, Kaltner, and McKenzie, *Jonah*, 200. Even if the theory holds water, why would a later scribe adding these lines deliberately create such confusion when it would have been far more advantageous to clarify the text, as the versions seem to do? The authors elaborate on the same page, "The person who added it gave it a new interpretation as dealing with the loss of life in accord with the older poem in vv. 3–4 + 6–7. It is even possible—though beyond proof—that the secondary hand changed *rûhî* in the psalmic refrain to *napšî*, implying the flagging of vital force in greater accord with the older poem." Here, they switch their argument from contradiction between the older and newer layers to conformity between the two.

The Targum, on the other hand, reads the root עלף (faint) instead of עטף (feel week) in the first word:³²⁸

בְּאַשְׁתְּלֵהוּיּוֹת עָלַי נִפְשִׁי פִּלְחָנָא דִּיּוּי אִידְכָּרִית

When my soul became faint upon me, I remembered the worship of the Lord

However, the *ט* in Mur88 confirms that the Targum's reading of this line is probably not following a different *Vorlage* but rather trying to connect the psalm with the narrative by bringing this verse closer to Jonah 4:8 where Jonah become faint (עלף) in the scorching heat of the sun.

2.12.1 Verbal Resonance

Why did the MT miss the opportunity to do the same as the Targum? As with other such missed opportunities earlier in the psalm, perhaps there is an intertextual reason for choosing the root עטף here. Psalm 142:4 has the same first two words as this line in Jonah 2. Similarly, Psalm 77:4 reflects the same kind language. The verbal correspondence between these texts is clear³²⁹:

When my soul was fainting upon me, I remembered YHWH	בהתעטף עלי נפשי את־יהוה זכרתי	Jonah 2:8a
When my spirit was fainting upon me, you know my ways	בהתעטף עלי רוחי ואתה ידעת נתיבתי	Psalm 142:4a
I will remember God and moan, I will meditate and my spirit faints.	אזכרה אלהים ואהמיה אשיחה ותתעטף רוחי	Psalm 77:4

Is it possible that the psalm uses a slightly different root here than in Jonah 4:8 to trigger a connection with Psalms 142:4 and 77:4? Magonet seems to think that is the case with another word in the phrase, “The rareness of the verb and the similarity of phrase suggests strongly that we have here a quotation, and the author has been forced to replace רוחי with נפשי as the latter is also a key

³²⁸ Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Jonah*, 78.

³²⁹ The Masora parva points out that the form בהתעטף only appears twice, here and in Psalm 142:4.

word within the ‘psalm’ itself (verse 6) and the rest of the book (1:14; 4:3, 8).”³³⁰ Or as Alnbladh contends, is it simply using the “standard phraseology of poetry”?³³¹ Wolff is more balanced on the issue, “That the author has drawn from the treasury of the psalms for his language may count as certain. What is less clear is *which* texts he had in mind.”³³² Adding to the complexity of the problem is the fact that Jonah 2:8a not only seems to broadly reflect language from the psalms but also use that language in surprising ways even challenging the psalms. For example, Psalm 6:6 says:

כי אין במות זכרך בשאול מי יודה-לך

For there is no remembrance of you in death; in Sheol who will praise you?

Yet, and perhaps comically, it is precisely in the belly of Sheol that Jonah “remembers” Yahweh and sings notes of thanksgiving from the Psalms. So, Psalm 6 is reflected in Jonah 2 by its subversion. Psalm 142 and 77, on the other hand, align closer to Jonah 2:8a in their language and their broader message. In the first section below, we will employ some of the helpful indicators of literary dependence to see if Psalm 142:4 relates to Jonah 2:8 in a more substantial way and if there are more texts at play in this line. In the second section, we will explore how Psalm 77 relates to the second clause of the line.

2.12.2 Availability

As we have seen in many cases earlier, the Psalms remain elusive for precise dating. Our concern here is to explore relative dating of particular psalms if only for the sake of historical

³³⁰ Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 48.

³³¹ Alnbladh, *Studies in the Book of Jonah*, 29. Similarly, Niditch, along with Sasson, thinks “the language is formulaic.” Niditch, *Jonah*, 63. Erickson says this is an idiomatic expression. Erickson, *Jonah*, 339.

³³² Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 137.

plausibility that this psalm might have been available to the author of Jonah's psalm. Psalm 142 has elicited different opinions among scholars. Gerstenberger thinks that this psalm belongs to the "postexilic phase of Judean tradition"³³³ but Dahood says some of the features of the psalm favor a pre-exilic date.³³⁴ The latter seems to have support from at least one linguistic feature in the psalm—the relative pronoun *זו* in Psalm 142:4 is an archaic counterpart to *אשר*.³³⁵ But that is meager evidence to suggest that the psalm predates Jonah's psalm, let alone serves as the source of a reference in Jonah's psalm. We will consider other factors to see if Psalm 142 relates to Jonah 2.

2.12.3 Modification

Several manuscripts, as noted by Kennicott and de Rossi, replace *נפשי* (my soul) with *רוחי* (my spirit) likely drawing from the more familiar idiom found in the Psalms. At least three times in the Psalms, *רוחי* (my spirit) follows the root *עטף* (become weak):

When my spirit was fainting upon me	<i>בהתעטף עלי רוחי</i>	Psalm 142:4
So, my spirit faints upon me	<i>ותתעטף עלי רוחי</i>	Psalm 143:4
So, my spirit faints	<i>ותתעטף רוחי</i>	Psalm 77:4

Similarly, 4Q437 2:8 reads: *רוחי* [*ביא מלפ[נ]י*] [*יעטף רוחי*] (...my spirit grows weak), reinforcing this idiomatic usage even outside the Psalter. The scribes responsible for the manuscripts reading *רוחי* instead of *נפשי*, in addition to following the idiomatic language, may have been influenced by these psalmic parallels, hinting at the intertextual resonance of Psalm 142:4 in Jonah 2:8. Not conforming to that familiar expression is Jonah 2:8a where *נפשי* takes the place of *רוחי*. There is a

³³³ Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 420.

³³⁴ Dahood, *Psalms III*, 317.

³³⁵ Huehnergard, "Relative Particles," 363.

contextual reason for the author of Jonah's psalm to potentially modify the language of Psalm 142:4 because Jonah's life is consistently described with נפש in the rest of the book (Jonah 1:14; 4:3, and 8).³³⁶

2.12.4 Partial Integration

Jonah 2:8a creates interpretive challenges in the psalm. Is the prophet once again recounting how he was delivered from his distress *after* he already declared that God had lifted him up from the pit in Jonah 2:7? And in doing so, is he giving a different perspective on his salvation? Or is it complementing the previous line? This line emphasizes how the prophet remembered God in the nick of time whereas the previous line attributes all agency in his salvation to God.

If there is an intertext here that is only partially integrated, it might answer some of these questions. In Psalm 142:4, the rest of the line highlights how God knows all his ways: בהתעטף עלי (When my spirit was fainting upon me, you yourself know my ways). The syntax of this verse, with the disjunctive *waw* and the independent personal pronoun, very emphatically switches the focus from the psalmist to God. This shift in language draws attention away from the psalmist's distress and redirects it to God's comprehensive knowledge and care for his paths. However, in Jonah 2:8a, God becomes the object of Jonah's remembrance: בהתעטף עלי (when my soul was fainting upon me, I remembered YHWH).³³⁷ Jonah is still the main agent in his prayer. If the intertext has created partial integration here, it highlights the

³³⁶ Weimar, *Jona*, 263.

³³⁷ Dahood argues that the את (direct object marker) in Jonah 2:8 is actually an independent personal pronoun whose orthography is shortened as in oblique cases in Ugaritic. Mitchell Dahood, "The Independent Personal Pronoun in the Oblique Case in Hebrew," *CBQ* 32, no. 1 (1970): 86. Sasson disagrees with this suggestion. Sasson, *Jonah*, 193–94. However, if Dahood is right, then we can see how the את in Jonah 2:8a is a continuation of אתה (you) in Psalm 142:4, further solidifying the link between the two texts.

contrast between the psalmist in Psalm 142 who, in dire circumstances, declares that God knows his ways, and the prophet in Jonah 2, who, in the same circumstance, effects his own deliverance by remembering God.

2.12.5 Multiplicity between Psalm 142 and Jonah 2

Multiplicity of verbal correspondences often signals intertextuality, but the links between Psalm 142 and Jonah 2 are tenuous beyond shared phrases. However, the presence of the term תפלה (prayer) in both texts (Ps 142:1; Jonah 2:8b) is worth noting. The prophet says that his prayer (תפלה) for deliverance from drowning in the sea went to God in his holy temple, paralleling Psalm 142's status as a prayer for deliverance from enemies who unjustly put the psalmist in prison. This thematic alignment makes Psalm 142 a suitable prayer for the prophet to invoke in a submarine prison of his own in Jonah 2.

2.12.6 Thematic Correspondence between Psalm 142 and Jonah 2

Beyond the specific language of Psalm 142:4, does Jonah's prayer draw on broader themes found in psalms such as Psalm 18, 31, 42, 69, 116, and 120? Like Jonah's prayer, these psalms explore significant themes such as exile, temple, innocent suffering, and other less pronounced concepts. Psalm 142 appears to engage in similar thematic dialogues, reflecting the same concerns that shape Jonah's prayer.

2.12.6.1 The Petitioner's Perspective: Longing for the temple in exile

Psalm 142 portrays the psalmist's profound sense of alienation, declaring in verse 5 (4), "Look on my right hand and see—there is no one who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me; no one cares for me" (NRSV). Gerstenberger explains this aspect of lament as alienation from

the psalmist's social environment.³³⁸ This can be true even if the psalmist is not physically in exile in a foreign land but experiences alienation psychologically. In verse 8, the psalmist implores God to bring him out of prison. This language of “bringing out” (הוציאה) is evocative of the exodus out of Egypt which is here applied to the return from the Babylonian exile (cf. Exod 3:10–12; 6:6, 13, 26 etc.).³³⁹ Fascinatingly, the prison from which the psalmist is crying out in Psalm 142:8a is tied to the cave in which king David is said to have prayed in Psalm 142:1.³⁴⁰

A Maskil of David when he was in the cave, a prayer	משכיל לדוד בהיותו במערה תפלה	Psalm 142:1
Bring my soul out of prison to praise your name	הוציאה ממסגר נפשי להודות את-שמך	Psalm 143:8
And Jonah was in the innards of the fish	ויהי יונה במעי הדג	Jonah 2:1
From the belly of Sheol I cried for help; you heard my voice	מבטן שאול שועתי שמעת קולי	Jonah 2:3b

The cave provided refuge for David, but also represented a state of exile as he was on the run from Saul.³⁴¹ The prison in verse 8 might even have a mythological meaning of death and underworld (Ps 88:9; Lam 3:7) in contradistinction to the land of the living (Ps 142:6).³⁴² Taking a similarly multifunctional place in Jonah's story is the belly of the fish *in* which he was and *from* which he cried out. While the sequence of the prepositions may be fortuitous, the symbolic resemblance

³³⁸ Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 419.

³³⁹ Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 420. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 567.

³⁴⁰ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 565. Nancy L. DeClaissé-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 979.

³⁴¹ On the issue of the relationship between this reference to David in Psalm 142 and the narratives in 1 Samuel, see the work of Tiemeyer who prefers to read them dialogically even if we cannot make a diachronic connection between the two texts. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, “David's Conflict with the Saulides in 1 Samuel and the Book of Psalms: A Reception Historical Perspective,” in *Song, Prayer, Scripture: Aspects of the Use of the Book of Psalms from the Hebrew Bible to the 21st Century*, ed. David Davage and Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, LHBOTS 749 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2025), 202–4.

³⁴² Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 565; Dahood, *Psalms III*, 317.

between the cave, prison, belly of the fish, and the belly of Sheol is highly centripetal, drawing them towards a common center—a state of exile. King David’s exile in the cave is used as the precedent for the psalmist’s own time in the prison. His deliverance from that prison is described in terms of Israel’s exodus out of Egypt. This may have voiced the concerns of the exilic and post-exilic communities which needed relief from the Babylonian exile.³⁴³ Jonah’s time in the fish converges with this Davidic cave and prison metaphor while also carrying exilic connotations. Psalm 107:5 adds to this point by using the root עֹטַף with נִפְשָׁם (their souls) and תִּתְעַטֹּף (they will be wrapped) (hungry and thirsty their souls fainted within them). This psalm describes the plight of some of the exiles as they wandered in the desert (Ps 107:4). Jonah’s own experience in the belly of the fish is imagined as exilic suffering.

Ideas about the exile have revolved around the temple as their reference point so far in our study. While Psalm 142 does not emphasize the temple as explicitly as other psalms, it hints at temple orientation in verse 3 where he pours out his distress לִפְנֵי (before). The temple may be in view again in verse 8 where the psalmist is surrounded by the righteous:³⁴⁴ הוֹצִיאָה מִמִּסְגֵּר נַפְשִׁי לַהּוֹדוֹת (bring my soul out of prison to praise your name). The righteous will surround me for you will deal bountifully with me). The temple becomes the end point of the resolution of the exile. The psalmist’s journey progresses from complete isolation in an exilic enclosure (Ps 142:5, 8a) to communal worship in the temple (Ps 142:8b), the ultimate symbol of restoration in the promised land. Jonah’s prayer similarly moves towards the temple where he

³⁴³ Kraus relegates the post-exilic dating of this psalm to being “irrelevant” and suggests that this psalm is “a formulary that was available to those who were oppressed by enemies.” Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 531. Similarly, Weiser, *Psalms*, 814. But it does not have to be one or the other since we can observe how this individual prayer is connected to a specific moment in David’s life from the book of Samuel while its liturgical use makes it relevant for anyone in a similar circumstance to pray.

³⁴⁴ Weiser, *Psalms*, 813.

offers sacrifices and confesses God's sovereignty to the congregation there (Jonah 2:10). This shared orientation toward the temple underscores both texts' conception of their resolutions in proximity to God's presence.

2.12.6.2 The Presumption of Innocence

The psalmist in Psalm 142 seems to believe that he is suffering as an innocent victim, for his enemies hid a trap for him in his path (Ps 142:4) and possibly slandered him, resulting in his imprisonment (Ps 142:8).³⁴⁵ This is made more explicit in the last verse where the psalmist confidently says that the righteous will surround him because God will deal with him favorably. Kraus' conclusion is helpful: "In his distress the persecuted person is not alone. The צדיקים, who strive for an obedient way of life, faithful to the covenant, wait for the release of the one who was accused, though innocent."³⁴⁶ Strengthening this point is the link with David in the superscription, which takes us to the story of David's time in the cave in 1 Samuel 24:4, 11, 18–19 where Saul proclaims David righteous, solidifying the concept of innocent suffering in Psalm 142.³⁴⁷

Further enriching this idea is Hodayot 16:30, which echoes Psalm 107:5 and Jonah 2:8a in breaking away from the idiomatic pairing of עֵטָף with רוּחַ: וּלְיָמָם וּלְלַיְלָה (my soul is weary day and night).³⁴⁸ This is a rather long Hodayah which begins with an allegory of trees (16:5–27) and pivots to the speaker's state of agony (16:28–41). Both sections have complex allusions to different parts of the Hebrew Bible. The first section depicts a duality of trees of life and trees by the water, corresponding to the righteous and the wicked (cf. Ps 1). The speaker

³⁴⁵ Weiser, *Psalms*, 815.

³⁴⁶ Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 533.

³⁴⁷ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 565.

³⁴⁸ Mansoor, *The Thanksgiving Hymns*, 157.

identifies himself as the gardener who nourishes the former.³⁴⁹ He is the leader of the righteous trees of life whose innocent suffering is the subject of the subsequent section. His suffering is described in 16:27–28 in terms of the suffering experienced by the servant in the fourth servant song (Isaiah 52:13–53:12).³⁵⁰ He is **בְּיֹרְדֵי שְׂאוֹל** (like the ones who descend to Sheol) in 16:29. Then in the next verse, the hymnist goes on to say **מֵתִים יַחֲפֹשׂ רוּחִי כִּי הִגִּיעוּ לְשַׁחַת חַיִּי** [-- תִּתְעַטֵּף] (my spirit searches out the dead for [my] life reaches the pit; my soul is faint day and night). The hymn takes it further than Psalm 142 by putting the suffering of the hymnist explicitly in the context of death. In doing this, the hymn seems to combine language from Isaiah, Psalms, and Jonah. There is even water imagery that is closer to Jonah in Hodayot 16:32: **וַיִּתְעַפְּפוּ עָלַי מְשֻׁבְּרִים** (the billows fly over me). So, not only does this language of suffering point backwards to David in 1 Samuel 24 but also forwards to the Hodayot 16, both of which emphasize the protagonist's innocence in suffering.

In summary, the phrase **בַּהֲתַעֲטֵף עָלַי נַפְשִׁי** in Jonah 2:8a closely follows Psalm 142:4, triggering an intertextual connection to the psalm. It relates the psalmist's innocent suffering in terms of David's suffering in the cave, Israel's suffering in exile, and the hymnist's suffering as the leader of the righteous in Hodayot 16. The resolution of this exilic suffering is situated in the temple. These ideas of exile, innocent suffering, and temple map on to Jonah's situation well, deepening the characterization of Jonah in the book of Jonah.

³⁴⁹ Harkins, "Thanksgiving Hymns," 2066.

³⁵⁰ Harkins, "Thanksgiving Hymns," 2069. There is an allusion to this fourth song even in the allegory of the trees in Hodayot 16:11–12, tying the two sections together.

2.12.7 את־יהוה זכרתי (I remembered YHWH)

The phrase את־יהוה זכרתי (I remembered YHWH) in Jonah 2:8a transitions the focus from fainting in distress to an act of remembrance within a single poetic line. While the first part of the verse recalls language from Psalm 142, this second clause introduces a new theological perspective that connects to broader psalmic traditions, particularly Psalms 143 and 77 where the words עטף and זכר come together just as in Jonah 2:8a.³⁵¹

When my soul was fainting upon me, I remembered YHWH	בהתעטף עלי נפשי את־יהוה זכרתי	Jonah 2:8a
Therefore my spirit faints within me; my heart within me is appalled. I remember the days of old, I think about all your deeds, I meditate on the works of your hand (NRSV)	ותתעטף עלי רוחי בתוכי ישתומם לבי זכרתי ימים מקדם הגיתי בכל־פעלך במעשה ידך אשוחח	Psalm 143:4–5
I will remember God and moan, I will meditate and my spirit faints.	אזכרה אלהים ואהמיה אשיחה ותתעטף רוחי	Psalm 77:4

In what follows, we will explore if there is a connection to these passages or if they simply share stock liturgical language.

2.12.7.1 Possible Connection Psalm 143

Psalm 143 is closely related to Psalm 142, not only in its proximity but also in its language.³⁵² Both psalms have a variation of the same phrase which appears in Jonah 2:8a:

When my spirit is fainting upon me	בהתעטף עלי רוחי	Psalm 142:4
And my spirit fainted upon me	ותתעטף עלי רוחי	Psalm 143:4

³⁵¹ Weimar, *Jona*, 263.

³⁵² Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 577. As Goldingay argues, Psalm 143, much like Jonah 2, seems to be combining language from different psalms, including Psalm 77 and 142. Goldingay, *Psalms: 90–150*, 3:674.

In Psalm 143, this verse is part of a lament in which the psalmist recounts how his enemies pursued him, crushed his life to the ground, making him sit in darkness like those who have been long dead (Ps 143:3). This overwhelming oppression causes his spirit to faint within him, contrasting with Psalm 142, where the fainting of his spirit is expressed within a temporal infinitive clause: “when my spirit faints within me...” The extent of the psalmist’s suffering in both the psalms puts the psalmist in the realm of the dead (Ps 142:6, 8; 143:3, 7), adding Psalm 143 to the network of psalms that resonate with Jonah’s prayer.

Relevant to our interest is the additional element of remembering which Psalm 143:5 adds to the language of fainting. Recalling God’s past deeds is a recurring theme in the Psalms, often employed by the psalmists to appeal for His intervention (Ps 42:7; 63:7; 77:4, 7, 12; 105:5; 119:52, 55). Here in Psalm 143, this remembering of the past is used similarly. However, Jonah 2:8a has a slightly different accent, for Jonah remembers Yahweh himself, not his past acts.³⁵³ The Targumist, not comfortable with such directness, adds that Jonah remembered “the worship of the Lord” (פִּלְחָנָא דְיָי). To fully grasp the force of this language, we will search other passages for a stronger parallel. Other than the two key words, there is not anything else in Psalm 143 that is particularly striking to make a connection to Jonah 2.³⁵⁴

2.12.7.2 A Striking Parallel in Psalm 77: Remembering God Himself

Psalm 77 offers a closer thematic and verbal parallel to Jonah 2:8a than Psalm 143, especially in its reversal of the typical biblical pattern where God remembers His people.

³⁵³ Weimar notes this difference and suggests a contextual interpretation which highlights Jonah remembering Yahweh more fundamentally as his God again after having lost that connection in his fleeing from him. Weimar, *Jona*, 263–64. Erickson thinks this is a “rather muted response to deliverance” in light of how the psalms typically remembering God’s mighty acts. Erickson, *Jonah*, 303.

³⁵⁴ Almladh, *Studies in the Book of Jonah*, 29.

I will remember God and moan, I will meditate and my spirit faints.	אזכרה אלהים ואהמיה אשיחה ותתעטף רוחי	Psalm 77:4
I will remember the deeds of Yah; surely I will remember your wonders of old	אזכיר מעללייה כי־אזכרה מקדם פלאך	Psalm 77:12

Outside of Psalm 77:4, אלהים (God) is usually the subject of the root זכר (remember). God remembers Noah (Gen 8:1), Abraham (Gen 19:29), Rachel (Gen 30:22), and his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod 2:24).³⁵⁵ Psalm 77:4 flips this pattern by saying that the psalmist remembers God and his spirit faints (cf. Ps 42:7).³⁵⁶ Jonah 2:8 plays a similar chord by making יהוה the object of the psalmist's remembrance (cf. Deut 8:18; Judges 8:34) but his remembering Yahweh turns things around for him as opposed to the psalmist in Psalm 77.³⁵⁷ The resemblance between the two verses is worth noting:

Jonah 2:8a

Psalm 77:4

בהתעטף עלי נפשי את־יהוה זכרתי

אזכרה אלהים ואהמיה אשיחה ותתעטף רוחי

³⁵⁵ In the Hebrew Bible, the root זכר signifies a “reciprocal relationship between Yahweh and Israel or individual Israelites.” W Schottroff, “זכר,” in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, trans. Mark Biddle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 385. For more on Yahweh remembering people in the Hebrew Bible and beyond, see the helpful treatment by Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme, *Before the God in This Place for Good Remembrance*, BZAW 441 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 135–38.

³⁵⁶ Psalm 42:7 also has a similar statement addressing God directly saying that the psalmist remembered God: “My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.” I have already shown how Psalm 42 is related to Jonah 2 in an earlier section, so I will refrain from analyzing that connection here. Limburg helpfully notes the sustained connection to Psalm 42 in this verse. Limburg, *Jonah: A Commentary*, 69.

³⁵⁷ Gerstenberger's comments here are worth noting: “Jussive (and imperfect) forms of *zkr*, ‘remember,’ may signify different things in different contexts. It probably referred originally to bringing a sacrifice, later on to remembering and cultically actualizing the presence of God. Thus personal and communal remembrance of ceremonial acts are the preferred references of the first-person expression (Pss 42:5, 7 [RSV 4, 6]; 63:7 [RSV 6]; 119:52, 55; 137:6; 143:5; cf. Job 21:6; Jonah 2:8 [RSV 7]; Jer 20:9). D layers look at this remembrance from a different angle. They take it as a responsibility of individuals and the congregation to “remember” and thus actualize everything Yahweh did and communicated to his people (e.g., Num 15:39, 40; Deut 5:15; 7:18; 8:2, 18; 9:7, 27; 15:15; 16:3, 12; 24:9, 18, 22).” Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 89.

This resemblance becomes more compelling when we read more of Psalm 77. The first half of the psalm (vv. 1–11) is a personal lament, born out of an individual crisis (v. 3). In the second half (vv. 12–21), however, the psalmist shifts focus to recount God's mighty acts on behalf of Israel, particularly the nation's deliverance through the waters of the red sea (Ps 77:17–21). Hossfeld and Zenger observe that these two sections—the lament over personal crisis and the remembrance of salvation history—seem to stand apart, as if unconnected.³⁵⁸ Yet it is more fruitful to read them as intertwined, with the psalmist interpreting his personal distress through the lens of Israel's collective, national stories, ones that include deliverance from raging seas. This perspective also illuminates the psalm of Jonah, which we have argued carries a similarly collective tone.³⁵⁹ Jonah's personal experience of being cast into the sea is woven with language evocative of Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea, linking his individual plight to the nation's exodus story.

An additional point of contact between the two texts is their broader reflection upon the exile. According to Ezekiel 6:9, those who survive the exile among the nations will *remember* God and acknowledge that he sent them into exile because of idolatry. Likewise in Hosea 8:14, the prophet accuses Israel of forgetting their marker and building palaces and fortified cities:³⁶⁰

Those of you who escape shall remember me among the nations where they are carried captive, how I was crushed by their wanton heart that turned away from me, and their wanton eyes that turned after their

Ezekiel 6:9 זכרו פליטיכם אותי בגוים אשר נשבו-
שם אשר נשברתי את-לבם הזונה אשר-
סר מעלי ואת עיניהם הזנות אחרי

³⁵⁸ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 276.

³⁵⁹ See the discussion in thematic correspondence on Jonah 2:3a, 3b, 4b, 2:6.

³⁶⁰ Hosea 8 is an illuminating text for the reader of the book of Jonah. In Hosea 8:18, the prophet says נבלע ישראל עתה היו בגוים ככלי אין-חפץ בו (Israel is swallowed up; now they are in the nations like a vessel in whom there is no pleasure/use). This is parallel to Jonah being swallowed up by the fish as the sailors launch their luggage overboard to lighten the ship (Jonah 1:5). Additionally, Hosea 6:2 says that God would raise up Israel on the third day just as Jonah was in the fish for three days. Cf. Erickson, *Jonah*, 300–301. So, Jonah remembering God has particular resonance with Hosea 8:14.

idols. Then they will be loathsome in their own sight for the evils that they have committed, for all their abominations. (NRSV)

Israel has forgotten his Maker, and built palaces; and Judah has multiplied fortified cities; but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour his strongholds. (NRSV)

גלוליהם ונקטו בפניהם אל־הרעות אשר
עשו לכל תועבתיהם

Hosea 8:14 וישכח ישראל את־עשהו ויבן היכלות
ויהודה הרבה ערים בצרות ושלחתי־אש
בעריזו ואכלה ארמנתיה

But in Psalm 77 and in Jonah 2, the psalmists remember God as a way of reflecting upon and rolling back the effects of the exile which came about as a result of forgetting God.³⁶¹ In Jonah's case, the prophet's remembrance of God provides a basis for his deliverance, which can be read as a return from exile. In this way, Jonah and Psalm 77 provide a way for post-exilic communities to think about one of the causes for exile i.e. forgetting God and a way back from exile as remembering him.

The last few words of Jonah 2:8a, while not a direct quotation or allusion from any particular psalm, nevertheless still resonate with at least two psalmic texts—Psalm 143:4–5 and 77:4. The former is probably just a coincidence in its resemblance since it does not quite capture the boldness of Jonah's claim that he remembered Yahweh. But the latter offers a striking parallel in its reversal of the typical biblical pattern of God remembering His people, instead depicting the psalmist remembering God. This connection situates Jonah's prayer within a liturgical and theological framework that reflects both personal lament and a collective reflection on the exile based on texts like Ezekiel 6:9 and Hosea 8:14. Moreover, such boldness of the character of Jonah enriches the narrative by underscoring Jonah's presumptive confidence—a train that finds fuller expression in his forthright confrontation with God in chapter 4.

³⁶¹ Gerstenberger says Psalm 77 echoes the voices of exilic and post-exilic communities. Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 89.

2.13 Praying Psalm 88: Transforming Exilic Lament (Jonah 2:8b)

Jonah's remembering Yahweh leads to his prayer going to his temple in the next line, which in the MT reads:

ותבוא אליך תפילתי אליהיכל קדשך

And my prayer came to you, to your holy temple

This text is fairly well represented as is by the collective witness of 4Q82 and Mur88 which respectively read:

[ו]תבוא אליכָהּ

[ותב]וא אליך תפ[ל]ת[י] ת[י]א[ל] [ל]הי[כל] קדש[ך]

The OG, however, interprets the verb in this line differently than the Masoretes, resulting in more of a wish that his prayer would reach God than an indicative assertion in the MT, that his prayer reached God as a result of Jonah remembering Yahweh:

καὶ ἔλθοι πρὸς σέ ἡ προσευχή μου εἰς ναὸν ἁγίόν σου

And may my prayer come to you, into your holy temple

The Greek translator, just like we have seen in Jonah 2:7c, reads the *wayyiqtol* verb ותבוא (it came) as a jussive by translating it with an aorist active optative verb, ἔλθοι (may it come), turning the confident assertion of the MT into a remote hope that his prayer would go to God.³⁶² The syntax of the consonantal text of the MT allows for this interpretation here more so than in Jonah 2:7c, so the Greek tradition does not represent a different *Vorlage*.

³⁶² Perkins, "The Septuagint of Jonah," 49–50.

2.13.1 Verbal Resonance

But more than that, what if the Greek translation was influenced by other texts just as we saw was the case in Jonah 2:3b? Two texts from the Psalms are relevant to this verse which may have influenced the way the Greek translator rendered the verb:

May my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry	תבוא לפניך תפילתי הטה אָזְנְךָ לִרְנָתִי	Psalm 88:3
Lord, listen to my prayer and may my cry for help come to you	יְהוָה שְׁמַעָה תְּפִלָּתִי וְשׁוּעָתִי אֵלֶיךָ תְּבוֹא	Psalm 102:2
And my prayer came to you, to your holy temple	וּתְבוֹא אֵלַיךָ תְּפִלָּתִי אֱלֹהֵיכֶל קֹדֶשֶׁךָ	Jonah 2:8b

These two texts have the same second person orientation as Jonah 2:8 with the words תפילתי and תבוא, although Psalm 88:3 is closer to Jonah 2:8 than Psalm 102:2 in its syntax and poetic structure. The difference between these texts and Jonah is that the former contain a request for their prayer/cry for help to come to Yahweh whereas Jonah confidently asserts that his prayer has already come to God. The Greek translators, in addition to preferring a more modest request for help in Jonah 2, also found themselves in good company with the psalmists of Psalm 88 and 102.

Whether Psalm 88 and 102 simply provided a shared liturgical language for the Greek translators or if Jonah's psalm depended on the two psalms in this line is the object of our inquiry now. Niditch thinks "The language that expresses the prayer going to or reaching God is a common formula in the psalms, communion with a sympathetic deity being the quintessential goal of prayer (cf. Pss 18:7 [cf. 2 Sam 22:7]; 88:3 [2]; see also 2 Chr 30:27)."³⁶³ But the weakness of this argument is that this language of prayer going to God, into his holy temple is only found in a handful of texts—in exactly the texts she mentions in parentheses. While the influence of Psalm

³⁶³ Niditch, *Jonah*, 63.

18 is present in Jonah 2, it is missing the key word תפלתי (my prayer) to make a more direct connection to Jonah 2:8.³⁶⁴ Psalm 102:2 seems to be reflecting the wording of Psalm 18:7 with the words ושוועתי לפניו תבוא (And my cry for help came to you) which are parallel to ושוועתי באזניו (and my cry for help came before him in his hearing). So, it is not exactly a parallel to Jonah 2:8b as Psalm 88:3 is. 2 Chronicles 30:27 is a descriptive text rather than a prayer like Jonah's (cf. 1 Kings 8:45).

Thus, Psalms 88:3 is the only close parallel to Jonah 2:8, probably recognized by the Greek translators, suggesting a more distinct connection than general shared vocabulary. Simon seems to assume the link with Psalm 88 when he says, “What is expressed in Ps. 88:3 as a request—‘let my prayer reach You’—is phrased here as a past certainty.”³⁶⁵ Similarly, Wolff says, “What the petitioner still implored in the songs of lament Ps. 88:2; 102:1 is reported here, in very similar words, as having taken place.”³⁶⁶ Does the language of Jonah 2:8b show evidence of repurposing of Psalm 88:2? Below, I will apply some of the indicators of dependence to see if that is indeed the case. We have already seen verbal resonance between Jonah 2:8 and Psalm 88:3. Below is a visual representation that shows how the structure of the poetic lines are similar:

May my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry	תבוא לפניך תפלתי הטה-אזנך לרנתי Psalm 88:3
And my prayer came to you, to your holy temple	ותבוא אליך תפלתי אל-היכל קדשך Jonah 2:8b

³⁶⁴ This missing word in Psalm 18 maps on to the historical development of תפלה and פלל. Gerstenberger concludes that this pair came to be in common use in the exilic period, explaining its absence in Psalm 18 and presence in Psalms 88, 102, and Jonah 2). Erhard S. Gerstenberger and Heinz-Josef Fabry, “פלל,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 11:570.

³⁶⁵ Simon, *Jonah*, 23.

³⁶⁶ Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 137.

But since this language of prayer entering God's presence is found in a few other texts as we have seen above, the connection between Psalm 88 and Jonah 2 should be explored further for evidence of availability, modification, partial integration, multiplicity, and thematic correspondence.

2.13.2 Availability

Opinions on the dating of Psalm 88 are largely based on its theological character rather than linguistic layers. Hossfeld and Zenger, while admitting to the difficulty of dating the psalm, nevertheless suggest an exilic or post-exilic date based on the psalm's theological reflection on Yahweh's relationship to the dead.³⁶⁷ However, Gerstenberger, acknowledging a parallel to Job in its dialectic with God, argues that the psalm might find its origin in pre-exilic times when it was probably used "in prayer services outside the sanctuary."³⁶⁸ Textually, parts of Psalm 88:1–5 and 15–17 are attested in 4QPsalms, in different fragments (4Q87 and 4Q98), with only one minor difference in Psalm 88:16.³⁶⁹ So, it is possible that the psalm was available to the author of Jonah's psalm.

2.13.3 Modification

If Jonah 2:8b is borrowing from Psalm 88:3, the difference between the two lines can be significant to how the author of Jonah's psalm repurposes Psalm 88:3 to fit Jonah's psalm and narrative. The first change is the addition of waw to the verb, תבוא. As we have seen above, this transforms the jussive in Psalm 88:3 (may it come) into an indicative past tense verb (it came). With the absence of any jussives or imperatives in the rest of the psalm of Jonah, this modification makes sense. By not following suit with the rest of the poetic line of Psalm 88:3 which includes

³⁶⁷ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 394. Similarly, due to the similarity of language with Job, Kraus dates the psalm to post-exilic times. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 192.

³⁶⁸ Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 145–46.

³⁶⁹ Ulrich, *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls*, 652.

an imperative, Jonah (both the character and the author) is almost deliberately selective in his words.³⁷⁰

A second modification comes in the second word, אֵלֶיךָ (to you) changed from לִפְנֵיךָ (before you). This change reflects assimilation of the preposition to the repeated use of אֵל to refer to praying to deity both in the psalm of Jonah (Jonah 2:3, 5, 8) and in the narrative (Jonah 1:5, 6, 14; 2:2; 3:8; 4:2).³⁷¹ These modifications are consistent with Jonah's narrative framework, ensuring the psalm integrates seamlessly into the larger story.

2.13.4 *Partial Integration*

The word תַּפְלָתִי (my prayer) in Jonah 2:8 echoes Psalm 88:3 but diverges in tone and function. It complements how Jonah's prayer is introduced with the verb, וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל (and he prayed) in Jonah 2:2. However, תַּפְלָה in the Psalms is typically characterized by petitions and requests (Ps. 4:2; 6:10; 17:1; 35:13; 39:13; 54:4; 55:2; 61:2; 69:14; 84:9; 86:6; 88:3, 14; 102:2; 141:2, 5; 143:1).³⁷² In a significant work on the form of prayer in the Hebrew Bible, Aejmelaeus says, "Prayer... is of its very essence speech to God and in particular appeal to God. It implies address to God in the vocative sense, as well as the use of pronouns and verbal forms in the second person singular, particularly the imperative."³⁷³ Moreover, תַּפְלָה in the later post-exilic texts came to mean penitential prayers, marked by confession of sin (Ezra 9:6–15; Neh 1:5–11; 9:5–37; Dan 9:4–

³⁷⁰ An additional reason for moving away from Psalm 88 in the second part of the line might be to emphasize the temple orientation which is so prominent in Jonah's prayer but conspicuously absent in Psalm 88 (except maybe in 88:3 and 14 where the presentation of the prayer before God implies a temple context).

³⁷¹ Opgen-Rhein suggests that the second preposition אֵל in the same poetic line reflects a Deuteronomistic understanding of the temple in whose direction prayers are offered in 1 Kings 8:29, 30, 38. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 171.

³⁷² For a general analysis of תַּפְלָה in the Hebrew Bible, see the helpful article by Gerstenberger and Fabry, "תַּפְלָה."

³⁷³ Anneli Aejmelaeus, *The Traditional Prayer in the Psalms*, BZAW 167 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986), 10.

19).³⁷⁴ Jonah's is perhaps the only "prayer" in the Hebrew Bible with no imperative or jussive or confession of sin, creating incongruence from partial integration of language from Psalm 88, and prompting a link to the psalm.³⁷⁵ This partial integration highlights Jonah's unique use of liturgical language. While the phrase aligns with Psalm 88, Jonah's psalm reconfigures its purpose, shifting from a plea for deliverance to a declaration of God's completed action. This divergence invites readers to reflect on Jonah's self-perception and theological stance.

2.13.5 Multiplicity

Psalm 88 has verbal similarities with Jonah beyond what can be seen in Jonah 2:8b, furthering the possibility of literary dependence. For instance, in Psalm 88:8, the psalmist says that God's breakers afflicted him: *וכל־משברִיךְ עֲנִית* (and with all your breakers you afflicted [me]). As we have seen earlier in Jonah 2:4b, the phrase *כל־משברִיךְ* (all your breakers) is part of a quotation from Psalm 42:8, but it might have originated from Psalm 88:8 because another part of that quotation appears in Psalm 88:17, *עָלִי עָבְרוּ חֲרוֹנֶיךָ* (your wrath crossed over me). Whatever the relationship may be, the phrase only appears in these three texts in all of the Hebrew Bible. Other words that relate to Jonah's watery distress appear are *שְׂאוֹל* (Sheol [Ps 88:4 cf. Jonah 2:3b]), *מְצוֹלָה* (deep [Ps 88:7 cf. Jonah 2:4a]), *שׁוֹעֵתִי* (I cried for help [Ps 88:14 cf. Jonah 2:3b]). Related but not exact words are *יְשׁוּעָה* (salvation [Ps 88:2 cf. Jonah 2:10c]), *יֹרְדֵי בֹר* (those who go down to the pit [Ps 88:5 cf. Jonah 2:4a, 7a]), *נִגְזְרוּ* (they are cut off [Ps 88:6 cf. Jonah 2:5a]), and *סְבוּנֵי כַּמִּים* (they surround me like waters [Ps 88:18 cf. Jonah 2:4a]). The multiplicity of verbal contacts outside of the verse in question makes it more likely that Psalm 88 is invoked in Jonah 2.

³⁷⁴ Gerstenberger and Fabry, 571–72. Cf. Mark J. Boda, *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9*, BZAW 277 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), x.

³⁷⁵ Sasson, *Jonah*, 194. Surprisingly, in stark contrast to the Psalms, Jonah does petition God in chapter 4 to kill him (Jonah 4:3, 8, 9).

2.13.6 Thematic Correspondence

Jonah 2:8b aligns not only verbally but also thematically with Psalm 88, a unique lament in the Hebrew Bible that gives voice to intense suffering without offering resolution. It describes a prolonged, near-death experience of the psalmist in terms that evoke the dialectic of Job, the suffering of exile in Lamentations and Isaianic servant. More relevant to Jonah 2 is that the psalmist's experience converges with that of Jonah in the sea. The psalm, which metaleptically fills in the content of Jonah's, brings to the surface Jonah's self-perception as an innocent sufferer who endures exilic suffering and presents his case to God using the traditional language of the psalms.

2.13.6.1 The Petitioners' Perspective: Death in primeval waters

The experience of the psalmist in Psalm 88 converges with that of Jonah in that he thinks he is passing into the realm of death through watery depths. The psalmist complains that he is drawing near to Sheol (Ps 88:4), and is being counted with those who go down to the pit (Ps 88:5).³⁷⁶ He likens himself to those forsaken among the dead, like those who have been slain and lie in graves (Ps 88:6a). God does not remember them, for they have been cut off from his hand (Ps 88:6b). He appeals to God on the basis that the dead do not rise up to praise God (Ps 88:11), nor do they recount his grace and faithfulness (Ps 88:12).³⁷⁷ He describes the realm of the dead as the land of forgetfulness (Ps 88:13). Against this light, Jonah *remembering* God in the belly of Sheol, the same realm of the dead, is astonishing.

³⁷⁶ Descent to the underworld has mythological context in other ancient near eastern cultures which Kraus helpfully outlines. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 194. For the complex significance of death in Psalm 88 encompassing different dimensions of life, see Katherine E. Southwood, "Metaphor, Illness, and Identity in Psalms 88 and 102," *JSOT* 43, no. 2 (2018): 237–39.

³⁷⁷ That the dead cannot praise God appears 4 other times in the Hebrew Bible (Pss. 6, 30, 115; Isa 38). On this, see Bernd Janowski, "Die Toten loben JHWH nicht. Psalm 88 und das alttestamentliche Todesverständnis," in *Der Gott des Lebens*, Beiträge zur Theologie des Alten Testaments 3 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2003), 222ff.

The similarities deepen with the introduction of water in Psalm 88:7, where the psalmist sees himself in the deep just like Jonah in Jonah 2:4. God's breakers, which is a unique expression as we have seen earlier, afflict him (Ps 88:8). God's terror surrounds him like water all day long (Ps 88:18), just like Jonah being surrounded by the underwater river in Jonah 2:4a and the deep in Jonah 2:6a.

You have put me in the depths of the Pit,
in the regions dark and deep (NRSV) שתני בבור תחתיות במצלות Psalm 88:7

Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and you
overwhelm me with all your waves. *Selah*
(NRSV) עלי סמכה חמתך וכל־משבר־יך ענית סלה Psalm 88:8

They surround me like a flood all day long;
from all sides they close in on me (NRSV) סבוני כמים כל־היום הקיפו עלי יחד Psalm 88:18

Both texts frame their distress as divine acts, emphasizing the overwhelming and inescapable nature of their suffering.

2.13.6.2 The Presumption of Innocence: Unjust suffering in exile

Psalm 88 challenges the traditional form of lament by making Yahweh, not an enemy, the source of the psalmist's unjust suffering. In Psalm 88:7, the psalmist accuses Yahweh of putting him in the depths of a "pit" (בור) set in parallel to the "deep" (מצלות) in the poetic line. As Gerstenberger points out,³⁷⁸

The great majority of individual complaints make human or demonic agents responsible in the first place... Evilmongers are accused of causing every harm. They are usually pointed out and denounced in individual complaint psalms; God's wrath is called on to destroy them. All this seems invalid in the case of Psalm 88. The suppliant is turning toward and against Yahweh himself only.

This strikes the same chord as Jonah 2:4a where Jonah says that Yahweh cast him into the deep, into the heart of the seas where the river surrounded him and all of God's breakers and waves

³⁷⁸ Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 143. Cf. Southwood, "Metaphor, Illness, and Identity in Psalms 88 and 102," 240–41. Janowski, "Die Toten loben JHWH nicht," 215ff.

crossed over him. In chapter 1, it was the sailors who cast Jonah into the sea. But in the psalm, Jonah takes it up with God and accuses God in the same fashion as the psalmist in Psalm 88, where the role of the enemy in the traditional form of a lament is replaced by Yahweh.³⁷⁹

The dialectic that follows in the questions aimed at Yahweh in Psalm 88:11–13 brings out the notion of innocent suffering more forcefully than is present in Jonah:

Do you work wonders for the dead?
Do the shades rise up to praise you? *Selah*
Is your steadfast love declared in the grave,
or your faithfulness in Abaddon?
Are your wonders known in the darkness,
or your saving help in the land of forgetfulness? (NRSV)

These rhetorical questions follow the form of questions that God asks Job in Job 38–39, giving the psalmist a chance to argue his case with God, perhaps even using sarcasm.³⁸⁰ The psalmist goes on to further question God in Psalm 88:15 asking him why he rejects him. Gerstenberger is again helpful here when he says, “God is accused of having brought about the condemnation of his client, and unjustly so, at that...In this sense the interrogative particle is used in the Psalms and the book of Job.”³⁸¹ Bolstering this point further is Southwood’s work which shows that despite the ubiquitous notion of illness and suffering caused by sin in the ancient world, Psalm 88 does not confess the supplicant’s sin.³⁸²

If anything, the supplicant blames YHWH for causing his problems and perceives them to be unfair, with obvious similarities to the book of Job. The illness is reported as being YHWH’s doing, but no admission of guilt or request for forgiveness is present.

³⁷⁹ Janowski, “Die Toten loben JWHW nicht,” 216.

³⁸⁰ Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 144. Southwood, “Metaphor, Illness, and Identity in Psalms 88 and 102,” 241.

³⁸¹ Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 144.

³⁸² Southwood, “Metaphor, Illness, and Identity in Psalms 88 and 102,” 243.

Both Gerstenberger and Southwood mention the similarity of Psalm 88 to Job, who argues for his innocence.³⁸³ I suggest that Psalm 88 participates in more Job-like discourse by reading it alongside Lamentations. In Psalm 88:6–7, the psalmist says that the dead are those who are cut off from God’s hands (והמה מידך נגזרו) and placed in deep darkness (במחשכים במצלות). This sense of being cut off from God in the *nifal* stem is used in Lamentations 3:54 to refer to exile and alienation from God (cf. Isa 53:8; Ezek 37:11; 2 Chron 26:21), which earlier in Lamentation 3:6 is described as being seated in darkness as the dead of old (במחשכים הושיבני כמתי עולם).³⁸⁴ Moreover, in Psalm 88:9, the psalmist says that he is shut in and cannot escape (כלא ולא אצא). Lamentations 3:7 uses the same language to speak of innocent suffering:

גדר בעדי ולא אצא

He has shut me in, and I cannot escape

Later in the chapter, the writer declares his innocence, asking God to vindicate him (Lam 3:59). The psalmist’s cry for deliverance and lament over his separation from God parallels Jonah’s prayer, which uses similar language but repositions it as a moment of resolution rather than ongoing despair.

Psalm 88 provides a compelling parallel to Jonah 2:8b, not only through shared vocabulary and poetic structure but also in thematic resonance. While the psalmist in Psalm 88 laments his near-death experience and pleads for divine intervention, Jonah’s psalm reframes similar language as a confident assertion of resolution, consistent with the tone of the rest of his prayer.

³⁸³ Janowski draws a parallel in Psalm 88 to Job 16:7–14 where Job accuses God of acting like his enemy. Janowski, “Die Toten loben JWHW nicht,” 216–17.

³⁸⁴ Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 193. Janowski, “Die Toten loben JWHW nicht,” 211. The Targum interprets Psalm 88:7 as referring to the exile: שויתא יתי בגלותא דמתילא לגובא ארעיתא בחשוכיא במצלותא (You have placed me in exile, which is likened to the lower pit, among the oppressed in the depths). Also, see my discussion of Lamentations 3:54 in the section discussing Jonah 2:5a.

Psalm 88, with its bold questions directed at God, participates in the Hebrew Bible's broader dialogue on exilic suffering and the struggles of the innocent. By drawing on its language, Jonah situates his own experience within this tradition, presenting himself as an innocent sufferer vindicated by divine response. In this way, the liturgical space of Jonah 2 subtly foreshadows the direct, unresolved confrontation between the prophet and God in Jonah 4.

2.14 Vain Idols and Faithfulness: In Dialogue with Psalm 31 (Jonah 2:9)

Verse 9 introduces a new, didactic element into Jonah's prayer, setting up a contrast with the psalmist in verse 10. Along with interpretive issues, this line also presents a few textual issues, offering a window into how some ancient traditions read this verse. The MT reads:

משמרים הבלי־שוא חסדם יעזבו

Those who worship vain idols will abandon their faithfulness

The same words can be seen in Mur88:

משמר[י]ם הבל[י] שוא חסדם י[עזבו]

However, 4Q82 introduces a variation:

[משמרים הבלי שו] א חסודם [יעזבו]

The waw in חסודם is either an orthographic variant or an infinitive of the verbal root חסד (uncertain meaning)³⁸⁵ Additionally, the Syriac tradition emends this word by reading a second-person pronominal suffix instead of third-person plural on חסד. The OG reads this line somewhat differently, treating the construct phrase הבלי־שוא (vain nothings) as two distinct nouns and interpreting the imperfect verb יעזבו (they will abandon) as past tense:

φυλασσόμενοι μάταια καὶ ψευδῆ ἔλεος αὐτῶν ἐγκατέλιπον

Those who observe vanities and lies have forsaken their own mercy

One of the Greek recensions, Aquila, reads the form משמרים (those who worship) as מן + שמרים, rendering the phrase with the preposition ἀπό (from), tying verse 9 syntactically to verse 8.³⁸⁶ This is understandable since the *piel* participle of שמר appears only here in all of the Hebrew Bible. For

³⁸⁵ Lange, "4QXIIg (4Q82) as an Editorial Text," 95.

³⁸⁶ Gelston, *BHQ*, 62.

this reason, the BHS mentions an alternate suggestion of **הַשְׁמֵרִים**, a Qal participle instead of reading piel participle with the Masoretes, possibly because of the parallel with Psalm 31:7.³⁸⁷

With the exception of the last word, all the words in Jonah 2:9 were subject to slightly varying readings over the centuries. These variations may be explained by the fact that this line, as DeWette noted, presents interpretive difficulties in the book of Jonah, leading to perhaps the most varied opinions on its interpretation than any other line in Jonah's psalm.³⁸⁸ Does **מִשְׁמֵרִים** mean "worshipper" possibly derived from the Akkadian root *šamāru(m)*? Or does it convey the sense of "guarding" or "holding on to," as signified in the *qal* stem, and thereby forming an antonym to the chiastically arranged final verb, **יַעֲזֹבוּ** (cf. Pss 89:31–32; 119:87–88)?³⁸⁹ What does the unique pairing **הַבְּלִי־שׁוֹא** mean, given the diverse ways these nouns are used separately elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible?³⁹⁰ And finally, much ink has been spilled on the meaning of **חֲסֵדָם**,

³⁸⁷ The editors also suggest reading **מִשְׁמֵרִים** as more grammatically expected **מִשְׁמֵרִי**, putting it in construct state with the following phrase. It is possible that the final **ם** is an enclitic *mem*. Cf. H. D. Hummel, "Enclitic Mem in Early Northwest Semitic, Especially Hebrew," *JBL* 76, no. 2 (1957): 99. But Sasson doesn't think that is a necessary explanation. Sasson, *Jonah*, 197. Opgen-Rhein, on the other hand, posits that the enclitic *mem* makes the phrase an archaic formulation in Jonah 2:9. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 172.

³⁸⁸ "Für sich genommen, würde es wie Ps. LXIX, 1 f. 15., vgl. XVIII, 5. XLII, 8. zu erklären sein. Vs 9. passt gar nicht auf Jona" (Taken by itself, it would have to be explained like Ps. LXIX, 1 f. 15., cf. XVIII, 5. XLII, 8. Verse 9 does not fit Jonah at all). DeWette, "Die Einleitung," 464. See Sasson's discussion for how interpreters over the years have dealt with the difficulties. Sasson, *Jonah*, 197–99. Sherwood goes as far as to say, "if we read the scrambled line 'Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their true loyalty' (2:8) as a deliberately ridiculous concatenation of psalm phrases, a joke at the expense of superior didactic psalmists, then the book of Jonah may *just* be anticipating one use for which the Backwaters will later conscript it: as a means of deflating what they perceive as the inflated piety of the biblical." Sherwood, *A Biblical Text and Its Afterlives: The Survival of Jonah in Western Culture*, 258.

³⁸⁹ García López, "שָׁמַר," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 15:280–81. On the chiastic arrangement of the verse, see Jerome T. Walsh, "Jonah 2,3–10: A Rhetorical Critical Study," *Biblica* 63, no. 2 (1982): 224. Barré goes into depth about how the two verbs are used antithetically in the Hebrew Bible and beyond. Michael L. Barré, "Jonah 2,9 and the Structure of Jonah's Prayer," *Biblica* 72, no. 2 (1991): 238–40.

³⁹⁰ Love makes the case for translating the phrase as "empty breaths" rather than vain idols (cf. Deut 32:21; Jer 8:19), seeing 2:9 as a didactic, self-reflective comment on Jonah's plight under the sea rather than a critique of the sailors and the Ninevites. Nathan Patrick Love, "Translating Jonah 2.9: Looking for a Breath of Fresh Air," *The Bible Translator* 64, no. 3 (2013): 266–83.

both on its meaning in this context as well as the referent and the nature of the referent (subjective or objective) of the third plural pronominal suffix.³⁹¹

While not attempting to resolve all these interpretive issues, I propose an intertextual reading of this line with Psalm 31:7, which it appears to quote. This perspective may help clarify how Jonah 2:9 reuses Psalm 31 in a way that complements both the psalm and Jonah's narrative.

2.14.1 Verbal Resonance

The resemblance between Jonah 2:9 and Psalm 31:7 is unmistakable:

Those who worship vain idols will abandon their faithfulness	משמרים הבלי־שוא חסדם יעזבו	Jonah 2:9
I hate those who worship vain idols; but I trust in YHWH	שנאתי השמרים הבלי־שוא ואני אל־יהוה בטחתי	Psalm 31:7

This phrase, although in a slightly modified form in Jonah 2, only appears in these two texts in all of the Hebrew Bible and the Qumran scrolls, strengthening the chance of a quotation. Moreover, the adversative conjunction introducing a *casus pendence* ואני (but as for me) in Psalm 31:7 continues in Jonah 2:10, making a sustained quotation more likely: ואני בקול תודה אזבחה־לך (But as for me, I will sacrifice to you with a voice of thanksgiving...).

³⁹¹ Cf. Weimar, *Jona*, 269. Beyond the typical debates about the meaning of חסד in the Hebrew Bible, some scholars have suggested that here in Jonah 2:9 is a personalized reference to God himself, complicating the verse even more. Landes, "The Kerygma of the Book of Jonah," 7; Walsh, "Jonah 2,3–10: A Rhetorical Critical Study," 228. Love, "Translating Jonah 2:9," 278. Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 138. Erickson's discussion of this issue is worth reading as she illuminates how חסד is a divine quality that humans are expected to follow in their loyalty to God. Erickson, *Jonah*, 306, 341–42. Further adding to the complexity are scholars such as Barré who have argued for the referent of the third plural suffix on חסדם to be unfaithful Israelites who disregard their covenant obligations rather than nations who worship idols, interpreting הבלי־שוא as "faithless practices" rather than idols. Barré, "Jonah 2,9 and the Structure of Jonah's Prayer," 240–41. However, Ferreira thinks the referent is unfaithful Israelites who were practicing idolatry, which was one of the reasons for exile according to Deuteronomistic history (1 Kings 16:13, 26; 2 Kings 17:15). Johan Ferreira, "A Note on Jonah 2:8: Idolatry and Inhumanity in Israel," *The Bible Translator* 63, no. 1 (2012): 32.

2.14.2 Availability

I have already discussed Psalm 31 in relation to Jonah 2:5 and argued that the textual, linguistic, and form critical features of this psalm are too diverse to set a relative date to the book of Jonah.³⁹² However, I concluded from other indicators of dependence that Psalm 31 influenced the composition of Jonah's psalm. Building on that conclusion, I will tease out a specific connection between Psalm 31:7 and Jonah 2:9 in what follows.

2.14.3 Modification

Jonah 2:9 modifies Psalm 31:7 in two notable ways, showcasing a creative adaptation of traditional language. First, with only one letter, the author of Jonah 2:9 transforms the *qal* participle in Psalm 31:7 into a *piel* participle, which has an intensifying and habitual force to it.³⁹³ Magonet affirms the connection to Psalm 31:7 and says,

One is forced to compare this verse with its original source, of only because of this strange change of verb form. What is immediately apparent is that the Jonah version lacks שונאתי 'I hate', and in place of the Psalm's contrasting 'but I trust in YHWH,' the Jonah verse continues by describing the fate of 'those that regard lying vanities,' ...³⁹⁴

Although reworking a psalmic text, this is a creative composition since this *piel* form is unattested in any surviving Hebrew literature before rabbinic Hebrew, showing that reliance upon and reuse of traditional language can also be original.

³⁹² See 2.6.2.

³⁹³ Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 141, §52.f. Jenni says that the *piel* in Jonah 2:9 emphasizes the object of the veneration whereas the *qal* in Psalm 31:7 emphasizes the subject. Ernst Jenni, *Das hebräische Pi'el: Syntaktisch-semasiologische Untersuchung einer Verbalform im Alten Testament* (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag Zürich, 1968), 223–24.

³⁹⁴ Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 45–46.

Second, the phrase **משמרים הבלי־שוא** (those who worship vain idols) is made the subject of the main verb, **יעזבו** (they abandon), in Jonah 2:9 whereas it was the object of the verb, **שנאתי** (I hate), shifting the focus from the psalmist to an opposing party which only made the debut at the end of the psalm here. This is done, not just to focus on the Other, but as a foil to the psalmist in the next verse who vows to fulfill his covenant obligations as opposed to those in verse 9.

2.14.4 *Partial Integration*

The inclusion of Jonah 2:9, with its didactic focus, creates a notable incongruity within Jonah's psalm, reinforcing the likelihood of its dependence on Psalm 31:7.³⁹⁵ Up until this point, the only characters in the prayer are Yahweh and Jonah (cf. Ps 88). In contrast, traditional laments typically include a third character—the psalmist's enemy—who is blamed for the psalmist's suffering. Jonah's psalm, however, departs from this convention. It blends features of both lament and thanksgiving, yet it breaks formal expectations by including a didactic statement in what otherwise resembles a thanksgiving psalm with lament elements. This didactic insertion introduces an implied audience whom the psalmist addresses directly, creating a tension between the psalm's form and the narrative setting of Jonah in the belly of the fish, where he is said to have prayed this prayer.³⁹⁶

As noted earlier, no other verse in this psalm creates as much interpretive speculation as this relatively short line because of its incongruity, reinforcing the likelihood that it is a quotation from Psalm 31:7. As Magonet observes, "We are forced to go to the only other place where an

³⁹⁵ Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 45.

³⁹⁶ To resolve this tension, Weimar proposes that starting in verse 9, the scene has shifted to the temple in the future where Jonah expects to offer sacrifices in front of a congregation (2:10). Weimar, *Jona*, 266.

answer might lie, namely, the original source of the phrase with which we are familiar from our tradition, namely Psalm 31.”³⁹⁷ This link clarifies two key aspects of Jonah’s line:

1. The meaning of הַבְּלִי-שׁוּא:

The psalmist in Psalm 31 builds up to Psalm 31:7 with an extended description of who Yahweh is, climaxing in verse 6 with the epithet אֱלֹהֵי אֱמֶת (true/faithful God). Then in the next verse, he expresses his disdain for those who regard הַבְּלִי-שׁוּא. Whatever this may mean, it has to be the opposite of who the psalmist trusts and worships in the psalm, namely Yahweh, the true/faithful God. This results in the interpretation that הַבְּלִי-שׁוּא refers to other gods, who are pejoratively labelled “vanities” and “emptiness” in other parts of the Hebrew Bible (cf. Deut 32:21; 2 Kings 17:15; Jer 2:5).

2. The meaning of מַשְׁמְרִים:

In Psalm 31:7, the *qal* participle form of מַשְׁמְרִים is paralleled to בִּטְחָתִי, a word that means to trust. Coupled with the fact that these words are both used in the relation to deities, something paralleling trust or worship must also be true of the word מַשְׁמְרִים in Jonah 2, thereby clarifying the meaning of the line in Jonah’s psalm. The following verse, Jonah 2:10 where Jonah vows to offer thanksgiving sacrifices to God, further clarifies the meaning of מַשְׁמְרִים placing it in the realm of cultic worship of foreign deities.

2.14.5 Multiplicity

There is substantial evidence in this area, as documented in the section on Jonah 2:5.³⁹⁸ Since that discussion is equally relevant to this line, I will not repeat it here.

³⁹⁷ Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 46.

³⁹⁸ See 2.6.5.

2.14.6 Thematic Correspondence

Again, the thematic correspondence with Psalm 31 which I discussed in Jonah 2:5 remains relevant here. But considering the broader thematic association with Psalm 31 here would prove useful to some more of the interpretive issues that Jonah 2:9 raises. In particular, who does the verse target? Unfaithful Israelites to whom the book is addressed? Or non-Israelites whom the narrative references?³⁹⁹ Psalm 31 may shed light on the referent in Jonah's psalm. Moreover, it also helps deepen the conception of God in Jonah's psalm.

2.14.6.1 Perception of the Other

In Psalm 31, those who regard “vain idols” are further identified as the psalmist's **אויב** (enemy [Ps 31:19]), **צָרִי** (adversary [Ps 31:12]), **מִרְדְּפֵי** (persecutors [Ps 31:16]), and **רָשָׁעִים** (wicked [Ps 31:18]). They have surrounded the psalmist as a city under siege (Ps 31:22), leading the psalmist to despair as one who is cut off from God's sight (Ps 31:23). This group is clearly on the outside of the metaphoric city in which the psalmist exists. He does not associate himself with his enemies who worship “vain idols” because he declares Yahweh as his God in Psalm 31:15. While the identity of this group is not explicitly stated as foreign nationals in this psalm, nothing else in the psalm prevents the reader from assuming their identity as non-Yahwists.

In the book of Jonah, the prophet is the sole Israelite character within both the narrative and the psalm. The sailors in chapter 1 are presumed to be non-Israelites as they initially call upon their own gods (Jonah 1:5). In chapters 3 and 4, the other prominent characters are Assyrians. This raises the question: Who does Jonah 2:9 address as worshippers of “vain idols” in a pejorative sense? The idea that Jonah 2:9 refers to unfaithful Israelites adopting pagan practices seems

³⁹⁹ Tiemeyer notes that the Jewish and Christian interpreters differed over this issue through the centuries. Tiemeyer, *Jonah*, 149–51.

unlikely given the narrative context. Proponents of this view argue that non-Israelites in Jonah's story do not worship idols but instead behave as model Yahwists.⁴⁰⁰ However, this tension underscores why Jonah 2:9 is placed in the prophet's mouth: it subverts his self-perception and his view of the Other. The book's conclusion reinforces this irony. The repentant non-Israelites (1:16; 3:7–9) contrast sharply with Jonah, who pledges in 2:10 to do what they have already done.⁴⁰¹ Supporting this interpretation is the Targum, which explicitly links Jonah 2:9 to the nations: **לֹא כְעַמֵּמִיָּא פְּלִיחֵי טְעוֹתָא דְּמֵאַתְר דְּמִתּוּטָב לְהוֹן לִית אֲנוּן יִדְעִין** (not like the nations, worshippers of errors, who do not know from where they have good). The Targum not only generalizes about the nations' idolatry but also makes a contextual statement about the sailors, who may have discarded their idols in Jonah 1.⁴⁰²

2.14.6.2 Perception of God

Psalms 31:7 introduces foreign deities as “vain idols” not merely as a critique of those deities but as a contrast to Yahweh's character. As we have seen above, the verse follows the psalmist's declaration of trust in God as **אֵל אֱמֶת** (faithful God) in Psalm 31:6, inviting a comparison between Yahweh and other deities, labeled as **הַבְּלִי-שׁוּא**.⁴⁰³ This phrase forms a pleonastic expression that emphasizes emptiness, void, and deception often associated with idols (cf. Deut 32:21; 1 Kings 16:13, 26; 2 Kings 8:19; 10:8 14:22).⁴⁰⁴ Fascinatingly, the

⁴⁰⁰ Ferreira, “A Note on Jonah 2:8,” 33. Weimar, *Jona*, 270.

⁴⁰¹ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 67. Barrett, “Meaning More than They Say,” 244–45.

⁴⁰² Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Jonah*, 79–81.

⁴⁰³ In Jonah 2:9, a similar contrast emerges between Yahweh who brings up Jonah's life from the pit versus the vain idols who are without substance or power. Erickson, *Jonah*, 305–6.

⁴⁰⁴ Weimar, *Jona*, 268.

Deuteronomistic tradition speaks of those who worship these vain idols as becoming like those vanities which they worship (2 Kings 17:15; Jer 2:5 cf. Isa 6:9–10):

They despised his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their ancestors, and the warnings that he gave them. They went after false idols and became false; they followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them that they should not do as they did. (NRSV)

Thus says the LORD: What wrong did your ancestors find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthless things, and became worthless themselves? (NRSV)

2 Kings 17:15
וַיִּמְאָסוּ אֶת־חֻקֵּי וְאֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַב
אֶת־אֲבוֹתָם וְאֶת עֲדוּתֵי אֲשֶׁר הָעִיד בָּם
וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי הַהֶבֶל וַיַּהֲבִלוּ וְאַחֲרֵי הַגּוֹיִם
אֲשֶׁר סָבִיבָתָם אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתָם
לִבְלֹתִי עֲשׂוֹת כִּהֶם

Jeremiah 2:5
כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה מֵה־מִּצְאוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בִּי עוֹל
כִּי רָחֲקוּ מֵעָלַי וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי הַהֶבֶל וַיַּהֲבִלוּ

The Psalms also perpetuate this tradition of drawing a similarity between idols and those who worship them (Ps 115:8 [=135:18]):

Those who make them become like them,
all who trust in them

Psalm 115:8
כַּמֹּוֹהֶם יִהְיוּ עֲשִׂיהֶם כָּל אֲשֶׁר־בָּטַח בָּהֶם

This helps illuminate Jonah 2:9, where the worshippers of these vanities abandon their חסד, a didactic remark equating idol worshippers with inaction and unreliability characteristic of idols themselves (cf. Isa 57:13; Jer 10:15; 16:19).

Moreover, the characteristic of truthfulness/faithfulness conveyed by the word אמת is significant to Jonah's perception of God throughout the book. Jonah is introduced as the son of Amittai (בן־אמתי) in Jonah 1:1, a name that creates a delightful pun with the word אמת. However, this term is conspicuously absent from Jonah's quotation of Exodus 34:6 in Jonah 4:2:

Gracious God and merciful, long suffering
and great in faithfulness and relenting from
harm

Merciful God and gracious, long suffering
and great in faithfulness and truth

Jonah 4:2
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְרַחוּם אֶרֶךְ אָפִים וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְנֶחֱם
עַל־הָרָעָה

Exodus 34:6
אֱלֹהֵי רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אֶרֶךְ אָפִים וְרַב־חֶסֶד
וְאֵמֶת

This omission in Jonah 4:2 invites a deeper reflection on Yahweh as אֱלֹהֵי אֱמֶת (God of truth/faithfulness) in the broader context of the book of Jonah. Does God keep his word to the prophet saying Nineveh will be destroyed for their evil? Does his relenting from evil extend to people other than Israel?⁴⁰⁵ What are the implications of that on God's חֶסֶד (faithfulness)? Thus, the colorful expression in Jonah 2:9 is far more than a simple critique of idols. It forms part of Jonah's case to Yahweh, drawing on psalmic material to appeal to God's אֱמֶת and חֶסֶד—not only in Jonah's own deliverance from the sea but also in the tension surrounding Nineveh's fate.

Given the textual and interpretive complexities of Jonah 2:9, its connection to Psalm 31:7 provides important insight into the verse's role within Jonah's prayer and the narrative as a whole. By adapting the psalmist's statement into a didactic reflection on idolatry, Jonah 2:9 highlights a shift in focus that aligns with the book's broader themes. When viewed alongside Psalm 31—particularly its earlier use in Jonah 2:5—this verse reveals a consistent engagement with the psalm to deepen the prophet's characterization and tie his prayer more closely to the surrounding narrative.

⁴⁰⁵ Weimar, *Jona*, 271.

2.15 Cultic Climax: Thanksgiving Offerings and Vows in the Temple (Jonah 2:10a)

The final verse of Jonah's psalm declares the prophet's intention to offer thanksgiving offerings and fulfill his vows. The MT reads:

ואני בקול תודה אזבחה־לך אשר נדרתי אשלמה

But I with a voice of thanksgiving, I will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed, I will pay
Between 4Q82 and Mur88, this line can be reconstructed without significant variants:

ואני בקול ת[ודעה אזבחה] [לך אשר נדרתי] אשלם
ואני ב[ק]ול[תודה אז]ב[חה] [לך אשר נדרתי] אשלמה

The two cohortative forms may be in question since 4Q82 does not have the final *heh* on אשלמה.⁴⁰⁶ Perhaps this omission reflects the fact that the cohortative of his root does not appear in similar liturgical texts (Pss 22:26; 56:13; 66:13; 116:18). This absence might indicate the influence of other psalmic traditions on this line in Mur88.⁴⁰⁷ The OG has slight differences with the Hebrew tradition:

ἐγὼ δὲ μετὰ φωνῆς αἰνέσεως καὶ ἐξομολογήσεως θύσω σοι· ὅσα ηὐξάμην, ἀποδώσω σοι

But I will sacrifice to you with the voice of praise and thanksgiving; what I vowed, I will repay
to you

The Greek translator renders the word תודה with two nouns, αἰνέσεως καὶ ἐξομολογήσεως (praise and thanksgiving) while adding an indirect object to the last verb ἀποδώσω σοι, which is not in the MT. The latter addition is understandable, as the MT already includes an indirect object earlier in

⁴⁰⁶ Lange says, "In Jonah 2:10, 4QXIIg reads an imperfect form while MT has a cohortative. Without more text of 4QXIIg, comparative evidence is missing as to whether the 4QXIIg-text had a tendency to eliminate cohortative or jussive forms or not." Lange, "4QXIIg (4Q82) as an Editorial Text," 96.

⁴⁰⁷ The only other time the cohortative of שלם appears in the Hebrew Bible is in Proverbs 20:22.

the line with the first cohortative verb, אֶזְבַּחַהּ לְךָ (I will sacrifice to you). The Greek translator was probably reading the last verb with the same indirect object, אֶשְׁלַמְהָ לְךָ (I will pay to you).⁴⁰⁸ However, the addition of καὶ ἐξομολογήσεως (and thanksgiving) needs further explanation since φωνῆς αἰνέσεως (a voice of praise) sufficiently translates the phrase בקול תודה (cf. Ps 26:7 [25:7 in LXX]). Perkins thinks that this translation was influenced by “parallel passages in the Psalter.”⁴⁰⁹ Yet these two nouns do not appear together in the Greek Psalter (cf. Pss 99:4 [100:4 in MT]; Isa 51:3). Instead, they are found together in Chronicles, where psalm singing plays a prominent role in Second Temple liturgy (as nouns in 1 Chron 25:3 and 2 Chron 20:22 but their roots appear in verbal forms in 1 Chron 16:4; 23:30; 29:13; 2 Chron 5:13; 20:21, 22; 23:12; 31:2; cf. Ezra 3:11). Perhaps the Greek translator was using stock phraseology from Chronicles to enhance Jonah’s psalm.⁴¹⁰ Therefore, there is no need to posit a different *Vorlage* for the OG. The MT preserves an ancient tradition consistent across all surviving textual traditions.

How was this line composed? Were specific texts influential in its formulation? The language of sacrifices and vows in Jonah 2:10a appears in various forms throughout the Psalter (Pss 22:26; 26:6–7; 50:14, 23; 54:8; 56:13; 66:13; 107:22; 116:17). However, Weimar thinks this line is possibly following Psalm 116:17.⁴¹¹ Magonet also says that while there is no exact parallel,

⁴⁰⁸ Graybill, Kaltner, and McKenzie, *Jonah*, 203.

⁴⁰⁹ Perkins, “The Septuagint of Jonah,” 50.

⁴¹⁰ The Targum does something similar by paraphrasing בקול תודה as בְּקוֹל תְּשִׁבְחָא אֱוִדָא (with the voice of praise, of thanksgiving). Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Jonah*, 81.

⁴¹¹ Weimar, *Jona*, 272. Although, Simon and Erickson argue that the cohortatives in Jonah 2:10a signify not a future fulfilment of actions but the present enactment of them in the prayer itself, creating a sort of spiritualized temple space. Simon, *Jonah*, 24; Erickson, *Jonah*, 307. Cf. Limburg, *Jonah: A Commentary*, 70.

Psalm 116:17a comes the closest.⁴¹² This is likely not only because of the closeness of the language here but also because of the rare form **אֶפְפוּנִי** (they [waters] encompassed me), which Jonah 2:6 shares with Psalm 116:3. In an earlier section on Jonah 2:6, I discussed how Psalm 116 might be related to Jonah's psalm.⁴¹³ There, I made a case for reading the two psalms intertextually without positing literary dependence. Here, because of scholarly speculation of literary dependence and the abundance of overlap in multiplicity and thematic correspondence between the two texts, I will use other indicators of literary dependence to see if Psalm 116 is behind Jonah 2:10a, while also extending the intertextual reading with specific reference to temple rituals.

2.15.1 Verbal Resonance

While no exact verbal correspondence exists between the two texts, the general similarity is worth noting:

To you I will sacrifice thanksgiving sacrifices, and the name of YHWH I will call. I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people	לֹךְ-אֲזַבֵּחַ זֶבַח תּוֹדָה וּבִשְׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא נִדְרֵי לַיהוָה אֲשַׁלֵּם נִגְדָה-נָא לְכָל-עַמּוֹ	Psalm 116:17–18
But as for me, I will sacrifice to you with a voice of thanksgiving; what I vowed I will pay	וְאֲנִי בִקּוֹל תּוֹדָה אֲזַבְחָה לְךָ אֲשֶׁר נִדְרָתִי אֲשַׁלְמָה	Jonah 2:10a

No other liturgical text in the Hebrew Bible shares as many words with Jonah 2:10a as Psalm 116:17–18. Furthermore, the phrase **ובשם יהוה אקרא** in Psalm 116:17 is missing in the OG (cf. Ps 116:13), possibly bringing the two texts even closer together as represented below:

To you I will sacrifice thanksgiving sacrifices; I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people	לֹךְ-אֲזַבֵּחַ זֶבַח תּוֹדָה נִדְרֵי לַיהוָה אֲשַׁלֵּם נִגְדָה-נָא לְכָל-עַמּוֹ	Psalm 116:17–18
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⁴¹² Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 48. See also Potgieter who lists Psalm 116:17–19 as an intertextual link to Jonah 2:10. Henk J. Potgieter, “The Nature and Function of the Poetic Sections in the Book of Jonah,” *OTE* 17, no. 4 (2004): 613. Likewise, Steenkamp and Prinsloo, “Another Look at Jonah 2,” 442.

⁴¹³ See discussion on Jonah 2:6a.

But as for me, I will sacrifice to you with a voice of thanksgiving; what I vowed I will pay וְאֲנִי בְקוֹל תּוֹדָה אֶזְבַּח־לְךָ אֲשֶׁר נִדְרַתִּי Jonah 2:10a
אשלמה

The author of Jonah's psalm departs from Psalm 116 by inserting אֲשֶׁר (what/that) before נִדְרַתִּי (I vowed), reflecting the formulaic phrase throughout the Hebrew Bible (Gen 31:13; Num 6:21; Deut 12:11, 17; 23:24; Judges 11:39; 2 Sam 15:7; Jer 44:25; Ecc 5:3).

2.15.2 Availability

As noted in the section on Jonah 2:6, Psalm 116 exhibits linguistic features of northern Israelite dialect, placing it before the exile. Jonah, portrayed as a northern prophet in 2 Kings 14:24–25, makes it plausible to imagine the literary character echoing this northern psalm in his prayer.⁴¹⁴

2.15.3 Modification

If Psalm 116:17 influenced Jonah 2:10a, the differences between the verses become significant. For example, the syntax of לְךָ־אֶזְבַּח (to you I will sacrifice) in Psalm 116:17 is flipped in Jonah 2:10 אֶזְבַּח־לְךָ (I will sacrifice to you), aligning with the self-centered orientation of the entire verse beginning with the *casus pendens*, וְאֲנִי (But as for me).⁴¹⁵ In fact, Psalm 116 has emphatic statements highlighting the psalmist as God's servant with the phrase אֲנִי־עֶבֶדְךָ (I am your servant [Ps 116:16 x2]), further aiding Jonah's own emphasis on the self in his prayer. In the same vein, the imperfect forms in Psalm 116 are transformed into cohortatives, highlighting the volition of the psalmist. Not only are these modifications meant to fit the psalm, but also the narrative. זֶבַח תּוֹדָה (sacrifice of thanksgiving) in Psalm 116:17 is modified to בְּקוֹל תּוֹדָה (with a

⁴¹⁴ On the connection to the prophet mentioned in 2 Kings, Ben Zvi says, "Nothing within the world of the book could have led an ancient community of rereaders to doubt that the two Jonahs were actually one." Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah*, 44.

⁴¹⁵ Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 48.

voice of thanksgiving), which connects this verse back to the first verse of the prayer (Jonah 2:3b):

מִבֶּטֶן שְׁאוֹל שָׁוְעָתִי שָׁמַעַת קוֹלִי (from the belly of Sheol I cried for help; you heard my voice).⁴¹⁶

Jonah's voice is highlighted in his thanksgiving rather than the sacrifices because his voice is the vehicle of thanksgiving in the present whereas the sacrifices will have to wait until a future time in the temple.⁴¹⁷ The difference between the two texts is the execution of the offering at the temple in Psalm 116 versus the intention of offering at the temple in the future in Jonah 2:10.⁴¹⁸

2.15.4 Partial Integration

Jonah 2:10a explicitly introduces a cultic context to Jonah's prayer, creating incongruity in two ways: first, as a northern prophet in the divided monarchy, Jonah is not likely to go down to the Jerusalem temple to offer sacrifices. For this reason and since Jonah is said to be in the fish when he is supposed to have prayed this, many scholars see a spiritualization of sacrifices here.⁴¹⁹ Second, the narrative does not show him fulfilling his vows. If anything, the sailors and the Ninevites sacrifice and fulfill their vows, not the prophet, creating tension and incongruity from

⁴¹⁶ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 68–69. This emphasis on the voice/speech might also be brought out by the addition that the Greek translator makes to this verse with the word, ἐξομολογήσεως, conveying an open acknowledgment of sin (cf. Daniel 9:4, 20) or praise. Robert J. Ledogar, "Verbs of Praise in the LXX Translation of the Hebrew Canon," *Biblica* 48, no. 1 (1967): 39–40. Does the OG portray Jonah as a repentant prophet with this addition? On this question of Jonah's repentance, see Hayyim Angel, "'I Am a Hebrew!': Jonah's Conflict with God's Mercy," *JBQ* 34, no. 1 (2006): 6–7.

⁴¹⁷ It is possible that the voice of thanksgiving replaces the physical sacrifices as many scholars argue in this verse. But I argue against that view later in this thesis.

⁴¹⁸ Weimar, *Jona*, 272.

⁴¹⁹ Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 69. Erickson says, "Jonah's language in the second stanza mimics a ritual performance. Such 'temple discourse' not only implies but also rhetorically constructs a sanctuary setting that recalls the space of the temple itself." Erickson, *Jonah*, 302. Crüsemann highlights the difference between the imperfections in Psalm 116:17–18 and the cohortatives in Jonah 2:10a, as well as the absence of an explicitly mentioned audience in Jonah 2:10, which is present in Psalm 116:18. He concludes that, unlike in Psalm 116, Jonah 2 does not envision bloody sacrifices. Frank Crüsemann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied in Israel*, WMANT 32 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), 248–49. On the other hand, Luther interprets this verse to mean animal sacrifices and turns it into a condemnation of the Jews using Psalm 50:13. Tiemeyer, *Jonah*, 151. However, I find it ironic that Jonah 2:10 shares cultic language with Psalm 50 (50:14, 23). Moreover, Psalm 50:23 positively endorses animal sacrifices which Luther seems to eschew.

partially integrated intertexts.⁴²⁰ This verse would make more sense in Psalm 116 where the psalmist seems to be in the temple, in the midst of Jerusalem offering sacrifices (Ps 116:19).

Additionally, this verse creates form-critical incongruity with its language of thanksgiving and sacrifices. Pointing to the same data—the volitive verbs expressing intent to sacrifice and fulfill vows—two recent commentaries on the book of Jonah reach two different conclusions. Niditch says this is a “typical feature of the lament” whereas Graybill, Kaltner, and McKenzie claim that this is a “typical element of a thanksgiving psalm.”⁴²¹ Jonah’s psalm seems to use language from different forms of psalms, making it difficult to categorize neatly.

2.15.5 Multiplicity and Thematic Correspondence

There is substantial overlap in both multiplicity and thematic correspondence between Psalm 116 and Jonah 2 as noted in the section on Jonah 2:6. There, I focused on how the perspective of exile and innocence in Psalm 116 enriches Jonah’s prayer. Here, I extend the focus to their shared emphasis on temple rituals, thanksgiving offerings, and vows. Building on earlier discussions of exile and innocence, I examine how Jonah’s reliance on Psalm 116 shapes the prayer’s cultic context and theological dimensions. By tracing connections to sacrifices, the Exodus, and themes of reciprocity, the analysis highlights the narrative’s broader implications, including Jonah’s complex role in upholding proper worship practices and anticipating eschatological significance.

⁴²⁰ Holbert, ““Deliverance Belongs to Yahweh,”” 73–74. Barrett, “Meaning More than They Say,” 244.

⁴²¹ Niditch, *Jonah*, 65; Graybill, Kaltner, and McKenzie, *Jonah*, 202.

❖ 2.15.5.1 *The Temple Space: Jerusalem temple as a climactic place of deliverance and cultic worship*

The role of the temple and its cult in Jonah's prayer remains a debated issue in scholarship. Because this verse creates incongruence in the narrative of Jonah, scholars suggest that the sacrifices mentioned in Jonah 2:10 are spiritualized, not literal.⁴²² Examining the role of the temple and sacrifices in Psalm 116 might shed more light on this issue in Jonah 2:10.

The temple emerges as a climactic focus in Psalm 116, even though it is not overtly emphasized throughout the psalm. The psalmist concludes by envisioning himself offering sacrifices in the temple courts (Ps 116:18–19), where he finds resolution to his troubles in a communal thanksgiving celebration.⁴²³ There might even be references to the temple in the middle of the psalm. Barré argues that the phrase ארצות החיים (lands of the living) in 116:9 creates paronomasia with חצרות בית יהוה (the courts of the house of YHWH) at the end of the psalm (116:19), not only tying the psalm together but also functioning as an epithet for the Jerusalem temple itself.⁴²⁴ The psalmist anticipates the thanksgiving offerings by asking in verse 12, מה-אשיב ליהוה כל-תגמולוהי עלי (What shall I give to YHWH for all his benefits upon me?). The benefits he is referring to gain particularity earlier in verse 8 where the psalmist says that God rescued his life from death, which is more colorfully described as the bonds of death encompassing him in verse 3 (cf. Jonah 2:3, 6), אפפוני חבלי-מוות ומצרי שאול מצאוני צרה ויגון אמצא (the bonds of death encompassed me, and the distresses of Sheol found me; I found distress and grief). For this rescue

⁴²² See earlier footnote under “partial integration.”

⁴²³ Janowski, “Dankbarkeit,” 99. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 215.

⁴²⁴ Barré, “Psalm 116,” 67. Similarly, Hossfeld and Zenger see a connection to the temple in the word למנוחכי in Psalm 116:7 and the cup ritual in verse 13. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 218.

from death, the psalmist wants to thank God by fulfilling his vows in the presence of the congregation in Jerusalem (116:14, 18–19).⁴²⁵ The temple becomes the place of vindication for the psalmist, a place of closure and belonging.

Jonah's (both the character's and the author's) reliance on Psalm 116, with its emphasis on the temple, presents a challenge to the prevailing theory that Jonah (the author) spiritualizes the temple space and sacrifices. There is definite movement from death to life marked by the psalmist's journey to the temple in Psalm 116 that is undeniable in its context. The same movement is literalized in the story and the psalm of Jonah where he physically moves away from the land of Israel into the heart of Sheol and the seas and longs to "see" the holy temple (Jonah 2:5), later claiming that his prayer reaches the same holy space (Jonah 2:8b). In Jonah 2:10, he follows his prayer into the temple and envisions offering sacrifices and fulfilling his vows, not just in the space created by his words in the psalm. Even beyond Psalm 116, Jonah 2:10 uses language reminiscent of thanksgiving offerings in the Psalms (22:26; 26:6–7; 50:14, 23; 54:8; 56:13) where the sacrifices are not spiritualized but envisioned as occurring in the temple.⁴²⁶ Moreover, the sacrifices of the sailors in the story of Jonah are not spiritualized (Jonah 1:16), making it less likely that the sacrifices in Jonah 2:10 are spiritualized.⁴²⁷ The sailors' sacrifices were offered to give thanks to Yahweh for delivering them from the storm at sea, standing as a parallel to Jonah's sacrifices in

⁴²⁵ Gerstenberger, *Psalms* 2, 294.

⁴²⁶ Lang points out how the song of thanksgiving replaced the sacrifice of thanksgiving in Psalm 69:31 and 1QH 2:20. B. Lang, Helmer Ringgren, and J. Bergman, "תְּהִלָּה," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 4:24.

⁴²⁷ While acknowledging the eventual spiritualization of thanksgiving sacrifices (even in the same period of the book of Jonah's composition), Gunkel still imagines a physical temple space and sacrifices in Jonah because of Psalm 116. Gunkel, *Ausgewählte Psalmen*, 289–90.

his prayer.⁴²⁸ Extending this parallel is the case of the Ninevites who are also delivered from harm and perhaps ready to offer thanks to Yahweh just like the sailors. The mention of the animals in Jonah 3:7–8 and 4:11 can be understood in light of thanksgiving offerings which the Ninevites owe to Yahweh for relenting from harm.⁴²⁹ In fact, the exact sequence of בהמה (animal), בקר (cattle), and צאן (flock) only appears in Jonah 3:7 and in Leviticus 1:2 (cf. Neh 10:37) where the priestly sacrificial system is introduced. Rather than spiritualizing the sacrifices, Jonah’s reliance on Psalm 116—with its clear emphasis on the temple as the appropriate place for offerings—strengthens his case and implicitly contrasts him with the sailors. While the sailors offer sacrifices onboard the ship (Jonah 1:16), Jonah demonstrates an understanding of the proper way and place to perform such acts of worship. Viewed through this lens, Jonah’s unfulfilled vows in the narrative might reflect the unfinished nature of the story of Jonah as the book ends with a cliff hanger, where some of the details in the story are left without a resolution.

❖ 2.15.5.2 *The Nature of Sacrifices: Covenantal dining with God*

Reading Jonah 2:10 with Psalm 116:17 also sheds light on the exact kind of sacrifices in view, which enriches Jonah’s psalm and narrative. The offerings mentioned in Jonah 2:10 are probably the same as what Psalm 116:17 specifies with the phrase, זבח תודה (the sacrifice of thanksgiving), mentioned in Leviticus 7:13, 15, and 22:29. In Leviticus 7, the fuller phrase is זבח תודת שלמי (sacrifice of his thanksgiving peace offerings), signifying the fact that thanksgiving

⁴²⁸ Handy, *Jonah’s World*, 55.

⁴²⁹ Bolin, “Eternal Delight and Deliciousness,” 9–11.

offerings are related to peace/well-being offerings (cf. Lev 3). Milgrom's comments are helpful to understand the relationship:⁴³⁰

The well-being offering is, at its core, an offering of thankfulness. Although it takes on three unique forms, discussed below, its overarching purpose is to provide a ritual by which the Israelites could acknowledge the miracles of their lives and express gratitude for them.

Later on in his commentary, Milgrom clarifies that thanksgiving sacrifice was the original name of the sacrifice before it was categorized under peace offerings in P.⁴³¹ The votive offerings (נדב) follow the discussion of thanksgiving offerings in Leviticus 7:16. Together with thanksgiving offerings, votive offerings also fall under peace offerings. This picture from Leviticus fits with both Psalm 116 and Jonah 2, where the psalmists offer thanksgiving and votive offerings to thank God for his deliverance. The use of the root שלם (fulfill/pay) in both texts (Ps 116:18; Jonah 2:10) creates a pun, reinforcing their connection to peace offerings. These peace offerings, which can be eaten by laypeople, are meant to highlight the idea that Israel is God's family (cf. Deut 27:7; Amos 3:1), a special privilege of covenant relationship with Yahweh that is not open to those outside of Israel.⁴³²

❖ 2.15.5.3 Eschatological Feast: Offering Leviathan

The kind of offering highlighted by Psalm 116 may also illuminate how traditions about Jonah (the prophet) in the eschatological feast might have started. Like the Psalmist in Psalm 116, Jonah expects to be restored in the temple where he will publicly give thanks for his deliverance,

⁴³⁰ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics*, CC (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 28.

⁴³¹ Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 71.

⁴³² Alan W. Jenks, "Eating and Drinking in the Old Testament," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:253. Cf. Baruch A. Levine, *Leviticus*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 14.

presumably before a gathering of God's people. With this, both the psalmist in Psalm 116 and Jonah may be anticipating a feast, for the thanksgiving sacrifice is the only sacrifice in the priestly legislation of the Pentateuch that can be eaten by non-priests, inviting a celebratory feast (cf. 2 Chron 30:22; Neh 12:43).⁴³³ The Targum picks up on this element of feasting with the righteous in this verse by evoking the tradition that Jonah (the prophet) will bring up the Leviathan and serve it as a sacrifice in the eschatological feast when Israel is saved from all their enemies (cf. 1 Enoch 60:24; 4 Ezra 6:52; 2 Baruch 29:1–4).⁴³⁴

While it may sound fanciful to relate such cultic feasting with the slaying of Leviathan, the prophetic and psalmic traditions do intimate something to that effect. For example, Psalm 74 mourns the destruction of the temple and reminds God of previous acts of salvation which included dividing the sea, breaking the heads of sea monsters, and crushing the heads of Leviathan and feeding him as food for the people in the wilderness (Ps 74:13–14). This poetic reflection on the exodus preserves a tradition that sees God's battle with the Pharaoh in Exodus as rehearsing his conflict with the primordial sea monster, Leviathan.⁴³⁵ The psalmist in Psalm 74 relates Leviathan and the sea monsters to Israel's ancient (Pharaoh) and present enemies (Babylonians) who present an active threat to God's temple.⁴³⁶ After all, Ezekiel calls the Pharaoh a dragon (תנינ) whom God will draw out of the Nile and fling him into the wilderness as food for all the creatures there (Ezek

⁴³³ Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 71. Lang, Ringgren, and Bergman, “זֶבַח”, 21.

⁴³⁴ Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Jonah*, 82. Cf. George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37–82*, ed. Klaus Baltzer, vol. 2, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 240.

⁴³⁵ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 248; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 99–100.

⁴³⁶ Broyles helpfully notes, “this recitation of God's salvation when he vanquished the sea and Leviathan draws an implicit parallel between them and the temple invaders, who roar (v. 4) as wild beasts (v. 19), producing clamor, an uproar (v. 23), and a chaotic destruction (vv. 5–8).” Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, ed. W. Ward Gasque, Robert L. Hubbard, and Robert K. Johnston, *Understanding the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 307–8.

29:3–5; 32:2–5). Jeremiah applies this title of monster to Nebuchadnezzar who swallows Judah (Jer 51:34). But God promises another exodus in which he will dry up the sea (Jer 51:36) and drown Israel's enemies in it (Jer 51:42) just like he did in Exodus 14–15.⁴³⁷ Israel's enemies as living in the waters as sea monsters might have been informed by Exodus 14–15 where God drowns the Pharaoh and his army. Jonah's thanksgiving for deliverance from being swallowed by the fish/sea monster is fertile ground for midrashic elaborations. These affinities between Jonah 2 and Exodus 14–15, and Jeremiah 51–52 illuminate how the targum and later Jewish traditions read Jonah 2:10 as a vow of offering Leviathan in the eschatological cultic feast.

❖ 2.15.5.4 *Exodus and Exile*

Psalm 116 and Jonah 2 share allusions to the exodus tradition, especially with the formula from Exodus 34:6 (Ps 116:5; Jonah 4:2). Additionally, Psalm 116:13 mentions the cup of salvation, which might be a reference to the fourth cup of the Passover meal, resulting in this psalm being part of the “Egyptian Hallel” psalms that were sung during the Passover.⁴³⁸ So, the thanksgiving offerings mentioned at the end of Psalm 116 are tied to the exodus. In fact, thanksgiving offerings themselves might be connected to the Passover meal given that they both share the unleavened bread and the one-day consumption period. Ming Him Ko argues that the thanksgiving sacrifice is closely connected to the Passover meal (Exod 12:8–10; 23:18), suggesting that the thanksgiving

⁴³⁷ Sherwood and Erickson see a parallel between this and Jonah 2. Sherwood, *A Biblical Text and Its Afterlives: The Survival of Jonah in Western Culture*, 245–55; Erickson, *Jonah*, 309.

⁴³⁸ DeClaissé-Walford, Jacobson, and Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, 861–62.

meal and the thanksgiving songs in the Psalms served to remind Israel about God's saving work in the exodus from Egypt.⁴³⁹ As Lang notes,⁴⁴⁰

the Chronicler's history assumes that the *pesach* was celebrated as a *zebhach-sh^elāmîm* (2 Ch. 30; 35:1–19; Ezr. 6:19–22) with the burning of pieces of fat (2 Ch. 30:15; 35:12; Jub. 49:20; Mishnah *Pesaḥim* v.10 vi.1). Therefore *pesach* and *zebhach-sh^elāmîm* could be easily confused.

The Psalms take this further and tie the Exodus to the return from the Babylonian exile. Milgrom points out how Psalm 107 uses the language of thanksgiving offerings to specifically give thanks for a safe return from journey on the sea (Ps 107:23–25).⁴⁴¹ We have seen earlier that Psalm 107 describes the Babylonian exile with various metaphors, perhaps even interpreting Jonah's story as a story of exile. So, Jonah's use of Psalm 116 also brings together the motifs of the Exodus and the exile as we have seen in other parts of Jonah's psalm.

❖ 2.15.5.5 *Reciprocity: Jonah's vow-keeping as a reminder of God's promise to Israel*

The votive offering, containing within it the concept of reciprocity (Ps 116:12), offers a fascinating insight into Jonah's expectation of God in the narrative.⁴⁴² The promise of the offerings in Jonah 2:10 certainly indicates that Jonah wanted to thank God for his deliverance with offerings.⁴⁴³ However, in the subsequent chapter, he goes to Nineveh, preaches judgement upon

⁴³⁹ Ming Him Ko, "The Symbolic Significance of the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving," *ZAW* 136, no. 3 (2024): 355–71.

⁴⁴⁰ Lang, Ringgren, and Bergman, "כֶּבֶד", 22.

⁴⁴¹ Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 28. Wolff notes this connection to Psalm 107 in Jonah 1:16 where the sailors offer sacrifices. Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 121–22.

⁴⁴² Niditch, *Jonah*, 65.

⁴⁴³ The OG translation of Jonah 2:10 brings out the reciprocity explicitly by connecting the last two Hebrew words syntactically with the rest of the verse with the translation, ὅσα ἡὺξάμην, ἀποδώσω εἰς σωτηρίαν μου τῷ κυρίῳ (what I vowed I will pay to the Lord for my salvation).

it, goes outside the city to watch what would happen to it. I suggest that in declaring his intention to fulfill his vow to God, Jonah makes an unspoken case for God to keep his own vow to destroy Nineveh as spoken of not only in the book of Jonah (1:1) but also in other prophets (Isa 10:5–19).

In summary, Jonah 2:10a is freely composed with traditional psalmic language, particularly drawing on Psalm 116 and its emphasis on temple rituals, thanksgiving offerings, and vows. By integrating these elements, the verse highlights themes of covenant fellowship with God, proper modes of worship, and the concept of reciprocity, while advancing the narrative's broader purposes. It parallels the sacrifices and vows of the sailors in Jonah 1:16 and anticipates the ironic contrast with Jonah's own unfulfilled vows and reluctance in the subsequent narrative. However, this irony gives way to a deeper exploration of Jonah's insistence on the proper place of worship, aligning with Psalm 116's focus on offering sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple. Furthermore, the thanksgiving service at the temple with its element of a communal feast may have inspired later traditions to elaborate on it midrashically, connecting Jonah to eschatological imagery.

2.16 YHWH's Salvation and YHWH's People (Jonah 2:10b)

Jonah ends his prayer with two words in the MT:

ישועתה ליהוה

Salvation belongs to YHWH

4Q82 from first century BCE might resemble the MT of Jonah 2:10c but there are too many lacunae to be certain:

[ישועתה לי]הוה

But less than a hundred years later, Mur88 helps fill in the lacunae:

[ישוע]תה ליהו[ה:]

The OG has a different rendering:

ὅσα ηὐξάμην, ἀποδώσω εἰς σωτηρίαν μου τῷ κυρίῳ⁴⁴⁴

what I vowed I will pay to the Lord for my salvation

The Greek translator, rather than working with a different *Vorlage*, may have felt that the appendage at the end needed to be incorporated into the earlier part of the verse and thus transforms the theological dictum into a personal vow for the sake of his deliverance, contextualizing and limiting the scope of salvation to his own.⁴⁴⁵ In doing so, the OG makes it more explicit that Jonah has vowed to pay God in return for his salvation. The Targum also gives Jonah agency in this line by similarly limiting salvation to Jonah's own deliverance and introducing Jonah's prayer as

⁴⁴⁴ This is from the Göttingen edition which differs from Rahlfs' edition: ὅσα ηὐξάμην, ἀποδώσω σοι σωτηρίου τῷ κυρίῳ (what I vowed I will pay to you, the Lord of salvation)

⁴⁴⁵ The rare poetic form ישועתה could have influenced this translation, but we cannot be certain how the translators understood this form. Beyond the rare form, the translation is consistent with the overall goals of the Greek translators as we have seen throughout the psalm. Erickson confirms this with her observation, "This rendering does not suggest a different *Vorlage*. OG's construal of the syntax, in which *lyhwh* is the indirect object of *'šlmh* and *yšw' th* is an adverbial modifier, fits with the translator's goal to minimize the dissonance created by the psalm in its narrative context." Erickson, *Jonah*, 342.

effecting that deliverance before the Lord: פִּוּרְקָן נַפְשִׁי בְּצִלוֹ קֳדָם יְיָ (The salvation of my soul is in prayer before the Lord).

2.16.1 Verbal Resonance

This concluding confession in Jonah 2:9 resonates strongly with Psalm 3:9 through its rare pairing of pivotal theological terms. Even though these two words independently signify concepts key to the Hebrew Bible, they do not appear together very frequently. The first collocation of the two words appears in reference to the redemption of Israel from Egypt through the Red Sea in Exodus 14:13 where Moses tells the people to הִתִּיצְבוּ וּרְאוּ אֶת־יְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה (stand firm and see the salvation of YHWH). This text is probably in the background of Jonah 2:10, given of the affinities of Jonah's psalm with the exodus account.⁴⁴⁶ Yet, a closer intertextual link lies with Psalm 3:9, which features the same two words in reverse order and with the *lamed* prefix attached to the tetragrammaton:

Salvation belongs to YHWH	יְשׁוּעָתָה לַיהוָה Jonah 2:10b
To YHWH belongs the salvation	לַיהוָה הַיְשׁוּעָה Psalm 3:9a

Apart from being in inverse order, the other differences are the addition of the article to the noun יְשׁוּעָה (salvation) and the rarer הִתִּיצְבוּ ending of the feminine noun יְשׁוּעָה in Jonah 2:10.⁴⁴⁷ Moreover, the words יְשׁוּעָה (salvation) and יְהוָה (YHWH) with preposition לַ (to) only occur together twice in all of the Hebrew Bible: Jonah 2:10c and Psalm 3:9, reinforcing the intertextual connection

⁴⁴⁶ Hunter, "Jonah from the Whale: Exodus Motifs in Jonah 2."

⁴⁴⁷ Gesenius points out that יְשׁוּעָה is one of the feminine nouns that takes the הִתִּיצְבוּ ending in poetic texts, signifying what he calls "an old accusative of direction or intention." Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, §90.g (b), 251.

between the two passages.⁴⁴⁸ While the verbal correspondence between Jonah 2:10c and Psalm 3:9a is relatively brief, it is strengthened by indicators of literary dependence such as availability, modification, partial integration, multiplicity, and thematic correspondence.

2.16.2 Availability

This psalm may be tentatively dated to pre-exilic times because of a few archaic features. The first is the rare form of the word *ישועתה* (salvation) in Psalm 3:3. The second is the unique expression *שני רשעים שברת* (you broke the teeth of the wicked) in Psalm 3:8 which seems to reflect an ancient legal code found in thirteenth-century BCE Akkadian texts where the breaking of teeth is the punishment for breach of contract.⁴⁴⁹ Of course, this only indicates the antiquity of the expression, but not the psalm. As Kraus says, “It is impossible to assign a date to the psalm.” However, he goes on to say that if the psalm was a prayer formulary, it would be better associated with the first Jerusalem temple, opening the possibility that this psalm predates Jonah’s psalm.⁴⁵⁰ Since this is debated in scholarship, we will explore other indicators of dependence

⁴⁴⁸ See Proverbs 21:31 for a similar expression with a different but related noun: *וליהוה התשועה* (but the victory belongs to Yahweh). Verbal resonance alone is admittedly a weak argument for literary dependence, as it assumes later canonical boundaries and overlooks the vast body of literature that did not survive, as Carr points out in Carr, “The Many Uses of Intertextuality.” However, this fact precludes neither a cautious case for literary dependence nor the possibility of reading these two canonical texts together in a productive and illuminating manner. This underscores the importance of my approach, which balances arguments for literary dependence with broader intertextual readings.

⁴⁴⁹ Sarna highlights how this expression uses the root *שבר* (break) instead of the expected *הרס* (destroy [Ps 58:7]) or *נכה* (smite [1 Kings 22:24; Micah 4:14; Job 16:10]). Nahum M. Sarna, “Legal Terminology in Psalm 3:8,” in “*Sha’arei Talmon*”: *Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, ed. Michael Fishbane and Emanuel Tov (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 175–81. John Huehnergard and Jo Ann Hackett, “On Breaking Teeth,” *HTR* 77, no. 3/4 (1984): 259–75.

⁴⁵⁰ Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 1:138. Following Walter Beyerlin, *Die Rettung der Bedrängten in den Feindpsalmen der Einzelnen auf institutionelle Zusammenhänge untersucht*, FRLANT 99 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 75.

2.16.3 Modification

One key example of modification is the reversal of word order of Psalm 3:9a in Jonah 2:10c. Seidel's Law, which observes that target texts often invert the structure of their source texts to signal allusion, provides a compelling explanation for this phenomenon.⁴⁵¹ In Jonah 2:10c, לִיהוָה (to YHWH) follows יְשׁוּעָתָה (salvation), reversing the word order of Psalm 3:9a and signaling its reuse.

2.16.4 Partial Integration

The second stanza of Jonah's psalm is known to contain later features of Hebrew poetry such as the relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר in Jonah 2:10a. Only two words later is a more archaic יְשׁוּעָתָה, creating poetic dissonance. By using this rare poetic form, the author is creating a highly stylized, formulaic expression from the Psalms to emphasize conventional and high liturgical language that does not quite fit the rest of the more prosaic line.⁴⁵² Moreover, the line goes from addressing God in the second person earlier in Jonah 2:10 to speaking about God in the third person to a gathered audience. Here again as in Jonah 2:3a, we encounter the problem of introducing an audience to the prayer that is supposed to have been said in the belly of the fish, for this is a "confession of faith

⁴⁵¹ Moshe Seidel, "Parallels Between the Book of Isaiah and the Book of Psalms," *Sinai* 38 (1956): 149–72, 229–42, 272–80, 333–55. This reversal of word order in alluding to other texts is evidenced even outside the Hebrew Bible in the Hebrew text of Ben Sira 48:1b (כִּתְנוֹר בּוֹעֵר "like a burning oven") which reverses the word order from Malachi 3:19 (בֹּעֵר כִּתְנוֹר). The same occurs in Ben Sira 46:19c which alludes to 1 Samuel 12:3, Ben Sira 48:19 which alludes to Isaiah 13:8, Ben Sira 45:15ab which alludes to Exodus 28:4, and in a few other places as well. Following Seidel, Beentjes calls this phenomenon "inverted quotation." Beentjes, *Happy the One Who Meditates on Wisdom* (Sir. 14,20).

⁴⁵² Opgen-Rhein says, "Dahinter wird - wie schon hinter dem Gebrauch des enklitischen Mem in V. 9 - eine geradezu manieristische Art und Weise sichtbar, auf die der Autor konventioniertes Formelgut als solches akzentuiert" (Behind this—just as behind the use of the enclitic mem in verse 9—an almost manneristic approach becomes apparent, in which the author deliberately emphasizes conventional formulaic material as such). Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 173.

made in the presence of the congregation.”⁴⁵³ However, both of these elements make more sense in Psalm 3, suggesting that Jonah (both the character and the author) may be reworking language from Psalm 3.

2.16.5 Multiplicity

In addition to modification, Jonah 2 and Psalm 3 share a multiplicity of verbal links, the first of which is found in the superscription. The superscription of Psalm 3 states that this was a psalm of David when he fled from Absalom, his son.

2.16.5.1 A Note on Biographical Headings in the Psalms

The scholarly consensus is that the Davidic connections in the superscriptions of the Psalms were part of a wider Davidization of the Psalter later in the production of the book of Psalms, although some have recently challenged that idea and proposed a different function rooted in the political and cultic tensions in the post-exilic Yehud while still allowing for their role in the Davidization of the Psalter around the time of Chronicles when the political feud faded.⁴⁵⁴ Notably, Tiemeyer has argued, through a dialogical reading of the psalms with the biographical notes and corresponding narratives in Samuel, that these Davidic notes on the psalms in the MT put their

⁴⁵³ Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 138. Similarly, Nogalski, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, and Jonah*, 356.

⁴⁵⁴ The classic study on this issue is by Brevard Childs, who posited that the superscriptions pointed to an early form of midrashic exegesis within the Bible. Brevard S. Childs, “Psalm Titles and Midrashic Exegesis,” *JSS* 16, no. 2 (1971): 137–50. For a recent critical discussion of scholarship on this issue and a proposal for an entirely different function of these headings i.e. the enmity between Davidite and Saulide factions, see David Willgren, “‘May YHWH Avenge Me on You; but My Hand Shall Not Be against You’ (1 Sam. 24:13): Mapping Land and Resistance in the ‘Biographical’ Notes of the ‘Book’ of Psalms,” *JSOT* 43, no. 3 (2019): 417–35. See also Nihan’s work, which reconsiders the biographical headings of the psalms and the concepts of authorship: Christophe Nihan, “David Superscripts in the Psalms and Concepts of Authorship in the Hebrew Bible,” in *Authorship and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Sonja Ammann, Katharina Pyschny, and Julia Rhyder, FAT 158 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022), 193–208.

own twist on the characterization of David in the Psalms versus Samuel, ultimately downplaying the house of Saul to enhance David's agency and piety.⁴⁵⁵

Obviously, this development in scholarship regarding the biographical headings presents a problem if we were to diachronically connect Jonah's psalm to the heading of Psalm 3 and argue for a Davidic connection back to Jonah's psalm. However, the ideas about David in the later literature like Chronicles did not emerge from a historical vacuum. They were probably shaped by various events like the suffering in exile, the return to a troubled land with the prospect of rebuilding the temple (Ezra-Nehemiah), etc.—some of which have strong resonances in the stories of David in the books of Samuel and Kings. What if Jonah's psalm participates in the same trend as Chronicles (cf. 1 Chron 16:8-36), whose view of David as the performer of temple liturgy was a productive lens through which to view the character of Jonah?⁴⁵⁶ Tracing those lines is beyond the scope of this thesis, but suffice to say that my combination of diachronic and synchronic approaches allows us to read Jonah's psalm with the biographical headings of the psalms without having to land on a specific view on the headings.

Using the superscription then, one can detect a multiplicity of elements from Psalm 3 in both the prose and poetry of Jonah. The psalmist is said to have prayed in the context of fleeing (בברחו) from (מפני) Absalom, which parallels Jonah's fleeing (לברח) from (מלפני) God (Jonah 1:3). The irony is that the psalmist prays to God while fleeing from his enemy, but Jonah prays to

⁴⁵⁵ Tiemeyer, "David's Conflict with the Saulides in 1 Samuel and the Book of Psalms: A Reception Historical Perspective."

⁴⁵⁶ Nihan argues that one of the functions of the psalm headings is to make David the first performer of the psalms. Nihan, "David Superscripts in the Psalms and Concepts of Authorship in the Hebrew Bible," 200–201. The character of Jonah picks up that same Davidic baton in reusing words from the psalms to compose his own psalm. Later on page 205, Nihan also points out how the psalm headings associating David with prayers in the psalms participate in the larger phenomenon of righteous individuals "praying to the deity at key points of their narratives" (Cf. Ezra 9, Neh 9, Dan 9, etc). He notes that the effect of this is to portray David as "a model of royal piety."

God while fleeing from God. Additionally, the psalmist in Psalm 3:6 lays down and sleeps (אני (שכבתי ואישנה) after having prayed to God and heard from his holy hill (Ps 3:5) (מהר קדשו). Jonah also lays down and falls asleep in Jonah 1:5 (וישכב וירדם) while going away from the holy hill (Jonah 2:5, 8) (היכל קדש).

A more substantial point of multiplicity emerges in Jonah's poem with the rare poetic form of the word ישועתה (salvation), which occurs only three times in the Hebrew Bible: Psalm 3:3, 80:3, and Jonah 2:10.⁴⁵⁷ In Psalm 3, verses 3 and 9 are connected by this word. In fact, the definite article on הַיְשׁוּעָה is probably anaphoric, referring to ישועתה in verse 3 where the psalmist complains that many say there is no salvation for him in God.⁴⁵⁸ But he ends the psalm by confessing that *the* salvation (which many have said is not available for him) belongs to God. It is possible that by alluding to Psalm 3:9, Jonah also uses the same rare form (ישועתה) as Psalm 3:3, demonstrating a wider awareness for the context of the source text. As Schultz notes, "all quotation involves *interpretation*, since recontextualization inherently changes the meaning of the words quoted."⁴⁵⁹ This observation suggests that the phrase ישועתה ליהוה (salvation belongs to YHWH) in Jonah 2:10c is not merely a citation but a form of inner-biblical exegesis by the psalm's author.

Considering the wider literary context of Psalm 3 is not necessarily naïve to the compositional and redactional processes of the Psalms; instead, the psalm's internal literary cohesion supports reading it as a unified composition. While Psalm 3 may have undergone

⁴⁵⁷ Psalm 80:3 has a shortened form with a preposition לִישׁוּעָה, whereas Jonah 2:10c and Psalm 3:3 have the same form and spelling without a preposition, ישועתה.

⁴⁵⁸ On the anaphoric use of the article, see Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, SubBi 27 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006), §137.f.I.(3), 475. Hossfeld calls 3:9a a "Gegenpol" (antipole) to 3:3b. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 1:56.

⁴⁵⁹ Schultz, *The Search for Quotation*, 213. To be sure, Jonah 2:10c is probably an allusion rather than a quotation, but their rhetorical functions overlap just as Schultz himself admits later on page 223.

developmental stages, its structure reveals interwoven literary links that reinforce its unity.⁴⁶⁰ For instance, the phrase *ליהוה הישועה* in Psalm 3:9a inverses the word order of the enemies' speech in 3:3b *אין ישועתה לו באלהים* (there is no salvation for him in God) thereby indicating a reversal of the psalmist's fortunes.⁴⁶¹ The entire psalm is interwoven with similar literary links. As I have demonstrated above, Jonah 2:10 seems to make an intertextual allusion to Psalm 3:9a with awareness of language that is beyond that one verse, even to the superscription. Psalm 3 in its current form is more or less reflected in Jonah 2's reading of it, as the author appears to engage with the very first line (the superscription) and at least verse 3 and verse 9 (the last verse).

2.16.6 *Thematic Correspondence*

In this section, I will demonstrate that the author of Jonah's psalm may have used Psalm 3 because of thematic correspondences that are shared not only between these two texts but also some of the other psalms used in Jonah's prayer and may also have drawn upon the rest of Psalm 3:9 metaleptically to highlight the exclusive nature of divine blessing and covenant.

2.16.6.1 The Petitioners' Perspective: Longing for the temple in exile

The verbal link between the superscription of Psalm 3 and Jonah 2 where the psalmists are fleeing from the presence of God (discussed earlier) doubles as an element of thematic correspondence to the book of Jonah, for it creates distance between God and the psalmist in a sort of an exile. This is reinforced in the rest of the psalm as the answer to the psalmist is said to have come *from* the holy hill (*מהר קדשו* Ps 3:5), suggesting that the psalmist is some distance away

⁴⁶⁰ John S. Kselman, "Psalm 3: A Structural and Literary Study," *CBQ* 49 (1987): 572–80.

⁴⁶¹ Kselman, "Psalm 3: A Structural and Literary Study," 579. Botha adds to this observation and notes that the enemies use the generic word for God in verse 3 (*אלהים*) whereas the psalmist makes it his own with *אלהי* (my God) in verse 8 and adds uses his personal name *יהוה* in verse 9, highlighting his close relationship with God. Phil J. Botha, "'Killing Them Softly with This Song ...' The Literary Structure of Psalm 3 and Its Psalmic and Davidic Contexts," *OTE* 21, no. 1 (2008): 32–33.

from it.⁴⁶² Similarly, Jonah longs to see the holy temple (Jonah 2:5) and send his prayer in its direction (Jonah 2:8). This thematic element aligns with Jonah 2 just like some of the other psalms examined above, tying these two texts closer.

The temple remains a center for God's presence and the locus for the resolution of the psalmist's troubles in both texts.⁴⁶³ It is even referred to in similar manner in both texts: מִהֵר קְדָשׁוֹ in Psalm 3:5 and הֵיכַל קְדֹשׁ in Jonah 2:5, 8. The psalmist and the prophet direct their prayers to the temple and receive their answer from it while remaining away from it. By drawing from a psalm that emphasizes the centrality of the temple, the proper mode and language of prayer that follows, the author of Jonah might be characterizing the prophet as someone who is well acquainted with the Israelite traditions and orthodoxy. As Erickson says, "This character who has refused YHWH's commission also speaks the Israelite reader's 'insider' worship language."⁴⁶⁴

2.16.6.2 Collective Identity

The language and experience of the psalmist and the prophet are larger than life. They transcend the singular persons. This points to another thematic feature relevant to Jonah—national personality. As Kim notes,⁴⁶⁵

Psalm 3 is an example in which an individual experience becomes an expression of the national (or communal) experience, although the language is left in its individual form: the lament singer combines his personal experience of salvation with the liturgical confession of the community.

⁴⁶² Botha, "Killing Them Softly," 28.

⁴⁶³ Gillingham notes the rabbinic discussion on how the temple could appear in a psalm attributed to David. Gillingham, *Psalms 1–72*, 2:47.

⁴⁶⁴ Erickson, *Jonah*, 308.

⁴⁶⁵ Ee Kon Kim, "Holy War Ideology and the Rapid Shift of Mood in Psalm 3," in *On the Way to Nineveh: Studies in Honor of George M. Landes*, ed. Stephen L. Cook and S. C. Winter (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1999), 84.

These characters, through liturgy and story, relive and rehearse national memories in their personal laments and thanksgivings.

2.16.6.3 Exclusive Nationalism

Jonah's use of Psalm 3:9 exemplifies metalepsis by creating a bridge between the two texts, transferring meaning beyond the intertexts.⁴⁶⁶ If one imagines a textual moment in which Psalm 3:9 was available to the author of Jonah's prayer, a significant detail emerges. The phrase, *ישועתה ליהוה* (salvation belongs to YHWH), closes the psalm in Jonah 2:10, while in Psalm 3:9, the phrase *ליהוה הישועה* (to YHWH belongs salvation) opens the last verse. Notably, Jonah (both the character and the author) omits the remainder of Psalm 3:9 *על-עמך ברכתך* (may your blessing be upon your people).⁴⁶⁷ This omission in Jonah 2:10, consistent with Jonah's rhetorical style as part of his characterization in the book, activates metalepsis by inviting the reader to consider the unspoken themes of covenant and the exclusivity of divine blessing.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁶ On metalepsis, see 1.2.3.2.6.1.

⁴⁶⁷ The Psalms (in whatever form they were available) would have been deeply familiar to the exilic and post-exilic communities, making such connections intuitive. Fishbane points to the study and explanation of the Torah in Nehemiah 8:8 as well as the Psalms of the Torah (Psalm 119 for example) to buttress this point. Michael Fishbane, "The Hebrew Bible and Exegetical Tradition," in *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel*, ed. Johannes C. de Moor, OtSt 40 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 28–30. The Psalms would have been the most recited and internalized part of scripture in the exile (cf. Ps 137). After the exile, the Psalms played a pivotal role in reconstituting temple worship. James L. Kugel, "Early Interpretation," in *Early Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Wayne A. Meeks, LEC 3 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 24. Kugel also discusses how the post-exilic community's most important reason for studying the texts of the past is that the past provided a hope for their future. They wanted to reinstate and relive the glories of the past monarchy. He says, "*The past was in texts*, and if the past was that to which the exiles were returning, then those texts had to be studied in their tiniest details." Kugel, "Early Interpretation," 37.

⁴⁶⁸ Gaps in information both to readers and to the characters in the story begin in Jonah 1:3 where Jonah does not provide a reason for fleeing from God. He explains the reason later in 4:2 where he also refers to what he had said while he was in Israel that was not recorded in chapter one. Likewise, Jonah does not directly answer the sailors' question about why the disaster had befallen them (1:9), which creates the inverse of dramatic irony (the sailors are told the reason but not the readers). Instead, the text just says that they knew because "he had told them" (*הגיד להם*) (1:10). In Jonah 3:2, God tells Jonah to proclaim to Nineveh "the proclamation" (*הקריאה*) which he had told him. The proclamation was not given in direct speech from God just like in 1:2 where it simply says, "proclaim against it" (*וקרא (עליה)*). The only clue to the message comes in the parsimonious proclamation in 3:4, *עוד ארבעים יום ונינוה נהפכת*, which in itself is ambiguous and polyvalent. On these gaps, see Raymond F. Person Jr., *In Conversation with Jonah*:

This metaleptic connection highlights the exclusive nature of divine blessing in Psalm 3, emphasizing the contrast between Israel and its enemies. Psalm 3:9 concludes with a nationalistic prayer, underscoring that God’s blessing belongs exclusively to God’s people, Israel. הישועה (salvation) is glossed with ברכה (blessing) similar to Psalm 28:9. The second masculine singular pronominal suffixes on ברכתך (your blessing) and עמך (your people) place both nouns not only in close relationship with God, the referent of the possessive pronouns, but also in close relationship with each other.⁴⁶⁹ In other words, God’s people and God’s blessing are exclusively connected. God’s blessing does not belong to people other than his own. If anything, the opposite is true of those who are not God’s people. This is highlighted by the previous use of עם (people) in Psalm 3:7 in reference to the enemies of the psalmist, creating a contrast between the people whom God has already stricken (Ps 3:8) and “your people” in Psalm 3:9 upon whom God’s blessing is

Conversation Analysis, Literary Criticism, and the Book of Jonah, JSOTSup 220 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 72–76. Closer to the omission in Jonah 2:10b, an important omission appears in Jonah 4:2 where he quotes from Exodus 34:6 via Joel 2:13. Yet both Jonah and Joel omit a key word—ואמת (faithfulness) and replace it with a new phrase עליהרעה ונחם (and he relents from evil). In Joel’s context, this revelation encourages Israel to repent (Joel 2:12–13) so that God may relent (Joel 2:14) from the day of the Lord which he was about to bring upon them (Joel 1:15; 2:1). Thus, within the relationship between God and Israel, God’s faithfulness (אמת) to his people means that he relents from disaster when his people repent from sin, as he did in Exodus 32. When Jonah cites this adapted formula from Joel, he seems to remind God that the promise to relent from disaster is a covenantal assurance directed specifically at Israel. Jonah’s conflict with God likely stems from an inability to reconcile God’s covenant loyalty to Israel with his mercy toward non-Israelites. Notably, Joel also reflects a national focus in his plea to God, saying, “Do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations” (NRSV). Jonah’s dependence on Joel, of course, assumes that Joel preceded the book of Jonah. Even though scholarly consensus dates Joel to post-exilic times, the first half of the book (1:2–2:27) probably preceded the other half. John Barton, *Joel and Obadiah: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 15–18. Since 2:13 comes from the first part, it is reasonable to conclude that the author of Jonah depended on Joel. John Day supports this view. Day, “Problems in the Interpretation of the Book of Jonah,” 46–47. See also Aaron Scharf, “The Jonah-Narrative within the Book of the Twelve,” in *Perspectives on the Formation of the Book of the Twelve: Methodological Foundations, Redactional Processes, Historical Insights*, ed. Rainer Albertz, James Nogalski, and Jakob Wöhrle, BZAW 433 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 112.

⁴⁶⁹ Botha, “Killing Them Softly,” 32.

bestowed.⁴⁷⁰ More specifically, the psalmist's salvation from his enemies is achieved through God's smiting of all his enemies and the breaking of their teeth—a punishment fitting the crime (cf. Ps 3:3).⁴⁷¹ This internal cohesion ties Psalm 3 together, as Psalm 3:9 mirrors 3:2–3, beginning with a collective group of enemies and ending with another collective group in contrast.⁴⁷²

This dichotomy between God's people and their enemies in Psalm 3 enriches Jonah's concluding confession and introduces a subtle tension. Jonah's statement, *ישועתה ליהוה* (salvation belongs to YHWH), in Jonah 2:10c, serves as both a summary of the psalm and a central theme of the book as a whole.⁴⁷³ On the surface, this expression reflects Jonah's piety, seemingly marking a turning point in his attitude by affirming God's sovereignty in granting salvation to whomever He pleases—whether Nineveh or Jonah.⁴⁷⁴ However, the intertextual link to Psalm 3:9 complicates

⁴⁷⁰ The perfect tense of the verb *הכית* in Psalm 3:8 is another point of contact in Jonah's psalm, although the past tense of deliverance is not distinct to the two texts. For the psalmist, the deliverance has already happened. As Weiser comments, "The past, the present and the future intertwine at this moment; God has already helped, he has already wrought deliverance, and yet at the same time his help and his deliverance are prayed for and hoped for by man." Weiser, *Psalms*, 118. Similarly, Jonah's psalm of thanksgiving does not fit the context, for he is purportedly still inside the fish (Jonah 2:11). This incongruity is explained by psalms like Psalm 3 and other such psalms which are also used in Jonah's psalm that share a similar feature.

⁴⁷¹ Botha, "Killing Them Softly," 34. Hakham, *Psalms*, 1:14. Hakham also points out that the last verse has two short phrases which might have served as a battle cry. This is supported by the militant nature of the psalm, leading Sarna to think that the petition in Psalm 3 is recited by either the king of Israel or a commander-in-chief of the army on the eve of battle. Sarna, "Legal Terminology in Psalm 3:8," 175. See also the very persuasive discussion in Kim, "Holy War," 86ff. If that is true, the final line of Jonah's prayer can be read as a call to war against Israel's enemy—Assyria. The dove (יונה), instead of being a sign of peace (Gen 8:11), becomes a messenger of war. K. -M Beyse, "עֲלָה," in *TDOT*, ed. Johannes G. Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 11:114. For the possessive meaning of the preposition *lamed*, see Arnold and Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, § 4.1.10 (f), 126.

⁴⁷² Kselman, "Psalm 3: A Structural and Literary Study," 580.

⁴⁷³ Simon, *Jonah*, 24. Fretheim affirms the importance of this phrase to the message of the book of Jonah saying, "This line may well serve as the key verse of the book. It is true for the sailors in Chapter 1, for Jonah in Chapter 2, for the Ninevites in Chapter 3, and it is the objective of God's question of Jonah in Chapter 4." Terence E. Fretheim, *The Message of Jonah: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 103–4. Similarly, Levine says this phrase is "the very substance of Jonah's psalm." Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Jonah*, 82. Likewise,

⁴⁷⁴ Or rather, a sign of Jonah's concession that Yahweh is in control. David M Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 136; Bolin, *Freedom Beyond Forgiveness*,

this interpretation. While Psalm 3:9 celebrates salvation as belonging to God, it ties this salvation explicitly to God's blessing upon His people, Israel. This exclusivity suggests that Jonah's confession may carry an implicit resistance to the extension of God's mercy to Nineveh. As Schultz observes, quotations create a "palimpsest-like layering of meaning," allowing recontextualized words to carry both their original significance and new implications.⁴⁷⁵ This layered dynamic is evident in Jonah 2:10c, where the intertextual resonance with Psalm 3:9a challenges the apparent universality of Jonah's confession, revealing his struggle with God's mercy for those outside Israel. In this way, the ending of Jonah 2 anticipates the open-ended conclusion of Jonah 4.⁴⁷⁶ Both withhold explicit resolution, leaving unspoken the prophet's deeper resistance, while opening metaphoric and metacanonical pathways to the broader prophetic corpus and Psalter for readers to ponder the book's central theological tensions.

In summary, Psalm 3:9a is creatively reused at the conclusion of Jonah's prayer, creating a layer of meaning that simultaneously fits Jonah's psalm and transcends it. This creative reuse positions Jonah's confession at the intersection of acknowledgment and silence. By omitting the remainder of Psalm 3:9, Jonah's psalm invites the reader to finish the sentence once they locate the source of the intertext. A flood of meaning comes pouring in when that happens, transforming the reading of the entire psalm. Jonah does confess that salvation belongs to God; but he may be saying more than that by keeping silent. Perhaps he wants that salvation to be limited to God's people as the rest of the narrative fills in. This tension enriches the narrative, inviting readers to

119. Opgen-Rhein, Magonet, and Weimar see this as a sign of Jonah's transformation from being self-centered to God-centered. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonapsalm*, 70; Magonet, *Form and Meaning*, 48–49; Weimar, *Jona*, 273–74.

⁴⁷⁵ Schultz, *The Search for Quotation*, 239.

⁴⁷⁶ For more on the relevance of Jonah 4 to Jonah 2, see 1.1, pages 2–3.

wrestle with the broader implications of God's mercy and justice not only in the narrative but also in the psalm of Jonah.

2.17 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have demonstrated that Jonah's prayer in Jonah 2 is not a standalone composition but a carefully crafted text that draws deeply on Israel's liturgical tradition and proves to be central to the story of Jonah. Using a detailed methodology that combined textual criticism, verbal resonance, availability, modification, partial integration, multiplicity, and thematic correspondence, I have highlighted how Jonah's psalm engages with and reinterprets existing psalms, prophetic texts, and Second Temple literature to create a complex theological tapestry.

In each section, my analysis began with textual criticism, which proved crucial in contextualizing MT rather than accepting it as the definitive starting point. By examining the earliest available Hebrew manuscripts of Jonah (4Q82, Mur88), the Greek Nahal Hever text, and the Old Greek (OG) translation, I showed how the text of Jonah's psalm remains remarkably stable with a few exceptions in the OG. At the same time, consideration of the different traditions also led to discovering intertextual connections to different psalms. For instance, the OG's link to Psalm 120:1 in Jonah 2:3a and Psalm 18:7 in Jonah 2:3b alerted us to productive intertexts in those verses, giving us access to ancient intertextual readings.

Following textual criticism, I explored verbal resonance, showing varying degrees of parallels between Jonah's prayer and specific psalms. In cases where dating the psalms was possible, I engaged in a diachronic analysis to assess their availability and potential influence on Jonah's composition. Even when dating proved difficult, this exercise offered valuable insight into the evolving use of Hebrew and the literary-historical development of biblical texts.

Modification was another significant aspect of my approach. By comparing Jonah's prayer with its likely sources, I highlighted potentially deliberate changes that shaped the psalm's meaning. These modifications reveal a sophisticated literary strategy, wherein Jonah's prayer retains familiar psalmic elements while reshaping them to fit its unique narrative context.

Partial integration of certain elements of Jonah's psalm proved to be a helpful element in identifying intertexts. This recognizes the fact that the psalm does not quite fit the situation of Jonah. But at the same time, it seeks to find resolution by reading the source text. Along this line, a key finding of this analysis is the composite nature of Jonah's psalm, which borrows language from a wide range of lament and thanksgiving psalms but does not fit neatly into either category. This composite structure reinforces the theory that Jonah's psalm is born as a new creation out of the womb of the Psalms, reflecting Israel's liturgical diversity. By integrating elements from both laments and thanksgivings, Jonah's prayer blurs traditional boundaries, creating a text that simultaneously recounts distress and announces deliverance with prophetic confidence.

Multiplicity of verbal connections between texts reinforces an intertextual connection. We have found this to be the case with at least all the primary intertexts from Psalms 3, 18, 31, 42, 69, 77, 88, 102, 107, 116, 120, and 142. This launched us into finding thematic correspondence between texts, engaging in an intertextual reading experience. Several recurring thematic patterns emerged throughout the study.

First, many of the psalms referenced in Jonah's prayer revolve around longing for the temple during exile. Water imagery frequently symbolizes foreign nations (e.g., Ps 18:17–18; 42:7–8, even in the Hodayot 1QH^a 11:14–15 [cf. 14:10–11]), while the temple represents the climactic place of deliverance and proper worship. Jonah's focus on the temple underscores his identity as a member of the covenant community and highlights his perceived distance from God

while at the same time emphasizing his knowledge of sacred space and sacred words used in proper modes of worship in cultic sacrifices.

Second, Jonah's prayer aligns with a strong tradition in the psalms of innocent suffering. Rather than confessing guilt or seeking forgiveness, Jonah presents himself as a righteous sufferer. Most readers of the psalms are trained to attribute any suffering of the psalmists to personal wrongdoing or sin because they read the psalms with the lens of what has been called "salvation-history" of the Old Testament.⁴⁷⁷ This chapter has tried to give the Psalms their own space by reading their protestations of innocence on their own terms rather than through a particular theological grid. In doing do, we have uncovered a strong tradition of innocent suffering in the Psalms which is picked up implicitly by Jonah's psalm and some of the Hodayot. Furthermore, Jonah's psalm contains no direct petitions. Instead, it recounts distress, announces deliverance, and makes didactic statements about idolaters. This absence of petition reinforces Jonah's self-image as a pious figure who expects deliverance based on his righteousness rather than repentance.

Third, Jonah 2:9 introduces the concept of idolatrous Otherness, contrasting the prophet's worship of Yahweh with the "vanities" of idol worshippers. While this critique may initially seem directed at non-Israelites, the broader narrative irony subverts Jonah's self-righteous stance by highlighting the repentance of the sailors and Ninevites. This perception of the Other is shared by a large number of the psalms that are features in Jonah's psalm, adding to the rationale for using those psalms.

Fourth, a recurring theme in Jonah's prayer, reinforced through its intertextual engagement with various psalms, is the call for retributive justice. This element is deeply embedded in the

⁴⁷⁷ David Willgren, "Canonical Tamings of Suffering: On How Paratextual Activities Reshapes the Relationship between God and Human in Psalm 71," in *God and Humans in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond: A Festschrift for Lennart Boström on His 67th Birthday*, ed. David Willgren, Hebrew Bible Monographs 85 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2019), 176.

psalms Jonah draws upon, which often petition Yahweh for vindication of the righteous and punishment of the wicked. Jonah's prayer implicitly critiques non-Yahwistic worship practices, framing their idolatry as grounds for exclusion from the covenantal blessings reserved for Israel. This theme of retributive justice reinforces the prophet's underlying belief in Yahweh's justice as selective, favoring Israel over the nations.

Fifth, Jonah's prayer consistently underscores Israel's unique covenantal relationship with Yahweh. The psalms Jonah references frequently highlight the centrality of the temple as the locus of Yahweh's presence and the proper site for worship. This temple-centric theology underscores the exclusivity of the covenant, distinguishing Israel from the surrounding nations. This exclusive view of the covenant is complicated by the broader narrative of the book, where Yahweh extends mercy to the Ninevites, challenging Jonah's (the character's) theological assumptions. The tension between Jonah's prayer and the narrative invites readers to reflect on the nature of Yahweh's covenantal relationship—not only with Israel but potentially with other nations. By framing his deliverance in covenantal terms, Jonah's prayer highlights his expectation that Yahweh's mercy should be reserved for Israel, thereby setting the stage for the dramatic irony that unfolds in the narrative.

Sixth, the use of psalmic language transforms Jonah from an individual prophet into a corporate representative of Israel. By drawing on collective liturgical material, Jonah's prayer reflects the nation's concerns, particularly regarding exile, divine justice, and the hope for restoration, allowing us to read the psalm of Jonah as an embodiment and re-enactment of Israel's experience in exile.

The network of psalms in Jonah's psalm also led to a broader network of texts, including Isaiah 53, Lamentations 3, Ezekiel 37, Hosea 8, among other texts. These prophetic texts share

thematic concerns with the psalms Jonah references, particularly regarding exile, innocent suffering, and the hope for national restoration. The Dead Sea Scrolls, particularly 4Q381 and the Hodayot, further corroborate this intertextual engagement by using similar language and themes to reflect on Israel's liturgical and theological traditions.

The temple-centric focus of Jonah's psalm challenges conclusions by scholars such as Lacocque and Lacocque, who argue for a decentralized universalism in the book of Jonah towards turning of hearts towards God (cf Jer 31; Isa 40–55) rather than to Zion.⁴⁷⁸ While the broader narrative may gesture towards universalism by highlighting the repentance of Nineveh, Jonah's prayer remains firmly rooted in Zion theology. This tension invites readers to reassess the book of Jonah's theology in light of the intertextual engagement with the Psalms. Does the book ultimately subvert the psalm's temple focus, or does it use Jonah's prayer to critique his reluctance to accept God's universal mercy?

Finally, this analysis supports the view of Jonah as a meta-prophetic book. The use of past tenses in Jonah's psalm highlights its prophetic nature, anticipating future events in the narrative. This prophetic dimension anticipates how the Psalms are reused in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Second Temple literature, where they are often interpreted prophetically rather than purely liturgically. Jonah's prayer, therefore, serves as a bridge between Israel's past liturgical traditions and its ongoing prophetic mission.

In conclusion, Jonah's prayer is a richly layered text that engages deeply with Israel's psalmic and prophetic traditions. By employing intertextual references, creative modifications, and thematic correspondences, the author of Jonah's psalm crafts a composite text that reflects on exile,

⁴⁷⁸ André LaCocque and Pierre-Emmanuel Lacocque, *Jonah: A Psycho-Religious Approach to the Prophet*, SPOT (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 22–23.

innocent suffering, divine justice, and exclusive covenantal relationship. This prayer not only reinforces Jonah's role as a representative of Israel but also invites readers to wrestle with complex theological questions about God's mercy, justice, and covenant faithfulness. Ultimately, Jonah's prayer exemplifies how ancient Israelite literature could creatively reuse and reinterpret traditional material to address new contexts and challenges, making it a powerful example of biblical intertextuality and theological reflection.

Ultimately, Jonah's prayer reflects the prophet's identification with the national experience of exile as an innocent party, struggling to reconcile their understanding of Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness with the unexpected extension of that faithfulness to outsiders. This tension lies at the heart of the book of Jonah, making the prayer a pivotal element in the narrative's exploration of God's character, Israel's identity, and the scope of divine mercy.

3. IMPLICATIONS ON THE INTERPRETATION OF JONAH

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore how the recurring themes from my intertextual analysis of Jonah's psalm may enhance key elements of the book's interpretation. First, I will examine Jonah's sojourn in the sea as a metaphor for Israel's exile, evoking layered concepts rooted in the Exodus tradition, which the prophetic literature uses to reimagine the return from exile as a second Exodus. Second, I will discuss the temple motif in the psalm—not as an extraneous element, but as a focal point that orients the reader toward proper modes and places of worship. Through its liturgical language, the psalm underscores Jonah's knowledge of special language used in Yahweh worship, setting his prayer apart from the prayers of the sailors and the Ninevites. This expands Jonah's characterization paralleling David in Chronicles (and also the Psalms to an extent via the effect that the biographical headings have on one's reading of those psalms)—zealous for the temple and for Jerusalem—while highlighting a contrast with the sailors and Ninevites, who lack both the proper language and understanding of Yahweh's worship.

Third, and more original to this thesis, I will argue that Jonah's portrayal as an innocent sufferer enriches the narrative and explains his lack of repentance. By aligning himself with figures such as Joseph, Job, Jeremiah, and Daniel, Jonah invokes the exilic protest seen in Lamentations 3 and Isaiah 53, standing in contrast to the penitential prayers of Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, and Baruch. Fourth, the themes of exile, temple liturgy, covenant, innocent suffering and more reflect engagement with prophetic discourse, leading to the reinforcement of the notion that Jonah is a meta-prophetic book.

Ultimately, this chapter outlines the potential broader implications of my interpretation of Jonah's psalm. It is not intended to offer a comprehensive treatment of these themes but to provide

context and coherence to the findings in the previous chapter. As a result, my discussion in this chapter is more explorative than exhaustive. The primary contribution of this thesis remains the detailed intertextual analysis of Jonah's psalm presented in chapter two.

3.2 Jonah and the Exile

The book of Jonah is notoriously difficult to interpret despite its seemingly simple plot structure and language. The open-ended conclusion of the book invites diverse interpretations and has led to a proliferation of ideas through the centuries.¹ One interpretation suggested by early critical scholars, though criticized by more modern scholars, is that of the story of Jonah as an extended picture of Israel in exile.² Some have dismissed it as an allegory, creating a bifurcation between historical and allegorical interpretations of the text.³ However, scholars like Downs and Tiemeyer have defended viewing the book as more than marginally connected to exilic themes.⁴

My analysis of Jonah's psalm provides further grounds for viewing Jonah's sojourn in the sea as a metaphor for Israel in exile. As Tiemeyer notes, exilic readings of the story Jonah mostly focus on the fish as a symbol of exile (cf. Jer 51:34).⁵ However, Jonah's psalm provides further metaphorical associations from the Psalms where waters often symbolize foreign nations.

¹ Sherwood and Tiemeyer trace the variegated reception of the book of Jonah. Sherwood, *A Biblical Text and Its Afterlives: The Survival of Jonah in Western Culture*; Tiemeyer, *Jonah*.

² For a good summary of older scholarship on this, see Phyllis Tribble, "Studies in the Book of Jonah" (Ph.D., Columbia University, 1963), 153–58. See also footnote 10 in David Downs, "The Specter of Exile in the Story of Jonah," *HBT* 31, no. 1 (2009): 30. And Tiemeyer, "Jonah, the Eternal Fugitive," 256–57.

³ Day, "Problems in the Interpretation of the Book of Jonah," 37. Sasson, *Jonah*, 338–39.

⁴ Downs, "The Specter of Exile in the Story of Jonah"; Tiemeyer, "Jonah, the Eternal Fugitive." See also the overview of scholarship on this topic in Tillema, "The Book of Jonah in Recent Research," 156–59. Nogalski argues that at the level of the redaction of the Twelve, whoever inserted the psalm in the book of Jonah thought of the prophet as representing Israel. James Nogalski, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve*, BZAW 218 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 265–69.

⁵ Tiemeyer, "Jonah, the Eternal Fugitive," 256–57.

Furthermore, the emphasis on corporate representation throughout the psalm indicates that the story of Jonah is about more than the prophet; he represents national interests. This suggests that Jonah's drowning in primeval waters is a picture of Israel's exile among the nations.

As I demonstrated in chapter two, Jonah's psalm alludes to certain psalms that share its imagery of drowning in chaotic waters. I have shown further that some of those psalms relate the waters to foreign nations, the perceived enemies of the psalmists. For example, Psalm 18, whose influence over Jonah's psalm is pervasive (see 2.3), conceives of the foreign enemies of the psalmist as **מים רבים** (mighty waters) in a clear poetic parallelism in verses 17–18:

He reached down	ישלח
from on high,	ממרום יקחני
he took me; he drew me	ימשני
out of mighty waters.	ממים רבים
He delivered me	יצילני
from my strong enemy,	מאיבי עז
	ומשנאי
and from those who	כי־אמצו ממני
hated me;	
for they were too mighty for me.	
(NRSV)	

The phrase **מים רבים** (mighty waters) is used by Isaiah and Jeremiah to refer to foreign enemies, especially Babylon (Isa 8:6–8; 17:13; Jer 6:23; 51:55), lending further support to this association in Psalm 18. In the same way, Psalm 42:7–8 connects the breakers and waves of the deep waters with lands outside of Israel:

My soul is cast down within me;
therefore I will remember you from
the land of Jordan and Hermon, from
mount Mizar
Deep calls to deep at the thunder of
your cataracts; all your waves and
your billows have gone over me.
(NRSV)

Psalm 42:7–8
עלי נפשי תשתוחח על־כן אזכרך
מארץ ירדן וחרמונים מהר מצער
תהום־אל־תהום קורא לקול צנור־ך
כל־משבריך וגליך עלי עברו

What is unique about Psalm 42 is that the breakers and waves are said to belong to God, extending his control to foreign lands beyond Israel. Here, the connection to Jonah 2 is even more explicit than Psalm 18 because Jonah 2:4b borrows a verbatim phrase from Psalm 42:8. Moreover, Psalm 69, with its connection to Jonah 2:6, expresses a similar connection between waters and enemies as Psalms 18 and 42:

Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. (NRSV)

More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; many are those who would destroy me, my enemies who accuse me falsely. What I did not steal must I now restore? (NRSV)

הושיעני אלהים כי באו מים עד-נפש Psalm 69:2–3
טבעתי ביון מצולה ואין מעמד באתי
במעמקי-מים ושבילת שטפתי

רבו משערות ראשי שנאי חנם עצמו Psalm 69:5
מצמיתי איבי שקר אשר לא-גזלתי אז
אשיב

It even contains a similar poetic parallelism as the other two psalms in Psalm 69:15:

Save me from the mire, and let me not sink הצילני מטיט ואל-אטבעה

Let me be saved from those who hate me אנצלה משנאי

And from the deep waters וממעמקי-מים

This consistent perception of the Other as chaotic waters that overwhelm the psalmist makes its way into the Hodayot (1QH^a 11:14–15 [cf. 14:10–11]) as well.⁶ Jonah's reliance on Psalms 18, 42, and 69 is shown to extend beyond shared words into broader themes and concepts, including drowning in chaotic waters as representing exile among the nations.

⁶ See the discussion in 2.5.5.2.1.

This reading is complemented by Hosea's metaphor of "Dove" for the northern kingdom in relation to the Exodus, exile, and second Exodus in Hosea 7:11 and 11:11.⁷

Similarly, reading Jonah's psalm as Israel's sojourn in exile comes with added connotations of the exodus, where exile is depicted as an undoing of the exodus, with Israel taking the place of Egypt in being submerged in the sea. This gives Israel a way of thinking about their exile in relation to their founding story, both giving comfort in light of their connection to their origins but also laying the foundation for an anticipation of another Exodus. The prophets take advantage of construing the exile as a return to Egypt and formulate hope of return from exile as a second Exodus. For example, Israel's exile in Assyria and its hope of return from there is described in very evocative terms of the Exodus in Isaiah 11:15–16:

And the LORD will utterly destroy
the tongue of the sea of Egypt;
and will wave his hand over the River
with his scorching wind;
and will split it into seven channels,
and make a way to cross on foot;
so there shall be a highway from Assyria
for the remnant that is left of his people,
as there was for Israel
when they came up from the land of Egypt. (NRSV)

Fascinatingly, this is followed by a psalm of thanksgiving for an Exodus-like deliverance in Isaiah 12.⁸ Similarly, the Babylonian exile is recast in terms of the Exodus, as Watts helpfully summarizes:⁹

Yahweh's advent 'in strength' inaugurates the deliverance of his people from bondage among the nations (40:10ff; 51:9ff; 52:10ff). As he had dried up the sea

⁷ Hyun Chul Paul Kim, "Jonah Read Intertextually," *JBL* 126, no. 3 (2007): 510–11.

⁸ Isaiah 12 and 38 are fruitful avenues of research in light of my work on Jonah 2. They seem to be using the Psalms in similar ways to Jonah.

⁹ Rikki E. Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation? Isaiah 40–55 and the Delay of the New Exodus," *Tyndale Bulletin* 41, no. 1 (1990): 33–34.

of old (51:9ff) so Yahweh will accompany them through the waters and the fire (43:1–3(-7)), leading the glorious procession (40:10f; 42:16; 49:10; 52:12), and being both front and rear guard in the cloud and in the fire (52:12, cf. Ex. 13:21f; 14:19f). Yahweh will again shepherd his people (40:11; cf. Ex. 15:13; Pss. 77:21; 78:52), providing food and water (49:9f; cf. 48:21) in a miraculous transformation of the wilderness (43:19f; 49:9ff and Ex. 17:2–7; Num. 20:8).

The prophetic imagination of the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles as types of the Exodus aligns with the themes of exile and Exodus evoked in Jonah's psalm, reinforcing the interpretation of Jonah's prayer as symbolizing Israel's exile and hope for restoration.

One other point solidifies reading Jonah 2 on a metaphorical level. Jonah 2 finds its structural parallel in chapter four where Jonah prays to God asking for death (Jonah 4:2ff). In a strange series of events, Jonah is further agitated to death and silenced by the divine questions. These events include a miraculous growth of a plant to provide shade from the sun, its sudden destruction by a worm, and an east wind that blows upon Jonah, exposing him to the heat of the sun. One way to read this story in light of the prophets is by understanding it as prophetic sign act, "in which the prophet carries a figurative message on his body or takes actions in his life designed to symbolically convey God's word" (cf. Jer 27, Isa 20:2–6; Hosea 1:1–9, etc.).¹⁰ Erickson goes on to suggest that the plant that magically grew to provide shade represents the king of Assyria, whom God will strike down because of his pride (cf. Ezek 31:3–18).¹¹ The symbolic meaning of the events that unfolded upon the prophet in chapter 4 also allows a similar reading of his submersion in the sea in chapter two. This makes my reading of Jonah's psalm not only consistent with the Psalms and prophets but also contextually fitting within the book of Jonah.

Interestingly, the description of the sun striking Jonah's head in Jonah 4:8 alludes to Psalm 121:5–6 where Yahweh's protection of Israel means that the sun will not strike them by day nor

¹⁰ Erickson, *Jonah*, 401–2.

¹¹ Erickson, *Jonah*, 403–4.

the moon by night, casting Jonah's experience as a removal of God's favor from Israel. This connection deserves further research in light of Jonah's connection to Psalm 120 in the first line of Jonah's psalm.

3.3 Jonah and the Temple

The emphasis on the temple in Jonah's psalm has two functions: first, to underscore proper liturgy in worship; second, to highlight the proper place of worship. Both of these functions enrich the interpretation of the book of Jonah, ultimately highlighting the broader theme of Israel's special relationship with God, which the nations do not share.

From Psalm 120 featured in Jonah 2:3a to Psalm 3 in Jonah 2:10b, the temple looms large in the psalms that Jonah alludes to, providing the proper language required to worship. Perhaps the archaizing language noted by Cross in Jonah's psalm is a nod to elite liturgy only accessible to those on the inside. The *yaqtul* preterites in Jonah 2:4a, 6a, the cohortatives in Jonah 2:10 and the rare poetic form in Jonah 2:10b all elevate the poetry of Jonah's psalm, echoing ancient Hebrew psalmody (cf. Exod 15, Psalm 18, etc.). This is all the more impressive when the reader considers that the prophet is supposed to have composed this psalm relying only on memory while in the belly of the fish. It is a complete psalm with formal features and language so sophisticated that many scholars have mistaken it for an independent psalm belonging in the Psalter. But that is precisely the point of Jonah's psalm—to give the impression of belonging to the traditional corpus of Israelite liturgy. Jonah, as a Hebrew who fears Yahweh, is portrayed as someone who could compose a psalm that rivals those of David's (cf. 1 Chron 16:7-36) even in extreme circumstances.

In contrast, the other prayers in the book of Jonah make Jonah's psalm conspicuously more elevated. The first mention of prayer in Jonah is that of the sailors who pray to their own gods (Jonah 1:5), demonstrating that they do not know the effective object of prayer. The second

mention is when the captain of the ship tells Jonah to call on his god, but the narrator adds אולי (perhaps), highlighting uncertainty about the deity and its response. The sailors' first formal prayer to Yahweh comes in Jonah 1:14¹²:

And they called upon YHWH and said, “O YHWH, please let us not perish because of this man’s life and do not put innocent blood upon us for you are YHWH; you do whatever you please	Jonah 1:14
	וּקְרָאוּ אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אָנָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
	נִאֲבִדָה בְּנֶפֶשׁ הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה וְאֶל־תֵּתֵן עָלֵינוּ
	דָּם נָקִיא כִּי־אַתָּה יְהוָה כְּאֲשֶׁר חָפְצָת עֲשִׂית

This is the kind of prayer one would expect in a storm at sea. It is reverent but lacks the poetic or liturgical structure characteristic of the Psalms. Once the sea ceases its raging, the sailors fear Yahweh and offer sacrifices (Jonah 1:16), but there is no mention of a thanksgiving psalm accompanying the sacrifices. They simply do not know the proper mode of worshipping Yahweh, authorized by the priestly elite. The next instance of prayer, excluding Jonah 2, is that of the Ninevites which the king commands in Jonah 3:8–9:

Human beings and animals shall cover themselves with sackcloth and they shall cry strongly to God. And each man will turn from his evil way and from violence which is in their hands. Who knows if God may turn back and relent and return from his fierce anger so that we may not perish.	Jonah 3:8–9
	וַיִּתְכַּסּוּ שָׂקִים הָאָדָם וְהַבְּהֵמָה וַיִּקְרָאוּ אֶל־
	אֱלֹהִים בַּחֲזָקָה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אִישׁ מִדְּרֹכֹו הָרָעָה
	וּמִן־הַחֲמָס אֲשֶׁר בְּכַפֵּיהֶם 9 מִיִּיּוֹדֵעַ יָשׁוּב
	וְנָחַם הָאֱלֹהִים וְשָׁב מִחֲרוֹן אָפָּו וְלֹא נִאֲבָד

Again, this resembles the urgent, prose-like prayer of the sailors, with no poetic structure. It arises from an immediate need for rescue from impending doom, following common speech patterns rather than the stock language of the elite priests in the temple.

¹² For a helpful analysis of the form of this prayer in comparison to other prayers in the Hebrew Bible and beyond, see Craig, *A Poetics of Jonah*, 97–100.

The characterization of Jonah as a master craftsman of Israel's psalmody contrasts sharply with the extemporized prayers of the sailors and the Ninevites.¹³ Jonah's prayer is elaborate and polished, akin to the work of a trained priest or a scribe (hence, the merging of the scribal author and the character in the composition of the psalm). This distinction creates a thematic contrast: Jonah, who knows Yahweh and temple worship, employs high liturgical language, while the non-Israelites relate to Yahweh in simpler, less formal ways.

Moreover, and tentatively, this highly stylized psalm in Jonah's mouth could be seen as part of his characterization in the book as paralleling David in Chronicles and Psalms. Scholars have seen parallels between Jonah and Moses in chapter 1, Jonah and Abraham in chapter 3 and Jonah and Elijah in chapter 4, among others. Perhaps Jonah's psalm, with its many allusions to the Psalms, presents him as similar to David in Chronicles and Psalms, anticipating later Jewish traditions that associate Jonah with messianic themes.¹⁴ Jonah's dependence on Psalm 18, a royal psalm, highlights this parallel with David (see section 2.3.4.4). This is not far from how Chronicles presents David as the "paragon of righteousness" precisely in connection with the Psalms (cf. 1 Chron 16:8–36).¹⁵ The Psalms become known as the book of David in later traditions as represented in 4QMMT. Thus, my suggestion that Jonah's psalm characterizes the prophet as a David-like figure finds continuity in later traditions and warrants further study.

At the same time, on the level of the narrative, the author might be undermining Jonah's self-perception as a Davidic figure (as portrayed in Chronicles). Instead, Jonah's actions parallel

¹³ For more on the popular piety of Israelite religion, see Moshe Greenberg, *Biblical Prose Prayer: As a Window to the Popular Religion of Ancient Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

¹⁴ Rachel Adelman, *The Return of the Repressed: Pirke De-Rabbi Eliezer and the Pseudepigrapha*, JSJSup 140 (Boston: Brill, 2009), 212; Katharina E. Keim, *Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer: Structure, Coherence, Intertextuality*, AGJU 96 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 115–16.

¹⁵ Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah*, 107–8.

those of David's enemies, Saul and Absalom. For instance, in Jonah 1:5, the prophet goes down into the hold of the ship and falls asleep, becoming as burdensome to the ship as the luggage, both of which get thrown overboard. There is a curious parallel here with 1 Samuel 10 where Saul is anointed as king. Before Saul is anointed, Samuel gathers the Israelites together at Mizpah and casts lots to determine who would be their king (1 Sam 10:20). Though the lot falls on Saul (much like Jonah in chapter one), he hides himself behind the luggage. This rather strange episode in Saul's story finds an even stranger parallel in Jonah:

The sailors were afraid and cried out, each man to his god. They threw the luggage which is in the ship into the sea to lighten it from them but Jonah had gone down into the hold of the ship and he laid down, and fell asleep.

Then they asked YHWH again, "Is there yet a man coming here?" Then YHWH said, "See, he has hidden himself among the luggage."

Jonah 1:5
וַיִּירָאוּ הַמִּלְחִים וַיִּזְעֲקוּ אִישׁ אֶל־אֱלֹהָיו
וַיַּטְלוּ אֶת־הַכֵּלִים אֲשֶׁר בָּאֵנִיָּה אֱלֹהִים
לְהַקֵּל מֵעֲלֵיהֶם וַיּוֹנֶה יָרֵד אֶל־יִרְכַּתִּי
הַסְפִּינָה וַיִּשְׁכַּב וַיִּרְדָּם

1 Samuel 10:22
וַיִּשְׁאַל־עוֹד בִּיהוָה הֲבֵא עוֹד הֶלֶם אִישׁ ס
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הִנֵּה־הוּא נֶחְבֵּא אֶל־הַכֵּלִים

Likewise, Jonah's intention to offer sacrifices and pay his vows parallels that of Absalom's statement:

But as for me, I will sacrifice to you with a voice of thanksgiving; what I vowed I will pay; Salvation belongs to YHWH

At the end of forty years, Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go so that I may pay my vows which I vowed to YHWH in Hebron"

Jonah 1:10
וְאֲנִי בִקּוֹל תּוֹדָה אֲזַבְחָה־לָךְ אֲשֶׁר נָדַרְתִּי
אֲשֶׁלְמָה יִשׁוּעָתָה לַיהוָה

2 Samuel 15:7
וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ אַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִשְׁלוֹם
אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲלֹכָה נָא וְאֲשַׁלֵּם אֶת־נִדְרֵי
אֲשֶׁר־נָדַרְתִּי לַיהוָה בְּחֶבְרוֹן

These intertextual connections need further exploration using the method I used in chapter two. If this reading proves productive, Jonah would be far from a Davidic figure outside his psalm; instead, he resembles David's enemies.

On the other hand, the sailors, despite their modest prose prayer, perhaps unintentionally, as part of their characterization, imitate the language of the Psalms:

And they called upon YHWH and said, “O YHWH, please let us not perish because of this man’s life and do not put innocent blood upon us for you are YHWH; you do whatever you please

But our God is in heaven; he does whatever he pleases

וּקְרָאוּ אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אָנָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
נִאֲבֹדָה בְּנֶפֶשׁ הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה וְאֶל־תֵּתֵן עָלֵינוּ
דָּם נָקִיא כִּי־אַתָּה יְהוָה כֹּאשֶׁר חָפַצְתָּ
עֲשֵׂיתָ

Jonah 1:14

וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ בַּשָּׁמַיִם כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־חָפֵץ עֲשֵׂה

Psalms 115:3

While the emphasis on the temple underscores proper mode of worship using high liturgical language in parallel with David (as portrayed in Chronicles), it also undermines Jonah’s perceived status and elevates the simple prose prayer of the sailors, indicating that piety is not just limited to the elite with access to temple liturgy.

The second function of the temple in Jonah’s psalm is the orientation of the proper place of worship in Jerusalem. Dell suggests the focus on the temple in Jonah 2 may be a critique of attempts to limit the worship of God to the Jerusalem temple, highlighting a universalist outlook.¹⁶ But this reading is inadvertently a sort of supersessionist reading of the Hebrew Bible that sees a progressive democratization of cult in the Hebrew Bible, culminating in the New Testament. To be sure, the words of the psalms themselves create sacred space. Erickson’s comments are helpful here:¹⁷

In the dislocated space of the fish’s belly, something strangely akin to a diaspora practice emerges. Jonah taps into a communal identity that orients its liturgical life toward the Jerusalem temple, even though worship cannot take place in the temple building (Knowles 2006). By depicting his acts of worship as evocative of the practices of the temple, Jonah’s ritual performance enacts the idea of Jerusalem’s centrality, even though his physical body is not in Jerusalem.

¹⁶ Dell, “Reinventing the Wheel: The Shaping of the Book of Jonah,” 95.

¹⁷ Erickson, *Jonah*, 308. Cf. Melody D. Knowles, *Centrality Practiced: Jerusalem in the Religious Practice of Yehud and the Diaspora in the Persian Period*, ABS 16 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2006).

But this is not a supersessionist phenomenon in which physical rituals are eventually replaced by something spiritual. Rather, as I demonstrated in my discussion of Jonah 2:10a, the psalmist hopes to return to the Jerusalem temple to offer sacrifices there. In the meantime, the psalm creates a sacred space that reassures the psalmist of an eventual pilgrimage to the temple.

Thus, the temple plays a major role in the interpretation of the book of Jonah. It creates tension between the prose and poetic forms of prayer, sets up competing parallels with Israel's kings, and maintains the temple's traditional status as the center of Yahweh worship while extending its reach to the seas and beyond. Is the book of Jonah an attempt to maintain the centrality of the temple while also affirming that Yahweh hears prayers from anywhere, provided they are directed toward the temple? After all, king Solomon prays for this very reality in 1 Kings 8:41–43.

Throughout the book of Jonah, the prophet is accorded a special standing before God. This can be seen in the way the prophet has unhindered access to God. For example, the sailors pray earnestly to God in Jonah 1:14 but there is no record of a direct answer from God, except what had been mediated through his prophet (1:12). The same can be said of Nineveh's repentance and prayer in 3:8–9. God relented but only according to the prophet's ambiguous speech in 3:4 and his clear knowledge in 4:2. On the other hand, Jonah says that he cried out to God in his distress, and he answered him (Jonah 2:3). This is representative of the special status that Israel was granted before God (cf. Ps 99:6; Song 5:6; 1 Chron 21:26). Weimar's observations are worth pondering over as I conclude this section:¹⁸

In bemerkenswerter Weise ist der Psalm in unterschiedlicher Dichte durch die Psalmensprache inspiriert, darüber hinaus aber auch mit zitatartig dem Psalter entlehnten Aussagen gestaltet (vgl. Magonet, Form 1983, 44ff.; Sasson 168ff.; Golka 66ff.), wohl nicht zuletzt in der Absicht geschehen, Jonas innige Vertrautheit mit der traditionsgesättigten Sprache der Gebetsliteratur des alten Israel zu

¹⁸ Weimar, *Jona*, 219–20.

demonstrieren, um zu zeigen, wie sehr er es versteht, seine eigene, ausweglose Situation im Licht jener Erfahrungen zu verstehen und zu deuten, die in den Psalmen verdichtet ausgesprochen sind. Indem er dies tut, legt er zugleich Zeugnis für jenen Gott ab, den er als Hebräer vor den Seeleuten bekannt hat und dem er sich aus intimer Kenntnis der Tradition verbunden weiß.

In a remarkable way, the psalm is inspired in varying density by the psalmic language, but beyond that is also shaped with quotation-like statements borrowed from the Psalter (cf. Magonet, Form 1983, 44ff.; Sasson 168ff.; Golka 66ff.), probably not least with the intention of demonstrating Jonah's intimate familiarity with the tradition-saturated language of the prayer literature of ancient Israel, in order to show how much he understands how to understand and interpret his own hopeless situation in the light of those experiences that are expressed in condensed form in the Psalms. In doing so, he also bears witness to the God whom he confessed to the sailors as a Hebrew and to whom he knows himself bound by an intimate knowledge of the tradition.

3.4 Jonah and Innocent Suffering

This section will explore the idea that the book of Jonah is a post-exilic reflection on the exile. Jonah represents Israel who disobeys God and goes into exile. But just like Jonah, Israel retains their self-conception of the innocent sufferer as reflected in the Psalms, Job, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and second Isaiah. This is further highlighted by the psalm's contrast with post-exilic prayers with their emphasis on confession and repentance as a marker of post-exilic piety—something that is conspicuously missing in Jonah's psalm.

Suggesting a link between the book of Jonah and innocent suffering is bold, considering that Jonah is read on *Yom Kippur*, a day of repentance in Jewish liturgy. However, the liturgical connection is not made to Jonah's repentance in the book but rather to the repentance of the Ninevites. As we have seen in chapter two, Jonah makes no admission of wrongdoing in his psalm or the narrative. Instead, his reliance on certain psalms that express innocence in suffering suggests that Jonah's non-repentance is deliberate, for he views himself in light of the bold claims of innocence by the psalmists. For example, Psalm 120:7 identifies the psalmist as peace, which his enemies hate. Likewise, Psalm 18:24 says that Yahweh deliverance of the psalmist from watery

chaos is a natural outworking of his own righteousness. Psalm 42–43 requests admission into the temple because of the psalmist's right moral standing (cf. Pss 15, 24). Similarly, Psalm 31:24 indicates that the psalmist identifies himself as the faithful who take refuge in Yahweh. Psalm 116:15 also participates in this identification as the psalmist extends his own near-death experience to the statement that the death of the faithful ones is precious in Yahweh's sight. Psalm 69:5 claims that the psalmist's enemies hate him without cause, establishing a link with the innocent suffering expressed in Isaiah 53, Lamentations 3, Jeremiah 15:15–21; 20:7–8, and Job. Psalm 142 also depicts the psalmist as an innocent victim of slander and imprisonment, aligning himself with David on the run from Saul. Psalm 88 participates in Job-like discourse, accusing God of inflicting unjust punishment. As this thesis has demonstrated in chapter two, all of these psalms play a critical role in the composition of Jonah's psalm, lending not only a few phrases but also their shared self-perception of innocent suffering to Jonah.

The lack of Jonah's repentance is stark when seen in light of other prayers in the period after the exile.¹⁹ The majority of post-exilic prayers emphasize confession of sin and repentance (Ezra 9:6–15; Neh 9:6–37; Dan 9:4–19; Bar 1:15–2:15, etc.).²⁰ Even within the book of Jonah, there is a clear instance of repentance expressed by the Ninevites (Jonah 3:8–9).²¹ But as we have seen from the resonances with Isaiah 53, Job, and Lamentations 3, Jonah is not alone in this self-conception of innocence in exilic suffering. These texts represent a different complex of traditions in the Hebrew Bible that do not agree with the tradition represented by Ezra-Nehemiah, Daniel,

¹⁹ Not only is there no reference to Jonah's repentance in the book of Jonah, but there is an explicit reference to Jonah as innocent in Jonah 1:14 where the sailors pray that Jonah's innocent blood may not be counted against them (cf. Deut 19:10; 21:8; Joel 4:19).

²⁰ Boda, *Praying the Tradition*.

²¹ Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah*, 153. Niditch, *Jonah*, 95–96.

and Baruch which follow 1 Kings 8 in their confession of sin and expectation of restoration and return from exile. Rather, Jonah belongs with the innocent sufferers of the Hebrew Bible who expect deliverance from exile because of their innocence, perhaps even thinking of themselves as martyrs for the sake of Israel, as Abravanel suggests in Jonah's case,²² or as Israel's role in atoning for the nations.²³

Adding to this conception of the self in the book of Jonah is its connection to the book of Job, which provides a paradigmatic example of innocent suffering in the Hebrew Bible. Dell notes parallels between the books of Jonah and Job in how they parody tradition both in form and ideas in order to expand their conceptions of God. She also notes how both characters hold on to their personal integrity, strengthening my argument for innocent suffering in Jonah.²⁴ For instance, Job links his innocence to his access to God through prayer just like Jonah:

I am a laughingstock to my friends; I, who called upon God and he answered me, a just and blameless man, I am a laughingstock. And he said, "I cried to YHWH from my distress and he answered me"	שחק לרעהו אהיה קרא לאלוה ויענהו שחוק צדיק תמים וַיֹּאמֶר קִרְאתִי מִצָּרָה לִי אֱלֹהִים וַיַּעֲנֵנִי	Job 12:4 Jonah 2:3a
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While Job explicitly states his innocence, Jonah leaves it implicit, relying on the psalms featured in Jonah 2 to convey this self-conception. Interestingly, Job's connections to the Psalms, Isaiah, and Lamentations converge with Jonah's relationship to the similar texts (cf. Job 16:7–22; Pss 3,

²² Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, "'Peace for Our Time': Reading Jonah in Dialogue with Abravanel in the Book of the Twelve," *JHebS* 17, no. 6 (2017): 5–6.

²³ Frolov argues that the book of Jonah is written as a polemic against Isaiah 53. Serge Frolov, "Returning the Ticket: God and His Prophet in the Book of Jonah," *JSOT* 24, no. 86 (1999): 98ff; on the contrary, see Philip P. Jenson, "Interpreting Jonah's God: Canon and Criticism," in *The God of Israel*, ed. Robert P. Gordon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 238. On lifting up and throwing Jonah overboard as a cultic sacrifice, see Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, "Attitudes to the Cult in Jonah: In the Book of Jonah, the Book of the Twelve, and Beyond," in *Priests and Cults in the Book of the Twelve*, ed. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, ANEM 14 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2016), 116.

²⁴ Dell, "Reinventing the Wheel: The Shaping of the Book of Jonah," 97–99.

22, 35; Isa 50, Lam 3, Mic 5 etc.). This convergence warrants further research into how Jonah and Job engage the traditions of innocent suffering within the Hebrew Bible. In a similar vein, Tobit is another promising partner to Jonah and Job, as I tried to intimate in brief references in chapter two (see footnotes in 2.2.6.2 and 2.3.4.2).²⁵

3.5 Jonah as a Meta-Prophetic Book

Ben Zvi argues that Jonah is “a prophetic book that deals with or is even devoted to issues that are of *relevance for the understanding of the messages of other prophetic books*” (emphasis original).²⁶ Despite its brevity, the book of Jonah encapsulates major themes of the prophetic corpus, reframing and complicating them in ways that invite further dialogue with the prophets. Rather than portraying Jonah as an anti-prophet or as a critique of prophecy, my reading of Jonah 2 paves a way to view the book of Jonah as a cross-section of prophetic thought, addressing and embodying multi-faceted questions and tensions surrounding exile, temple, covenant, and innocent suffering.

When seen in this light, the prevalent readings of the book of Jonah as a “polemical tract for universalism over against a narrow nationalism” become less compelling.²⁷ Instead, the book of Jonah mirrors the broader prophetic literature, where universalism and nationalism are held in creative tension without dismissing either. As I demonstrated in chapter two, Jonah’s nationalism is evident in his knowledge of the psalmic tradition, which celebrates Yahweh’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt and anticipates a similar deliverance from the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles.

²⁵ Cf. Gary A. Anderson, “Tobit as Righteous Sufferer,” in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. Vanderkam*, ed. Eric F. Mason et al., JSJSup 153 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 2:493–508; Southwood, “Comical Moments.”

²⁶ Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah*, 85.

²⁷ Jenson, “Interpreting Jonah’s God: Canon and Criticism,” 243.

But why did Israel go into exile in the first place? Prophetic texts such as Isaiah 10:5–11 answer this question by saying that God used Assyria as an instrument to punish Israel for their sins. Thus, in Jonah’s mind, the sparing of Nineveh—Assyria’s capital—ensures the eventual destruction of Israel, offering a plausible explanation for Jonah’s reluctance and his hope for Nineveh’s destruction.²⁸ As Cooper astutely observes, “The prophets who address the Assyrian threat struggle mightily to understand the nature of God’s wrath and love, and Jonah contributes to that discussion by way of interpretation and elaboration.”²⁹ Simultaneously, Isaiah 19:18–25 envisions a future in which Israel, Egypt, and Assyria coexist in peace and prosperity under an international Yahwism. This prophetic universalism does not negate Israel’s special covenantal relationship with Yahweh; instead, it coexists with the promises of a second exodus, the inheritance of the land, and the rebuilding of the temple. The book of Jonah reflects this same tension, where nationalism and universalism intersect and overlap, highlighting the complexity of prophetic thought.

Beyond its role as a meta-prophetic book, Jonah may also be understood as a meta-canonical book due to its extensive engagement with traditions from the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Psalms. As Weitzman observes, “I would argue, therefore, that whether the prayer is original or secondary, its role within the narrative points to the age of emergent canon-consciousness, when biblical narratives were first expected to include songs of praise.”³⁰ This is not too dissimilar to the way the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Psalms were used in 4Q174.³¹ While recent debates on canon-consciousness in Second Temple Judaism complicate this claim,

²⁸ Abravanel picks up on this connection to Isaiah 10 in his commentary on Jonah 1:2.

²⁹ Cooper, “In Praise of Divine Caprice: The Significance of the Book of Jonah,” 159.

³⁰ Steven Weitzman, *Song and Story in Biblical Narrative: The History of a Literary Convention in Ancient Israel* (Bloomington: IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 112.

³¹ Brooke, *Reading the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 88.

the density of allusive material in the book of Jonah warrants further investigation into its potential canonical awareness.

3.6 Conclusion

This final chapter builds on the analysis presented in chapters one and two, offering implications and potential avenues for further research rather than a comprehensive or exhaustively researched treatment. By synthesizing intertextual connections and theological motifs, this chapter underscores how the book of Jonah invites readers into a reflective engagement with its themes.

Jonah's sojourn in the sea, for example, emerges as a profound metaphor for Israel's exile. It echoes the undoing of the Exodus in the exile and aligns with prophetic hopes for a second Exodus, situating the book of Jonah within Israel's broader historical and theological narratives. The temple motif in Jonah's psalm further reinforces this narrative, emphasizing both the centrality of proper liturgical worship and the enduring significance of Jerusalem as the locus of Yahweh worship, even as Yahweh's reach extends beyond Israel's borders to the nations.

Jonah's self-understanding as an innocent sufferer adds another dimension, aligning himself with figures such as Job, Joseph, Jeremiah, David, and the sufferers of Lamentations 3 and Isaiah 53. This self-conception complicates traditional views of Jonah as a penitent prophet, instead highlighting a strand of exilic theology that interprets suffering as a badge of innocence and atonement for the nations.

Read this way, Jonah's psalm maps on to the idea that the Psalms played a vital role during the Babylonian exile in providing a framework for understanding the reasons for and experiencing the effects of exile. Kugel explains the significance of the Psalms in the history of Israel, especially in the exile saying, "the Jews most certainly must have sustained themselves in exile by the

recitation of these same songs and psalms.”³² Certainly, Psalm 137 seems to hint at this reality, depicting the Babylonian captors taunting the Judean exiles to sing one of the songs of Zion (Ps 137:3). Similarly, Psalm 107 proves to be key in reinforcing the fact that Israel called out to God for deliverance from exile using psalmic language (see 2.3.5). Thus, the Psalms not only provided the language of lament for the exiles, but also, as Jonah’s psalm indicates, offered a framework for interpreting their alienation from God and suffering in continuity with the legendary kings and psalmists of Israel and in relation to their founding story of the Exodus. They created a sacred space reminiscent of the temple, upheld the exiles’ sense of innocence, expressed calls for retribution, and reinforced their covenantal relationship with Yahweh by preserving the high register of psalmody even in a foreign land.

Finally, the interpretation of the book of Jonah as a meta-prophetic and meta-canonical book positions it as a reflective work that encapsulates and reframes themes from across the prophetic corpus. Its dense allusions to the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Psalms suggest an emergent canon-consciousness, presenting the book of Jonah as a text that stretches beyond its size in representing many of the varied traditions of the Hebrew Bible.

In conclusion, this chapter—and by extension, this thesis—proposes that the book of Jonah’s brevity belies its theological and literary depth. By engaging with its intertextuality and thematic complexity, readers are invited to wrestle with enduring questions of divine justice and mercy, human suffering, and the tensions between Israel’s particular identity and its universal mission. While this chapter has only begun to explore these implications, it offers a foundation for further research into the book of Jonah’s place within the prophetic and canonical traditions, encouraging future scholars to deepen and expand upon these insights.

³² Kugel, “Early Interpretation,” 24.

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