

# **Jonah's Piscine Plenitude: An Alternative Reading of Jonah**

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## 1.: Introduction

The biblical story of Jonah is pretty well known: The prophet Jonah flees God onto the high sea, gets swallowed by a great fish sent by God, spends three days in the belly of that fish, prays, gets spat out of the fish, and then goes his not so merry ways as a prophet. Following a literal reading, there seem to be at least two problems with this story:

Risibility: The lesser problem is that the story seems rather nonsensical—akin to so called *nonsense literature*. The story seems quite unrealistic, outright laughable; not just to the average modern recipient, but even in the contexts of the Old Testament and the ancient times, this story was a particular target of ridicule: According to St. Augustine, pagans ridiculed the story with “loud laughter, and with great scorn” as “utterly improbable and unbelievable.” (Letter 102:30) So, it is not like ancient people just generally would have believed such a story more easily than any modern person would. Nobody should fall into the fallacious trap of *chronological snobbery*.

The notion that the Book of Jonah were but a risible tale has endured unto modern times as the basis on which certain scholars have proposed that it must have been a humorous and satirical parody, never meant to be taken seriously. However, the very contents of Jonah 2—a highly reverent psalm prayer, which does in no way fit the idea of satire, irony, or parody—is itself a strong argument against understanding the Book of Jonah as having been meant to be ridiculous on purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Narrative Incoherence: The much bigger problem is that the story seems rather nonsensical—however, not in the almost respectable nonsense of comparing it to the literary genre of nonsense literature, no: With the traditional literal reading of Jonah being swallowed by one great fish, the story makes no sense in itself, as this leads to a narrative incoherence.

The story seems to make perfect sense as long as one only reads Jonah 2:1 and 2:11 (or 1:17 and 2:10, as these verses are numbered in the English tradition nowadays—this thesis, however, will use the traditional Hebrew numbering): “Now the LORD had prepared **a great fish to swallow up Jonah**. And **Jonah was in the belly of the fish** three days and three nights. [...] And **the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah** upon the dry land.” (KJV)

1 c.f. Pelli M. (1980): “The Literary Art of Jonah”, in *Hebrew Studies*, Vol. 20/21. p. 18,25. — “I tend to reject the proposed concept that the Book of Jonah is a work of satire in toto. The psalm prayer, for one, is a strong argument against the interpretation of this work as a total satire. Use of irony in the book, nonetheless, is acknowledged.” Pelli list several scholar which consider Jonah a work of satire, irony, or parody: Thomas Paine in (1793), Arnold Ehrlich (1901), Konig (1902), Bewer (1962), Leslie C. Allen (1976).

However, if one reads the rest of chapter 2 between these two verses, not only does the word for the fish change from a masculine singular to a feminine collective (as will be discussed later in this thesis), but there are several parts in the text which simply do not give the impression that Jonah is sitting in the belly of a sea-creature (which Jonah does not even mention during his prayer), but instead is sinking through the depths of the ocean, as stated in Jonah 2:4,6,7:

*“For thou hadst cast me **into the deep**, in **the midst of the seas**; and the **floods** compassed me about: all thy **billows** and thy **waves** passed over me. [...] The **waters** compassed me about, even to the soul: the **depth** closed me round about, the **weeds** were wrapped about my head. **I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.**” (KJV Jonah)*

These two concepts just do not match up well: Is Jonah inside the belly of a fish, or is he drowning to the bottom of the sea? There is no way the two stories can be reconciled; and yet, both ideas occur in the same text, and one must ask how the author and the original audience would have reconciled the two—at least if one singular great fish had literally swallowed Jonah. The best reading of the story must be a reading in which both concepts can work together—a reading where there is no narrative incoherence.<sup>2</sup>

So, what would be the best way to reconcile the two concepts and keep the narrative coherence?<sup>3</sup>

One reasonable assumption might be that the verses about the big fish shall simply NOT be taken literal, and may just serve as some sort of metaphor. There are, indeed, multiple metaphorical

2 Of course, there is the possibility that the story could have been stitched together from two different sources: Jonah’s prayer in chapter 2 feels very, very different from the rest of the book, like an entirely different text by a different author with a different style was added between Jonah 2:1 / 2:2 and 2:10. It would not be the only time such a thing would happen in the Bible—in the NT, the Books of Mark and of John are typically considered to include elements later added from other sources, and in the OT, the especially Books of Genesis and Isaiah have, by some scholars, been assumed to be stitched together from multiple sources. This is not to say that all of these hypotheses about frankensteined Bible-passages are correct (for example, I myself have thoroughly argued against John’s *pericope adulterae* being such a later addition in an earlier thesis), but the point is that it would not be uncommon that one biblical text might consist of different sources.

However, even if Jonah’s prayer in chapter 2 was indeed from a different source, which could explain the seeming inconsistencies, that would not excuse that the resulting text would in itself be so narratively incoherent and that the original audiences would just have accepted that. So, it is still important to find a reading which makes sense of both concepts.

3 It could be argued that maybe the verses about Jonah sinking to the ground tell of what happened before the fish swam along and picked Jonah up from the ground by swallowing him; but that is unlikely, because Jonah’s prayer first recapitulates what happened before by putting it into the past, verses 2:4–7 mostly utilizing Perfect tense, but then verses 2:8–10 transitions into Jonah’s ongoing act of praying to God and what will come of it, describing these events via the Imperfect to put them into the present and future. What is missing between between these past and ongoing/future events is, still, any possible mention of the fish having appeared. For this reason, it seems unlikely to me that the fish did appear and swallow Jonah after the described sinking to the bottom of the sea—this possible interpretation shall thus be dismissed.

interpretations for Jonah’s mysterious fish. However, it is somewhat problematic to just “explain it away” and just opt for an “easy way out” by assuming a metaphor whenever the primary literal reading seems to be somewhat troublesome. There is, of course, a time and place for metaphors, but there should be good reason to make that assumption before calling something “just a metaphor”. This thesis will by no means deny the possible layers of metaphor present in the passage (which shall be discussed on pages 105ff.), but that will not be the primary focus of the thesis.

The primary focus of this thesis shall instead be a different explanation, which will indeed allow for metaphorical connotations and at the same time does not sacrifice a literal reading—it is just a literal reading quite different from the traditional one: It was not one fish swallowing Jonah, but **multiple fish surrounding him**.

Jonah 2:1a, traditional reading: *YHWH appointed A BIG FISH to swallow Jonah.*

Jonah 2:1a, alternative reading: *YHWH gathered MUCH FISH to engulf Jonah.*

What is being proposed here is an *alternative* reading, but NOT a *new* reading per se. What is being argued is that this is actually a very old but mostly forgotten reading.

The author of this thesis is therefore NOT claiming to “know better” than the original ancient audiences—that everybody else misunderstood the story—, but rather that there used to be different strands of interpretation which some groups accepted and others did not.<sup>4</sup> Hints at an occasional awareness of this alternative reading can be gleaned from tradition—the evidence for that will be shown in the chapter on primarily Jewish traditions (pages 87ff.).

On a side-note, the Book of Jonah was (most probably) written between 500–330 B.C. (5<sup>th</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.)<sup>5</sup> depicting events which would have taken place hundreds of years earlier in the reign of the

4 Comparable to the modern situation of having different NT interpretations across Protestantism (e.g.: whether Jesus said that the Eucharist is his literal body, or whether it should be understood differently). Did the Virgin Mary have more sons after Jesus or not? Different traditions can come from different readings of the same passage quite easily, and this can take place very early on: Early Christians had to clarify, for example, that people are not meant to literally castrate themselves, and that a hyperbole uttered by Christ was merely misunderstood by some. That sayings by Christ were misunderstood during his lifetime multiple times is made clear in the texts themselves (c.f. esp. Mark 8:14–21), and St. Peter mentioned that writings by St. Paul were sometimes misinterpreted, and that this happened to other Scriptures (of the Bible) as well: *As well as in all the letters, in which [Paul] speaks about these things, in which some things are difficult to understand (δυσνόητά), which the unlearned and unsteady twist (ἃ οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι στρεβλοῦσιν), as they also do with the other writings/Scriptures, to their (τὴν ἰδίαν (f.)), i.e. the Scriptures’) destruction [through] them (αὐτῶν (m.)), i.e. the unlearned and unsteady).* (2 Peter 3:16) To put St. Peter’s words in a more neutral way: It does not take very long for different readings, different interpretations, different traditions to evolve from the same scriptural source.

5 “[...] philological study has revealed a number of words or phrases which show late Hebrew or Aramaic influence. These factors, along with a consideration of the most likely historical situation, make it probable that the book belongs to the late fifth or early fourth centuries B.C.E.” (Cartledge T.W. (1990): “Jonah” and “Jonah, Book of”, in *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 465)

Hebrew King Jeroboam II (786–746 B.C.).<sup>6</sup> So, if the story told in the Book of Jonah did indeed originate in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. but did not get written down for several hundred years until the 5<sup>th</sup> or even 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., then the oral tradition could, in the meantime and even later on, have led to diverging traditions rather easily.

Jonah is set in .....	786–746 B.C.	(8 <sup>th</sup> c.)	} — (The time around 607 (± 2 years), when Babylon violently filled the Jewish power vacuum, the stepping stone for the Babylonian Exile, then taking ca. 70 years.)
Nineveh fell in .....	612 B.C.	(7 <sup>th</sup> c.)	
King Josiah died in .....	609 B.C.		
Babylon took over in .....	605 B.C.		
Babylonian Exile in .....	597–539 B.C.	(6 <sup>th</sup> c.)	
Jonah was written in .....	500–330 B.C.	(5 <sup>th</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> c.)	

This is NOT to say that the story told in the Book of Jonah must be an accurate depiction of history—probably even far from it: Having been written down in the post-exilic age, post-exilic themes seem to have been projected onto the presumably pre-exilic story and setting.<sup>7</sup>

Another thing, which will be shown towards the end of this thesis, is how the particular understanding of Jonah presented in this thesis relates to the New Testament, and how this alternative reading might even be hinted at in the way the NT echoes the story of Jonah—this will be shown on pages 157ff.).

The main part, however, which this thesis will primarily focus on, and with which the actual thesis (after this introduction) will begin on page 7, are the linguistic word-studies—the core and the essence of this entire thesis—, which will analyze the semantic and grammatical implications of all the Hebrew key-words in Jonah 2:1,2,11 which can show how likely the proposed solution of a piscine plenitude surrounding the drowning prophet really is. Hebrew transliterations in this thesis will follow the example of Jenni-Westermann.<sup>8</sup>

At the end of each key-word’s primary sub-chapter, a conclusion as to how probable the presented semantic implications in favor of the thesis may be percentage-wise will be offered, which will culminate in a conclusion at the end of the word-studies on page 85.

The truly final conclusion and final thoughts—after having looked at all the evidence presented in the entire thesis, including the word-studies, the traditions, the metaphors, and the echoes in the NT—will be given on page 196, at the end of the thesis.

6 c.f. Cartledge T.W. (1990): “Jonah” and “Jonah, Book of”, in *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*. (pp. 464–465)

7 e.g. the reference to once again seeing God’s *holy temple* (היכל קדש) (c.f. Jonah 2:5) could imply a post-exilic mindset: היכל is one of several Akkadian words in Jonah, and the Hebrews were eager to see Jerusalem’s temple erected again after it had been destroyed in 587/586 B.C. That being said, “holy temple” in Jonah 2 is a metaphor for *Heaven* (c.f. Jonah 2:8)—God’s “holy temple” (היכל קדש) can refer to Jerusalem’s temple or the tabernacle (c.f. Ps 79:1), or to *Heaven* as God’s dwelling-place (c.f. Hab 2:20; Mic 1:2; Ps 11:4; maybe Ps 5:7[8], 138:2, according to some commentaries). Furthermore, Jonah easily could have uttered the words in Jonah 2:5 on a literal level during the pre-exilic age, since the utterance is made in the context of Jonah having turned away from God and deciding to return to God, including worship at the temple, which even necessitates that the temple was still intact.

8 c.f. Jenni E., Westermann C. (1997): *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Vol. 1. p. xx.

## 2.: Word Studies

The primary focus of this thesis will be the word studies. Although grammar does play a role here and there, most of these word studies will focus on semantics, i.e. the possible connotations of word meanings. This process will, whenever it is significant, include a look at the semantic connotations of a word in general, across the OT, as well as a closer look at the Book of Jonah, how its author may have used words or stylistic elements in somewhat special ways, and how the here proposed reading's probability compares to that of the traditional reading.

Over the course of these word studies, probability-estimations will be gathered, to determine how likely a word may or may not have a particular meaning. Eventually, these percentages will be added up, to determine what average likelihood there is for the entire hypothesis.

### 2.1.: *fish* sg. vs. *fish* coll. (2:1)

At the very core of this whole thesis is the fish that supposedly swallows Jonah. The common (literal) reading is that there was only one single fish (huge enough to actually swallow Jonah entirely). The alternative reading proposed here will be that there was not only one fish, but multiple fish (not to swallow Jonah, but to surround him).

It might seem bizarre at first, because the Hebrew text clearly uses the singular-form דָּג (dāg) when referring to the fish while describing the swallowing of Jonah in Jonah 2:1 (or Jonah 1:17, as some Bible-translations would have it), and there are clearly marked plural-forms of this word occurring throughout the OT,<sup>9</sup> which could have been used quite easily in Jonah 2:1 if a multitude of fish had been meant. So, one might ask how the passage could possibly be read as being about multiple fish.

The simple answer: Because it is a COLLECTIVE.<sup>10</sup>

Since this chapter of the thesis—the very core of the entire thesis—will deal with the concept of collective terms, it is necessary to offer a clear definition of what is meant by the term “collective”

9 i.e. דָּגִים (dāgîm) in Job 41:7, 1Ki 4:33, Eccl 9:12, 2Ch 33:14, Neh 12:39, Zeph 1:10. Also דָּגֵם (dāgê), much more likely to be used for the multitudes of fish in the sea in Gen 9:2, Num 11:22, Job 12:8, Ezek 38:20, Hos 4:3, Hab 1:14, Ps 8:8, and Zeph 1:3.

10 This larger chapter on the דָּג-collectivity will only show THAT the fish can and should be understood as a collective. To get an explanation as to WHY this is so, see the metaphor-chapters (pages 105–157), especially pages 147f.

here (as well as clarifying what is not meant). More general definitions<sup>11</sup> of *collective* (by Brugmann, Wellmann, Harðarson, Stüber) include:

- A) *Unified pooling of multiple individual things.*<sup>12</sup>
- B) *Grammatical unitary-forms for manyness-contents.*<sup>13</sup>
- C) *Rallying term, in which a multiplicity of singular appearances is seen as a unity.*<sup>14</sup>
- D) *The collective denotes a group, consisting of multiple entities, which is conceptualized as a unity. Grammatically, it may be a singular, but in terms of content it is close to the plural.*<sup>15</sup>

While these definitions are mostly just different ways of phrasing the same idea, peculiar to (B) and (D) is the notion that, although conveying plurality, the collective-word appears in a grammatically singular form and therefore may just look like the regular singular word. This is one possibility, e.g. Gen 6:7, 1Sam 25:29, Is 2:20, Is 43:4 (this last example uses אָדָם 'ādām (collective that looks like a singular) and לְאִמִּים le'ummîm (a clearly marked plural) interchangeably to describe *people*. Another example is Psalm 144:4, where אָדָם ('ādām) is translated as “man” in the KJV, but understood as *man in general* (i.e. people), as is explicated by some modern translations which speak of “people” (NET), “humans” (GW), “they” (NIV).<sup>16</sup> Note the agreement<sup>17</sup> between the verb and the subject in the Hebrew of that last example (Psalm 144:4): The verb is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (דָּמָה dāmâ), so the grammatically singular noun אָדָם ('ādām) is still treated as a grammatical singular, even though though it is expressing a collective plurality (or rather generality). Agreement between the verb and the collective-noun in Hebrew will be further discussed on page 81.

Another grammatical possibility is that a collective word, albeit grammatically most likely being treated as singular, none the less appears as a form marked with specific morphemes which signify the collective as a sort of plurality—e.g. German pl. “Berge” ↔ coll. “Gebirge” (both meaning *mountains*). Degrees of interchangeability between the plural and the collective can vary.<sup>18</sup>

11 c.f. Stüber K. (2012): “Kollektive Verbalabstrakta im Indogermanischen”, in *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft*, 66/1. pp. 120-121.

12 “einheitliche Zusammenfassung von mehreren Einzeldingen”

13 “grammatische Einheitsformen für Vielheitsinhalte” (regarding German)

14 “Sammelbezeichnung, in der eine Mehrzahl von Einzelercheinungen als Einheit betrachtet wird”

15 “Das Kollektivum bezeichnet also eine als Einheit konzipierte Gruppe, die aus mehreren Entitäten besteht. Es ist grammatisch ein Singular, steht aber inhaltlich dem Plural nahe.”

16 Psalm 144:4 (אָדָם לְהַבֵּל דָּמָה 'ādām la-he-bel dāmâ “man is like to vanity” (KJV)) can actually be read as a singular *man* or *person*, but Brown-Driver-Briggs puts this occurrence of אָדָם in Ps 144:4 (and 144:3) under collectives.

17 In Psalm 144:4, both the subject and the object are grammatically in the masculine singular, which makes the fact that the verb agrees with the subject and not the object a little obscure (so one could mistakenly assume that maybe the singular quality of the verb relates to the actually singular object and not the collective noun). A better verse to show the verb agreeing not with the object but with the subject (which is, however, not a collective, so this verse could not have been used as an example above) is Daniel 7:5 “*And behold another beast (feminine), a second, like (feminine) to a bear (masculine) [...]*”. (KJV)

18 c.f. Stüber K. (2012), p. 121.

Both of these grammatical phenomena can be observed in the Hebrew text of Jonah, which will be discussed over the course of this chapter: There is one grammatical singular which CAN and thus MIGHT be a collective (דָּג dāg, Jonah 2:1), and, immediately following, a grammatically marked form of the same root which MUST be a collective (דָּגָה dāgâ, Jonah 2:2).

Regarding how the collective works in the Hebrew language specifically: “Almost any singular noun may be used as a noun of species or of category — the generic use — and then it is equivalent to a plural.”<sup>19</sup> The singular-form דָּג (dāg) can be used as a collective,<sup>20</sup> comparable to *fish* in English (*surrounded by fish(es)*)<sup>21</sup> or *Fisch* in German (*umgeben von Fisch(en)*). Hebrew collectives can appear as “the Singular-nouns themselves, many of which have collective meaning at the same time”.<sup>22</sup> In addition, Hebrew collectives can be marked by “the Feminine-ending (i.e. ה-(-â))”, and such a marked feminine collective-form דָּגָה (dāgâ) appears in the story of Jonah as well.

Collective דָּג (dāg) may tend to imply *fish* as *food*,<sup>23</sup> while the singular female noun דָּגָה (dāgâ) occurs several times as a collective to imply *fish* as *living inhabitants of the sea*.<sup>24</sup> However, Num 11:5 utilizes דָּגָה (dāgâ) for *fish* as *food*, and in QNBMS 4Q287 f3:3 דָּג (dāg) is used as a collective for *living fish in the sea* (see page 21). So, there is no entirely universal rule that דָּג (dāg) or דָּגָה (dāgâ) must mean one or the other, and there is indeed some flexibility as to what sort of collective is being described—thus דָּג (dāg) in Jonah 2:1 could very well be referring to *fish* as a collective of *living fish in the sea*.

While the chapter will argue for the fish being a collective in the grammatical manner described above, one can still inquire further: Why and how is it a collective? The text explicitly speaks of Jonah as being *swallowed* and *vomited out* by the collective fish, and Jonah being in the belly of these collective fish. A multitude of several fish can hardly *swallow* the prophet in one single piece, and *vomit* him out in one single piece afterwards, and neither can a multitude of fish have one literal singular *belly*. The possible connotations of these words will be presented and explained over the course of the following word-studies (see pages 64, 71, and 79), but even without these explanations it can be argued that the collective fish should be read as *a metaphor for the deep sea*

19 Joüon P., Muraoka T. (2018): *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, § 135 “Plurality expressed by the collective singular, the singular of species, etc.”, p. 467.

20 c.f. Exodus 7:18, Exodus 7:21, Deuteronomy 4:18, Ezekiel 47:9, Nehemiah 13:16, Numbers 11:5

21 c.f. Waltke B.K., O’Connor M. (1990): *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, § 7.2.1b, p. 113.

22 Gesenius W. (1848): *Hebräisches Elementarbuch*, § 106:4 “Vom Plural und den Collectivis”, p. 208.

23 OT: Nehemiah 13:16. Mishna: Ter 10:8; Ned 6:3; Kelim 16:1, 24:11; Maksh 6:3; Bek 1:2; Ned 6:4. (See page 19.)

24 c.f. Exodus 7:18, Exodus 7:21, Deuteronomy 4:18, Ezekiel 47:9

in which Jonah is drowning—i.e. *swallowed up* and *vomited out* by the *womb* of deep sea, which is metonymically represented by the fish of which the sea does consists (which, among other connotations, will be discussed at length in the larger chapter on metaphors, see page 105 onward).

Fittingly, another connotation which the term *collective* can carry is “a blurring of the distinctiveness of the individual referents”,<sup>25</sup> and that “collectives are like mass nouns and lack internal structure”.<sup>26</sup> The idea of a collective referring to a “blurring of distinctiveness” into one “mass”—like a *body of water*—which “lacks internal structure”—like a *symbol of chaos*, i.e. *the sea* and its *fish* (see pages 114 and 128)—would indeed make perfect sense in this case.<sup>27</sup>

The collective fish as a symbol for the waters of chaos are strongly associated with *inextricable chaos* and *disorder* (“ungeordnet / unentwirrbar / ineinander verflochten”)—a connotation comparable to *Vorgangskollektiva*,<sup>28</sup> which are a lexicalization of collective verbal abbection (i.e. abstract (de-)verbal nouns, “kollektive Verbalabstrakta”) where a verb *X* is nominalized as *that which does X*,<sup>29</sup> and this would match the possible etymological connections between the word דָּגָא (dāgâ) and *increase* as *that which does multiply/increase* (see p. 22).

So, while the primary goal of this larger chapter for the *word-studies* (pages 7–87) is to argue for how the fish can be seen as a collective in the sense of *fish(es) in general* or *a multitude of fish(es)*, therefore still thinking of the fish as *actual animals* surrounding Jonah, the larger chapter concerning the *metaphors* (pages 105–157) will focus more on how the fish, as a collective of many as one, metonymically stand for one vague but singular entity, namely *the deep sea* in which Jonah is drowning.

Both of these two interpretations of what the collective is meant to convey can apply to Jonah’s fish, and while the different parts of this thesis will focus on either one or the other, neither of the two interpretations would exclude the other whatsoever, since they boil down to the very same idea: That being surrounded by fish, or even to be devoured by them, means to drown in the deep sea—to *feed the fishes*, so to speak (see pages 106ff.).

25 Melchert H.C. (2014): “PIE \*-eh<sub>2</sub> as an ‘individualizing’ Suffix and the Feminine Gender”, in *Studies on the Collective and Feminine in Indo-European from a Diachronic and Typological Perspective*. p. 257 [1].

26 Luraghi S. (2009): “The origin of the feminine gender in PIE”, in *Grammatical Change in Indo-European Languages*. pp. 7–8. Quoted in: Melchert H.C. (2014), p. 257 [1].

27 This statement refers less to the grammatical number which any of the mentioned words (*water*, *sea*, *fish*) would have in Hebrew, and more to the metaphorical connotations which will be discussed on the referenced pages.

28 Ortner L., Müller-Bollhagen E. (2017): *Deutsche Wortbildung 4 – Substantivkomposita*. p. 255.

29 c.f. Stüber (pp. 114–123). This category—“Vorgangskollektiva” or “kollektive Verbalabstrakta”—is discussed in Indo-European languages but is attested outside of that language family as well (e.g. Mongolian *орилоон* *the/a crying/screaming*; the related but slightly different phenomenon of Arabic *Masdars* for abstract (de-)verbal nouns of the sort *the/a multiplying* is common in Semitic languages), which is the point of contact between abstract noun and collective, where abstract nouns can become collectives.

Now, before continuing with the arguments for Jonah’s fish as a collective, it is also important to clarify what the collective fish CANNOT BE: individualizing. The process of *individualization* is a primarily (but not exclusively) Indo-European (IE) phenomenon where the suffix *\*(e)h<sub>2</sub>* could mark either a *set/group* (collective) or *an element belonging to that set/group* (individualizing)—the still massively debated majority opinion among linguists is that *\*(e)h<sub>2</sub>* or *\*(a)h<sub>2</sub>* (with theme vowel) may have evolved to change from an original *collective plural* into the *singular feminine*.<sup>30</sup>

The question does arise: Could this phenomenon possibly apply to Jonah’s explicitly collective fish דָּגָא (dāgā) as well, making it one individual, singular fish after all? If that were so, it could destroy the core of this entire thesis, so the question must be taken seriously. The following paragraphs will “steelman” this position as strongly as possible, before clarifying why it is NOT so.

- Afroasiatic plural-morphemes included *\*-ā-* (for both male and female)<sup>31</sup> as well as *\*-h-*.<sup>32</sup> The Afroasiatic root *\*h-* (meaning *abundance*)<sup>33</sup> evolved into a Proto-Semitic plural-morpheme occurring as an affix to signify *abundance*.<sup>34</sup> These morphemes are the most obvious candidates for what would later evolve into the Hebrew collective-suffix ה־ (*-(ā)h*). Just as this Hebrew suffix ה־ (*-(ā)h*) marks a *collective plural* while grammatically being a *feminine singular*, the same applies to the IE suffix *\*(e)h<sub>2</sub>* or *\*(a)h<sub>2</sub>* for abstract verbal nouns (“Verbalabstrakta”) and collectives.<sup>35</sup> These suffixes in IE and in Hebrew bear a striking resemblance to one another, in both form and meaning, and the similarity may very well go beyond mere superficial coincidence: Since the IE suffix predates Proto-Indo-European<sup>36</sup> (i.e. older than 5000 B.C.), then it would be absolutely feasible that there could be something like a Nostratic (until ca. 8000 B.C.) connection to the Afroasiatic suffixes (since ca. 8000 B.C.),<sup>37</sup> if the Nostratic hypothesis is correct (which may or may not be the case, but is ultimately unessential for this thesis, which is neither meant to endorse nor to

30 c.f. Melchert H.C. (2014), p. 258–272 [12–12].

31 The Afroasiatic feminine marker was *-t*, compare Hebrew *-(o)t*.

32 c.f. Makki E.R. (2019): *New discoveries in Hamito-Semitic case, number and gender*. pp. 7–8, 31.

33 c.f. Makki E.R. (2019), p. 31. Quote: “The morpheme [appears] in connection with the plural ummahātu ‘mothers (of human beings)’ of the singular ummu ‘mother’ and sanahātu ‘years’ of the singular sana-tu, where both plural forms include an un-etymological /-h-/.”

34 The Proto-Semitic plural-morpheme /-h-/ signified *abundance, numerous, many* (as well as *great amount, size, number*) in Classical Arabic and other sister languages, notably Egyptian *h* (i.e. *abundance, superabundance*), and maybe Sumerian *he* (i.e. *abundance*; however, the genetic roots of Sumerian are, as of now, still unclear).

35 c.f. Stüber (pp. 140–141).

36 c.f. Melchert H.C. (2014), p. 258 [12].

37 Assigning dates to Afroasiatic and especially Nostratic (which has not been proven anyway) is highly speculative—the accuracy of the dates shown here is uncertain.

deny the Nostratic hypothesis). If both language-families' suffixes are indeed related to one another, then they might have evolved in similar ways, and since the process of individualization of collectives took place in regards to the IE suffix, a similar process COULD have taken place in regards to the Hebrew suffix.

- This would be especially likely if the two suffixes evolved side by side: The Hebrews inhabited the *Fertile Crescent* (more on that on pp. 30ff.), which was an important bridge-region between the Afroasiatic south and the Indo-European north, with the Hebrews seated right between the two areas. Both Indo-Europeans and Semites share the rather unique ability to digest milk in adulthood, as can be gleaned from language evolution of both speaker-groups<sup>38</sup> (also note that Hebrews considered milk edible and becoming, as Israel was called *the land where milk and honey flow*), which may imply direct genetic as well as cultural exchange and contact (and thereby language-contact) during the very time in which both language-families simultaneously started differentiating (Semitic 3000 B.C., IE 3500 B.C.).<sup>39</sup> Language-contact is, of course, unlikely to create new grammatical elements in a language, but since the probably related morphemes were already present in both language-families and were still sharing form and meaning, some influence on the grammatical morpheme's semantic connotations COULD have happened rather easily.
- Last but not least, the best explanation for the presence of the consonant ה in the written form of the Hebrew collective-suffix is that it has its source in an earlier phoneme pronounced as some sort of *h*-sound, independent of whether or not the ה in the Hebrew collective-suffix was actually being pronounced as such (since the exact pronunciation of Biblical Hebrew cannot be established)<sup>40</sup>—and yet, whatever the pronunciation was, it might offer some hints as well. The laryngeal *h*<sub>2</sub> is speculated to have been a non-sibilant

38 c.f. Garnier R., Sagart L., Sagot B. (2017): “Milk and the Indo-Europeans”, in *Language Dispersal Beyond Farming*, p. 291, 306. Quote: “[...] Proto-Indo-European did not have a specialized root for ‘to milk’ and argue that the IE root *\*h<sub>2</sub>melg-* ‘to milk’ is secondary and post-Anatolian. We take this innovation as an indication of the novelty of animal milking in early Indo-European society.” (p. 291) Also: “[...] there is evidence for a similar lexical renewal in Semitic [i.e. similar to Indo-European languages (Germanic, Celtic, Tocharian, Latin, and especially Greek and Albanian in the ‘highly innovative Balkanic area’)], where the root ‘to milk’ is *√HLB-*, whereas several languages created a new name for ‘milk’ based on *√LBN-* ‘to be white’. [...] Such ‘modern’ designations [i.e. also in the Semitic] point to an innovative name for ‘milk’ as consumed by both infants and adults.” (p. 306)

39 c.f. Holman E.W, Brown C.H., Wichmann S., Müller A., et al. (2011): “Automated Dating of the Worlds Language Families Based on Lexical Similarity”, in *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 52, No. 6. pp. 848, 854, 868, 853.

40 c.f. Perelshtein L. (2008), p. 28. Quote: “[...] This is due to the lack of the ability to establish what BH's exact pronunciation of these words was. It could be either one of these two options: either the last root consonant was pronounced as part of the suffix, or that the suffix ended with a vowel. In MH, however, these consonants are never pronounced as part of the suffix.” This is in reference to verb suffixes, but the same logic applies to the Hebrew collective-suffix ה-.

fricative, i.e. [ħ] (fricative, no voice and no aspiration),<sup>41</sup> which would sound like /x/ or a rough /h/ at the end of a word, comparable to the ה-consonant at the end of Hebrew collective-words like דָּגָה (dāgâ) if that ה was ever being pronounced. If, however, this ה was not being pronounced—so that only the /â/ remains—then that would work just as well and match the IE suffix’s evolution into forms where only the vowel was kept (e.g. Gr. φυγή, Lat. fuga).<sup>42</sup> Since, however, the latter scenario (i.e. only /â/) is the accepted pronunciation nowadays, it would seem more likely that the Hebrew suffix may have evolved in a manner similar to the IE suffix, which COULD have included a process of individualization.

These have been the complex but highly speculative arguments in favor of the possibility that the Hebrew collective-suffix COULD have gone through the same individualization as the IE suffix has done—and here is the simple but rather strong reason why this possibility CANNOT be a valid option:

If individualization had taken place in regards to דָּגָה (dāgâ), this change in meaning could not just have come and gone, it would have had to stick.<sup>43</sup> Of course, this is not an absolute rule—linguistic trends can certainly come and go—, but the phenomenon observed in IE most certainly was more than a mere temporal trend. An isolated occurrence, however, would not even amount to a “trend” and would not have been understood by any audience. Therein lies the problem, because an individualized דָּגָה (dāgâ) in Jonah 2:2 would indeed have been an isolated occurrence. Not only are all occurrences of דָּגָה (dāgâ) within the OT collectives (i.e. not individualized), but also the few occurrences found in later, extra-biblical sources: 4 out of 5 extra-biblical occurrences of דָּגָה (dāgâ) mentioned on pages 19ff. are collectives (Mishna: AvodaZ 2:6,7; Maksh 6:3; Qumran: 1QpHab 6:2)—the one exception in Taan 2:4 being a direct reference to Jonah 2:2,3 and its vocabulary, thus not an independent occurrence. Since NOT A SINGLE ONE of the (independent) occurrences of דָּגָה (dāgâ) examined for this thesis—neither before nor after the one in Jonah 2:2—ever indicates that the word became individualized,<sup>44</sup> it must be concluded that דָּגָה (dāgâ) in Jonah 2:2 cannot be individualized either and thus must, just like all the other occurrences, be a COLLECTIVE.

41 Alternatively, it could have sounded like [ʕ] (voiced fricative, no aspiration)—at the end of a word, this might sound like a liquid or a sonorant consonant (/l, r, m, n/).

42 c.f. Stüber (pp. 137–138).

43 c.f. Tacelli R. (1997): “He’s an Only Child: A bogus Greek argument against Mary’s perpetual virginity is making the rounds”, in *Envoy Magazine*, May/June.

44 Admittedly, the amount of extra-biblical Hebrew literature taken into account in this thesis to offer additional occurrences for the *fish* is not at all exhaustive. There may very well be more ancient occurrences in some other Qumran-MSS currently unavailable to the author. However, even if other occurrences could be produced to prove that דָּגָה (dāgâ) was ever used not as a collective but to refer to a singular individual, these findings would still have to outweigh the rest of the 18 other occurrences discussed in this thesis (14 biblical, not including Jonah 2:2; 4 extra-biblical ones, not including the one Jonah-reference), or at least offer a significant quantitative counter-weight.

Although grammatically marked collectives in Hebrew can often be used to refer to singulative nouns (*nomen unitatis*), the marked collective form דָגִים of דָג stands out as one of those marked collectives which clearly do refer NOT to a singulative fish but an actual collective of fish.<sup>45</sup>

Since it has now been established that the grammatical collective is about individuation and the dissolution thereof, regarding livings things as well as environments, it might be worth mentioning that this blurring of the line between the individuated and the collective (self and other) plays into the core themes of the Jonah-story, which might be the very reason for the author's choice to express the fish's collectivity in such an obscure manner—this shall be explained in more detail on pages 147f., as part of the conclusions to the story's metaphorical layers.

Now that it has been sufficiently explained what is and what is not meant when speaking of Jonah's *fish* as a collective on the upcoming pages, the actual analysis can begin. In the following chapter(s), it shall be analyzed how likely it really is for sg. דָג (dāg) to be utilized as such a collective.

45 c.f. Waltke B.K., O'Connor M. (1990): *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, § 6.4.2d, p. 105. — “Single components of a collective unit often appear with *-at* suffix; such a form is called a *nomen unitatis* or singulative. [...] On the other hand, one finds דָגִים ‘fish (coll.)’ but דָג ‘(a) fish.’”

### 2.1.1.: Biblical דָּג-Collectives (OT & Jonah)

If דָּג (dāg) in Jonah 2:1 is a singular, the best way to find out how likely a collective-connotation may be would usually be a search for that word in the OT. This, however, is a little bit problematic, because, as odd as it may sound, Jonah 2 is the only place in the entire OT where דָּג (dāg) appears in the singular and not in the plural, except for one single other verse: Nehemiah 13:16.

Nehemiah 13:16 uses the singular דָּג (dāg / dā'g (?)) for *fish*, but does so to denote an implicit plural (namely for fish as edible wares to be sold in the markets). This is the only other time in the entire OT where the word for *fish* appears in this non-articular (i.e. anarthrous) singular-form—*basically* the same form as is used in Jonah 2:1. *Basically*, because it must be noted that Neh 13:16 speaks of the fish as דָּג, putting an aleph (א) right in the middle. Usually, the consonants דָּג would form the Hebrew word for *being anxious*, not *fish* (for more on that, see page 117).<sup>46</sup> However, concordances and Bible-translations overall treat this occurrence of דָּג in Neh 13:16 as *fish*, equal with דָּג (dāg but without א, as it is used thrice in the Book of Jonah)—this is corroborated by the Septuagint parallel for Neh 13:16 using ἰχθὺν (*fish*). Therefore, unless further study reveals a substantial difference, the two words דָּג and דָּג shall indeed remain to be considered one and the same for the rest of this thesis.

So far, then, the only other singular occurrence of *fish* throughout the OT is that in Neh 13:16, which happens to be a collective use of the singular—an implicit plural. This comes to show that, equally, the *fish* in Jonah 2:1 and 2:11 COULD be understood as a collective—but SHOULD it be understood that way? Yes, because of Jonah 2:2.

Very peculiarly, Jonah 2:2 does not continue to refer to the fish as דָּג (dāg), but as דָּגָה (dāgâ), which is NEVER used to refer to a singular fish, but ALWAYS for fish as a collective.

Other occurrences of דָּגָה (dāgâ) (with the article, as in Jonah 2:2) can be found in Numbers 11:5<sup>47</sup> as an edible multitude, as well as in Ezekiel 47:9 and Exodus 7:18,21 for the multitudes of fish in the sea and in the Nile. In these latter verses, הַדָּגָה (had-dāgâ) can be understood as *fishkind* (for lack of a better word).

<sup>46</sup> The word's root ד-ג-ג has a middle radical which, in inflected forms, usually disappears or turns into a vowel—the Aleph here in Neh 13:16 may be a representation of that middle radical, but that does not really explain how it came to be. Since Nehemiah is one of the OT's latest books, it could be argued that, in the minds of some northern Jews, a conflation of these two very similar words for *fish* and for *being anxious* had already started to take place (which plays a role in what is discussed in a later chapter on page 117). However, that דָּג would be written differently because of that cannot be observed anywhere, so this remains a bit of an oddity. One explanation which has been proposed (but it might be unlikely) has been that “perhaps the word is here used as the Tyrians pronounced it.” (Parkhurst J. (1807): *An Hebrew and English Lexicon: Without Points*, p. 126.)

<sup>47</sup> Numbers 11:5 has הַדָּגָה (had-dāgâ) not referring to one single fish, but to all the fish which the Israelites got to eat back in Egypt, numbered with other foods, all of which are plural or to be understood as collective.

Although these examples include the article, the fish in these verses are no specific fish but just fish in general, so the presence of an article has no real impact on whether the noun is referring to a particular fish or not—the use of the article is further discussed on page 24.

The only non-articular collective-singular דגה (dāgâ) in the OT appears in Deut 4:18, as כל-דגה (kōl dāgâ), which can only be understood as a collective reference, as *fish* in general, which is further highlighted by the presence of כל (kōl), i.e. *all* (or, in this passage, rather *any kind of*).

This understanding of דגה (dāgâ) as *fishkind*, fish as a collective, makes perfect sense for verses like Ezekiel 47:9, Ex 7:18,21 and Deut 4:18, but not for the traditional reading of Jonah 2:2—at least not as long as Jonah’s fish is thought of as one singular fish. In this regard, the reading of הדגה (had-dāgâ) in Jonah 2:2 as *fishkind*, fish as a collective, would certainly support the idea of Jonah having been surrounded by not just a single fish, but by a multitude.

In fact, the traditional reading of Jonah 2:2 with הדגה (had-dāgâ) as just one singular fish is not only a rather odd exception to the rule and thereby somewhat questionable, but also an exception for which no proper argument can be formulated, except for reliance on the presumption that it must be a singular fish, which would be circular reasoning.

So, the amount of times that דג (dāg) even occurs in the OT is extremely rare, and the Book of Jonah even uses two words with different implications for the fish’s numerus.<sup>48</sup> This leads to complications regarding the statistical evaluation for the probability of Jonah’s fish being plural/collective (as opposed to singular):

Not counting the 3 occurrences of דג (dāg) in the Book of Jonah (as they are the unknown quantity here), there are still 16 occurrences in the rest of the OT—but of these 16, only 1, a single one, is in the singular (Neh 13:16, although with an ם), and this occurrence happens to be an implicitly plural collective. It is really hard to tell how this should be evaluated, because technically, it means that 100% of all singular-occurrences outside of Jonah are indeed a collective-plural, but, obviously, that does not mean a lot when the total amount is n=1.

At the same time, however, ALL occurrences of דגה (dāgâ)<sup>49</sup> outside of Jonah can ONLY mean a collective plural—that is a full 100%—, which of course enormously increases the likelihood that

48 Throughout this thesis, *grammatical number* will generally be referred to as “numerus” (the Latin term for *grammatical number*), in order to enable a clearer distinction between *grammatical number* and any other context in which the word *number* can occur without any connection to *grammatical number* (even though such a distinction may be unusual in English)—the exception being quotations and other works’ titles which may still refer to *grammatical number* as *number*.

49 5 occurrences if only counting those forms ending with -â (except the one Jonah), 14 if counting all possible forms. This, however, only changes the total amount in absolute numbers—the 100% would remain either way.

the other references to *fish* in Jonah (i.e. דג) more or less MUST BE interpreted in such a collective manner.

To put this increase in probability into numbers: Even though 100% (1 occurrence) of all OT-occurrences of דג (dāg) happen to imply a collective, basic reason tells anyone that the singular form would, by default, generally have to refer to the singular—so, there is a fifty-fifty chance that דג (dāg) in Jonah could mean one or the other, and only surrounding evidence like דגה (dāgâ) in Jonah 2:2 (or the other words in 2:1) can truly help in determining whether דג (dāg) in Jonah 2:1 is truly a singular (50%) or a collective (50%), but since דגה (dāgâ) in Jonah 2:2 must mean a collective, דג (dāg) in Jonah 2:1 can only mean that as well. To put it simple: If דג (dāg) could mean one or the other, then collective דגה (dāgâ) shifts the likelihood toward a collective.

But does it shift entirely? While this approach is certainly rather reasonable, it cannot give anyone 100% certainty that 100% probability (of דג here being a collective) were therefore a necessity. So, in order to give this approach the benefit of the doubt, but also keep some healthy doubt as well, the probability for Jonah's דג (dāg) being a collective shall not jump from 50% to a full 100%, but only to 75% (for now) in order to account for the lack of certainty.

There are a few other words in the Book of Jonah which appear in the singular form, even though they denote a plurality of something, mostly for people and for animals:

- |       |  |   |
|-------|--|---|
| 1:5   | איש ('îš)  | <i>everyone</i> (lit. [each] <i>man</i> )                                   |
| 3:4   | יום (yôm)  | (forty) <i>day</i> – compare 3:3 which <small>DOES</small> use ימים (yāmîm) |
| 3:7,8 | האדם והבהמה (ha-'ādām w <sup>e</sup> -hab-b <sup>e</sup> hēmâ) <sup>50</sup> | <i>people and animals</i> (lit. <i>the man and the animal</i> )             |
| 4:11  | אדם [...] ובהמה [...] ( 'ādām [...] ū-b <sup>e</sup> hēmâ)                   | <i>people [...] and animals</i> (lit. <i>man [...] and animal</i> )         |

However, the author knows and uses the plural forms for some of the words listed above:

- |         |                     |                |
|---------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1:8     | עם ('am)            | <i>people</i>  |
| 1:13,16 | האנשים (ha-'ānāšîm) | <i>the men</i> |
| 3:3     | ימים (yāmîm)        | <i>days</i>    |
| 3:5     | אנשי ('anšê)        | <i>people</i>  |

50 The word בהמה (b<sup>e</sup>hēmâ), albeit the singular-form, is commonly used as a collective for *cattle* in general (e.g. Gen 1:24, 2:20, 3:14, 6:7), akin to דגה (dāgâ) for *fish*—in contrast to דגה (dāgâ), however, בהמה (b<sup>e</sup>hēmâ) also occurs in the explicit plural בהמות (b<sup>e</sup>hēmôt) every now and then (e.g. Deut 32:24; Ps 50:10, Ps 73:22; Hab 2:17; Job 40:15 for a singular but mighty animal), so the singular-form בהמה (b<sup>e</sup>hēmâ) still has a slightly stronger connotation of actually being a singular. In fact there even are a few verses where בהמה (b<sup>e</sup>hēmâ) can be read as an actual singular (something which cannot be observed for דגה (dāgâ)), clearly Neh 2:12,14, likely Lev 20:15,16, and possibly Lev 27:9–12. (The form d<sup>e</sup>gat and similar forms are attested, but considered to be grammatically singular collectives.)

So, the author's occasional preference to use singular forms which denote a collective to refer to plural entities, whilst using clearer plural-forms elsewhere in the book, even for those very same entities, may have been a stylistic choice—it looks like the author of the book simply had a certain tendency to do that. This is absolutely legitimate:

“Recent research has explored the question as to what extent the choice of singular or plural with collectives is a free choice of the author, or whether other factors constrain the degree of choice. [...] All researchers agree that it is not possible to find a convincing grammatical explanation for the use of singular and plural in every single case. It is acknowledged that some degree of stylistic choice is involved.”<sup>51</sup>

Thus, a multitude of fish being called both דָּג (dāg, implicit collective) and דָּגָה (dāgâ, explicit collective) might be just another one of those cases where the author has made a stylistic choice. This also increases the likelihood for דָּג (dāg) to indeed be a collective.

Together with the verb מָנָה (mānâ, *appointed/commanded/provided*) in Jonah 2:1 slightly implying plurality for the object in the majority of its applications of מָנָה all throughout the OT (as will be discussed later, see page 69), the author's general above-described tendency to fluctuate between implicit and explicit collective nouns in the rest of the Book of Jonah would raise the already established 75% to a still somewhat arbitrary but rather reasonable 78%.<sup>52</sup>

This, however, would only be the result if the Hebrew Bible alone were to be analyzed, and the probability becomes even higher if other ancient sources are taken into account, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

51 Young I. (2013): “Collectives: Biblical Hebrew”, in: Geoffrey Khan (ed), *Encyclopaedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*. p. 478.

52 Adding 3% is still a low estimate, granting 1% for the here mentioned factor that one of the verbs may imply plurality (as it is the weaker argument—especially since, as true as the verb's tendencies may be, the opposite tendency is attested in Jonah 4—for a more detailed explanation, see page 68), and 2% for the factor that the author fluctuates between implicit and explicit collectives in other places (as it is the stronger argument – the text itself proves that the author did indeed fluctuate).

## 2.1.2.: Extra-biblical דג-Collectives (Mishna / Qumran / Targum Gen 48:16)

Considering the very low number of Sg. דג in the OT outside of Jonah, it is very useful to find the word in extra-biblical ancient sources as well, like the Mishna and the Qumran non-biblical MSS—these writings shall be analyzed on the following pages, to see how likely or unlikely it is in these writings that Sg. דג should be read as a collective.<sup>53</sup>

First, the **Mishna**. The Mishna is a collection of Jewish oral traditions eventually written down after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and although a more or less complete and definitive edition was not established until ca. A.D. 220, the traditions written down in the Mishna partially date to much earlier times. So, the Mishna might be relatively late, but none the less quite relevant.

And relevant it is: 83.33% (10 out of 12) of all Sg. דג in the Mishna are collectives,<sup>54</sup> as presented in the following list (the last three entries of which will get more clarification afterwards).

Ter 10:8	דג טמא	“Impure <b>fish</b> [...]”
Ter 10:8	שכבשו עם דג טהור	“[...] that was pickled with pure <b>fish</b> ”
Ter 10:8	דג טמא צירו אסור [אם יש בו ...]	“[if it contains] impure <b>fish</b> , its brine is forbidden.”
Kelim 16:1	משישופם בעור הדג גמר שלא לשוף	“skin [of] the <b>fish</b> ” = fish-skin
Kelim 24:11	ושלעור הדג טהור מכלום	(compare Kelim 16:1)
Maksh 6:3	ודג המצרי הבא בקופה	“and Egyptian <b>fish</b> that came in a heap” <sup>55</sup>
Ned 6:3	מן המליה שלדג מליה שאֲנִי	“he is only prohibited from salted <b>fish</b> ”
Ned 6:4	דג דגים שאֲנִי טועם אסור בהם	“ <b>fish</b> [or] fishes”
Bek 1:2	דג טמא שבלע דג טהור מותר באכילה	(difficult, explanation on p. 20)
Bek 1:2	וטהור שבלע דג טמא אסור באכילה	(difficult, explanation on p. 20)

This last one—Ned 6:4—might need some explanation. At first glance, דג דגים looks somewhat strange—the singular immediately being followed by the plural of the same word. This is not at all common in ancient Hebrew, and thus somewhat unclear. A word’s repetition (with or without

53 Only the sources available to the author of this thesis are taken into account—this is by no means an exhaustive list.

54 The only time in the Mishna where the “one fish” can only mean singular without a doubt is Betza 2:1. There are also 3 occurrences of דגה (dāgā) in the Mishna (AvodaZ 2:6,7; Maksh 6:3) which are collectives, as usual, and 1 occurrence of דגה where this collective-meaning might be highly disputable (Taan 2:4), but it directly references the Jonah 2:2,3 and utilizes these verses’ vocabulary, and is therefore no independent occurrence. (הוא אומ’ מי שענה את ) יונה ממעי הדגה הוא יענה אתכם — *may he who answered Jonah in the entrails of the fish answer you.*)

55 Here דג (dāg) occurs between pl. דגין (dāgîn) and collective דגה (dāgā) in one single verse, and דג is also listed as one of three kinds of fish which are grammatically all in the singular but carry the clear connotation of a collective. Note that the verb בא (*came*), which belongs to דג (*fish*), is in the singular, even though the *heap/basket(ful)* קופה explicates the fish’s collective plurality—the fish’s explicit collectiveness still allows for the use of a SINGULAR VERB.

copula) would usually belong to the descriptors of plurality<sup>56</sup> (e.g. Ex 17:16 דר דר, Ex 36:4 איש איש), but this would never occur with switching between singular and plural numerus, as is the case here. Should it be read as *fish or fishes*, maybe *a fish or fishes*, or even *a fish among/of fishes*? Translations' interpretations of דג in Ned 6:4 are that דג is a collective—considering the strange grammatical construction this is not necessarily obvious, but it can be reasoned from the context:

- Ned 6:4 is about what can be a general rule (likely using a collective noun) to an individual.
- Ned 6:4, about potentially salted but also other fish, is preceded by Ned 6:3, which talks of collective salted fish (דג מליח). If Ned 6:3 uses fish in the collective sense, then that is most likely the case for Ned 6:4 as well.
- It is explicitly stated not to be about any one particular fish but explicitly about several kinds of fish, namely *big or small, salty or tasteless, raw or cooked*—all these adjectives relating to *fish or fishes* (דג דגים) are explicitly in the plural:

דג דגים ש[א]ני טועם אסור בהם בין גדולים בין קטנים בין מל(י)[ו] חים בין תפלים בין חים בין מבושלים [...]

This could of course be referring to the pl. דגים rather than the sg. דג in the same line, and even one actually singular דג named together with pl. דגים would also equate to plurality anyway; so, although the plural-form of the adjectives might not necessarily prove that sg. דג at the start of the line must be a collective, but it would definitely be a reasonable interpretation.<sup>57</sup>

Altogether, it makes the most sense to understand דג in Ned 6:4 as a collective.

Two other not-so-clear דג-collectives in the Mishna are two out of three occurrences in Bek 1:2.<sup>58</sup>

[...] דג טמא שבלע דג טהור מותר באכילה וטהור שבלע דג טמא אסור באכילה [...]

(coll.)

(coll.)

(sg.)

[If] [an] *unclean fish* swallows [a?] *clean fish*, [the latter] is permitted in food;  
but [if] [a] *clean [fish]* swallows [an?] *unclean fish*, [the latter] is forbidden in food [...]

All three of these דג occurrences here in Bekhorot 1:2 are a little unclear and could either be true Singulars or actual collectives—however, the first דג is likely a Singular, and the fish that are being swallowed are collectives, because one fish swallowing others is still one fish, but the one fish will

56 c.f. Gesenius W. (1848): *Hebräisches Elementarbuch*, § 106:4 “Vom Plural und den Collectivis”, p. 208.

57 Note, it has been shown elsewhere in this thesis that a collective's adjective can but does not have to be in the plural—it may depend on the time, place and author—, but the presence of an adjective in the plural might be the stronger indicator for a collective anyway.

58 If these two were (for the sake of the argument) not at all counted, the estimate would still be 66.67% (8 out of 12). So, in any case, the amount of דג-collectives in the Mishna is clearly above average.

very likely swallow more than only one fish. So, in the sense of singulars with a general meaning, Bek 1:2 probably has two collectives, and one Singular which shall not be counted.<sup>59</sup>

A noteworthy indicator for the possible collective nature of דג in this verse is the immediate context: Although Bek 1:2a speaks of פרה (parâ), which typically means a singular *cow* (but can, in rare cases, be a collective term or work as if it was a plural, as seen in Gen 41:26 שבע פרת (*seven cow(s)*) and a few times in the Mishna<sup>60</sup>), but then Bek 1:2b (preceding דג in Bek 1:2c) speaks of בהמה (b<sup>e</sup>hēmâ), which tends to mean *cattle* in a collective sense. So, considering the immediate context within the very same verse, it is very well possible (albeit not necessary) that דג in Bek 1:2 could be read as a collective.

Next, the **non-biblical Qumran MSS** (QNBMS) shall be examined. These contain one דגת (which is just the expected collective, 1QpHab 6:2) as well as six דג-plurals; what is most relevant for this thesis though are the two דג-singulars. One out of these two, namely 4Q287 f3:3, is a collective:

- 4Q287 f3:3 [ -- ב]המות ועוף ורמש ודג [י]מים וכול °° [ -- ]  
[... c]attle and bird and creeping thing and **fish** [of the] sea and all [...]

This fragment does not give much context around it list of a fragmentary בהמות collective and several singular animals, among them דג, but such a list of animals of all kinds are extremely likely to be understood as collectives. This is further substantiated by כול (kōl, *all/each*) appearing not only here in 4Q287 f3:3 but also in the two verses immediately surrounding it (3:2 and f3:4), which implies that the entirety of all listed animals is being referred to, and this is also the context the verse is embedded in. So, this דג is a collective.

- 4Q200 f5:2 ומרורת הדג בידו ונפוץ בעיניו <sup>61</sup>  
[... and] gall [of] **the fish** in hand and scatter [in eyes]

This occurrence of דג is NOT a collective, because it is a passage from the Book of Tobit, in which there is only one fish, and that fish is clearly singulative. There are, however, other

59 Alternatively, this could be referring to special cases and thus imply a proper singular for all three דג, but fish swallowing fish is by no means rare or special; and what is expressed here is a general rule talking about fish in general, so all three דג could be Collectives—but 11 out of 12 (91.67%) might be too good to be true in support of this thesis. Another indicator to read these occurrences in Bek 1:2 as singulars would be that they utilize verbs which are in the singular too—however, as could be seen in the other Mishnaic example of Maksh 6:3, about *Egyptian fish that came in a heap*, a singular verb still allows for a collective reading, i.e. it not just being one fish (see p. 81).

60 • Shabbat 5:4 discusses general rules concerning pl. התרנגלין (*the chickens*), pl. הזכרין (*the rams*), pl. הרחילין (*the ewes*), but also sg. העגל (*the calf*), sg. המור (*the donkey*), sg. פרה (*cow*); being paired with three explicit plurals, these three singulars (including פרה, *the cow*) here should be considered Collectives.

• Meilah 3:6 speaks of animals in plurals and collectives before giving sg. פרה as a final example, which contextually seems to have an equally collective meaning.

• Parah 1:1 refers to sg. פרה twice in a sense which may or may not be a collective.

• Toharot 3:8 has sg. בפרה ובכלב (*in cow and in dog*) surrounded by pl. תרנוגלים (*chickens*) and pl. כל הבהמה (*all the cattle*), so this occurrence of פרה can be understood as a collective.

61 The words ומרורת and בעיניו are only fragmentarily attested in this verse, but there was an issue with the formatting.

interesting things to be said about the Book of Tobit and what light it may possibly shed on Jonah, which will be further discussed in a separate chapter on pages 99ff.

Note that there is an interesting verb which occurs only once throughout the whole bible, namely the VERB דָּגַגַּ (dāgâ) in Gen 48:16, which may look like the piscine NOUNS דָּג (dāg) and דָּגָה (dāgâ)—but it means *to grow, to multiply, to increase*, in the sense of *spawning* and *becoming numerous*. The verb דָּגַגַּ has been suggested<sup>62</sup> as a possible etymological root for the piscine nouns, but the existence or direction of an etymological connection is neither provable nor particularly relevant; what matters more is that the two so similar words share in form and semantic connotations—ideal for some potential Hebrew word-play about the notions of *fish* and *muchness*. This potential was not lost on the Jewish audience, considering the Aramaic Targum translation of Gen 48:16, which takes some artistic liberties and adds *like the fish of the sea* where in the Hebrew there were no fish to begin with, but only Abraham's boys:

KJV                    *and let them **grow** (ידגוּ yidgū < dāgâ > fish) into a multitude*

Targum                וּכְנוּנֵי יַמָּא יִסְגּוּן

Targum (Eng.) *and may they **increase like the fish of the sea***

This shows that the ancient Jews themselves drew a connection between the VERB דָּגַגַּ and the NOUN דָּג as well, which implies that the two words were understood as being of a comparable nature: *fish* were associated with the act of *spreading in number*. This would imply that *fish* were generally thought of as a *plenitude*, i.e. a COLLECTIVE. This would be likely, considering that fish naturally occur in swarms and that Hebrew fishermen usually would have seen them that way—one might say that *the fish* was by default associated fish *the swarm of fish*. This is yet another another piece of evidence warranting a low 1%-increase in probability that *fish* is likely thought of as a collective.

On a side-note, it should be pointed out that the semantic field of גָּדַל(וּ) (gādôl, *great/big/grow*), another key-word in Jonah 2:1, contains connotations of *grow/increase/multiply* as well (as will be discussed on pages 46 and 57), not unlike verbal דָּגַגַּ<sup>63</sup> with its piscine connotations in the minds of the Jewish audience. A possible implication of this might be that maybe—just maybe—דָּג (dāg) and גָּדַל(וּ) (gādôl) appear side by side in Jonah 2:1 in order to emphasize this shared theme of implicit yet not explicit multiplicity and muchness.

62 c.f. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* and *NAS Exhaustive Concordance* on דָּג.

63 This is NOT to imply a direct connection between גָּדַל(וּ) and דָּגַגַּ—they are completely different words. The similarity between גָּדַל(וּ) and דָּגַגַּ that is being pointed out here does NOT go any further than their semantic fields happening to overlap.

Now the final numbers can be counted, starting with a **summary of sg. דָּג as collectives:**

	(Text)	(Coll.) (Sg.)
Biblical:	OT (minus Jonah)	1 out of 1
Extra-biblical:	Mishna	10 out of 12
	<u>QNBMS</u>	<u>1 out of 2</u>
	(Combined)	12 out of 15 = <b>80.00%</b>

Add to this number (as suggested before) the author's tendency to switch between implicit/explicit Pl.-forms (+2%), דָּג (dāg) by default being associated with plurality by virtue of its likely etymology (+1%), and the 78%-likelihood of מָנָה (mānâ) being followed by a Pl.-object (+1%),<sup>64</sup> and the final result for the likelihood of דָּג being a collective increases to **84.00%**.

The likely reason for the fish-collectivity's obscure formulation can be found on pages 147f.

64 The choice of 1% is ultimately arbitrary; for more on מָנָה and its effect on collective דָּג, see pages 67–69.

### 2.1.3.: ך-Collectives & the Article

Eventually, there is a question to be asked about the fish’s articularity, and whether the fish in Jonah 2 can even be a collective when it is accompanied by an article.

The first time the fish is mentioned in Jonah 2:1, it stands without the article; the second time, however, the fish is accompanied by the article, ך (had-dāg). Also, the ך (la) on ך (lad-dāg) in Jonah 2:11 is a dative-preposition merged with the article, so in both verses the fish is indeed articular. With this in mind, one might argue that ך (dāg) accompanied by the article must imply one singular fish. But does it?

Comparably to Greek and German, a previously mentioned, then non-articular because not yet established noun will likely be accompanied by the article once the same object is mentioned again (as is the case with the fish in Jonah 2), because the Hebrew article is, in its original sense, a demonstrative pronoun (like ὁ, ἡ, τό in Homer). As a direct example, Gesenius refers to Gen 1:3 “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (NOT *a* light—this is about light in general, as opposed to e.g. the more specific great and the small lights in Gen 1:16) and Gen 1:4 “And God saw the light [...]” (albeit light in general, the term has now been established and is therefore articular)—a similar scenario could very well be the case with the fish in Jonah 2. Furthermore, articularity is typical even for collective-nouns when a *Gattungswort* [i.e. a word referring to a kind] is used to describe the totality of the objects named as such (c.f. Gen 13:7, 18:25; Eccl 7:26), and even for words which would be thought of as having the indefinite article in English or German (which would usually be without the article in Hebrew) the article can occur with generally known *Gattungsbegriffen* [words referring to a kind], e.g. the silver, the gold, the cattle, the water (c.f. Gen 13:2).<sup>65</sup> This use is called the generic article, often used with a collective singular, referring not to a particular single thing but a class of things—a class which may be regarded as a unity.<sup>66</sup> So, it is absolutely possible, and even likely, that a word which is used to refer to a collective (for Gesenius a *Gattungswort* or *Gattungsbegriff*) could very well be appear with an article.

Applying all of this to Jonah 2 and its fish, just like the light in Gen 1:3 being introduced as a non-articular *Gattungsbegriff*, and then being referred to again as a now established and thus articular *Gattungsbegriff* (which, in general, is perfectly fine for a collective anyway, according to Gesenius), the fish in Jonah 2:1 can be understood as a *Gattungsbegriff* being introduced as non-articular (God sent *fish*),<sup>67</sup> but then appearing with the article after having been established (*the fish*

65 c.f. Gesenius W. (1848): *Hebräisches Elementarbuch*, § 107 “Gebrauch des Artikels”, p. 211.

66 c.f. Waltke B.K., O’Connor M. (1990): *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, § 13.5.1f, p. 244.

67 These examples are only phrased in English to illustrate how they can work in the Hebrew—it is just pure luck that the English language actually works in ways similar enough to allow for such an illustration in English.

expelled Jonah), whilst still remaining a *Gattungsbegriff*. The article's quality of acting as a demonstrative pronoun (*these fish*) makes this even easier to grasp.

When speaking of the *belly of the fish*, the articular  $\text{הַדָּג}$  in Jonah 2:1 and  $\text{הַדָּגָה}$  in Jonah 2:2 can be explained in multiple ways.

Firstly: According to Gesenius, articular collectives do occur, and this can be seen directly in Jonah 3:7,8  $\text{וְהַבְּהֵמָה וְהָאָדָם}$  (*ha-'ādām w<sup>e</sup>-hab-b<sup>e</sup>hēmâ*), lit. *the man and the animal*, but meaning *people and animals*: Articular  $\text{הָאָדָם}$  (*ha-'ādām*)—comparable to  $\text{הַדָּג}$  (*had-dāg*), a Sg.-noun utilized as a collective—, as well as articular  $\text{הַבְּהֵמָה}$  (*hab-b<sup>e</sup>hēmâ*)—comparable to  $\text{הַדָּגָה}$  (*had-dāgâ*), a collective noun by virtue of its feminine ending.<sup>68</sup> Concerning articular  $\text{הַדָּג}$ -collectives directly,  $\text{הַדָּגָה}$  (*had-dāgâ*) can, e.g., be seen in Num 11:5, Ezekiel 47:9 and Exodus 7:18,21—so, articular  $\text{הַדָּג}$  is indeed attested in the OT and not a problem.

Secondly: When Jonah stays in and prays from *the belly of the fish*, the text says  $\text{בַּמְעֵי הַדָּג}$  in 2:1 and  $\text{מִמְעֵי הַדָּגָה}$  in 2:2, where the Genitive-noun (*the fish*) is articular but the nomen regens (*the belly*) is not. According to Gesenius, the article of the Genitive-noun accounts for the articularity of the entire Genitive-construction (i.e. *the fish-belly*) and really does not seem to say much about whether the Genitive-noun is definite or indefinite, collective or not.<sup>69</sup> So, almost ironically, the non-articular *belly* is most certainly a definite object, whilst the same cannot be said with such certainty about the articular *fish*.

In the same manner, the articular  $\text{הַדָּג}$  (*had-dāg*) does occur in Kelim 16:1 and 24:11, where the  $\text{הַדָּג}$ -occurrences are deemed collectives in this thesis (as stated in the previous chapter); in both of these passages the articular fish appears as the Genitive-object of a Genitive-construction.<sup>70</sup>

The  $\text{הַדָּג}$ -collective in Nah 13:16 as well as the vast majority of extra-biblical  $\text{הַדָּג}$ -collectives presented in the previous chapter (namely all except for the Genitive-constructions) appear without the article. This, however, should be no reason for concern, because in all of those cases the  $\text{הַדָּג}$ -collectives have not yet been established, are mentioned for the very first time, and then... not mentioned ever again. It should be entirely expected that those  $\text{הַדָּג}$ -collectives would most likely be non-articular.

So, in conclusion, the fish's articular nature is not a problem and actually fits the hypothesis.

68 The later verse 4:11 even has non-articular  $\text{אָדָם}$  (*'ādām*) and  $\text{בְּהֵמָה}$  (*b<sup>e</sup>hēmâ*), referring to the same people and the same animals of Nineveh after they have already been established. So, it may be somewhat unexpected but obviously just as possible that they would be introduced with the article, but then be referred to again without one.

69 c.f. Gesenius W. (1848): *Hebräisches Elementarbuch*, § 109, p. 213.

70 The fish in 4Q200 f5:2 is also an articular fish and the Genitive-object of a Genitive-construction, akin to the occurrences in Kelim 16:1 and 24:11, but refers to an actual singular—so, the extra-biblical evidence for articular  $\text{הַדָּג}$ -collectives observed in this thesis is 2 articular collectives vs. 1 articular singular.

## 2.2.: big vs. much (2:1)

The fish is usually called a *great* or *big* one, גדול (gādôl) in Hebrew. At first glance, it may seem clear and obvious that this word can only mean that—a *big* fish. As part of this thesis, however, it will be argued that גדול here implies *muchness*. This does not necessarily mean that the Hebrew word directly means *much*, and it certainly does not mean *many*, but its semantic field is very broad and one of the implied connotations of גדול can indeed be *muchness*. Thus, the Jonah story might NOT actually talk about one *big fish*, but about *much fish*.

*Much fish* is not the best conceivable translation though, and a perfect translation would (as per usual) be impossible. The languages function differently—with גדול (gādôl), what is just one singular word in Hebrew maps onto a whole range of different things English. Using words of one language to speak about the words of another language will always result in semantic difficulties.

Finding an exact translation into one single English word for a semantically broad word in Hebrew like גדול (gādôl) is next to impossible.<sup>71</sup> The best way to encapsulate the general meaning of גדול (gādôl) might be that it is an *expression of grandeur* in any possible sense (e.g. to “express an attitude of awe toward the powerful”),<sup>72</sup> and that it may mean something like *immense* (compare the occasional use of the word *exceeding* in some translations, or German *beträchtlich*, *gewaltig*, *ordentlich*). Of course, in English it would sound very clunky and broken to speak of *immense fish* as referring to a whole lot of fish.

The best way to translate the idea which this thesis is arguing for in regards to גדול—albeit still somewhat clunky—might be that it refers to *an immense mass (of fish)*.

So, even though “much fish” is an imperfect translation, it will henceforth be used for the sake of simplicity—a choice which shall briefly be justified: There can be a gray-area between *much* and *many*,<sup>73</sup> especially when the line between multitude and unity is blurred, as tends to be the case with any collective, as is the case with *fish*. Even more peculiar is the notion that, in a sense, *much* can be considered the intersection between *big* and *many*—not unlike what is being proposed here.<sup>74</sup> Thus,

71 c.f. Waltke B.K., O’Connor M. (1990): *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, § 7.1b (see also c), pp. 111f. — “Words in one language rarely coincide precisely in scope and in content with ‘corresponding’ words in another. The cultural heritage of speakers causes them to perceive reality in a way somewhat different from that of speakers in another culture.”

72 Jenni E., Westermann C. (1997): *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Vol. 1. p. 30.

73 Compare Spanish “mucho”, in which the senses of *many* and *much* are both present.

74 A helpful comparison might be a glass of water: The *big* glass being filled by *many* water-droplets ends up containing *much* water. The water is not “many” (like the droplets of which it is made), neither would the water be called “big” (like the glass that contains the many droplets as one volumetric unit)—rather, the *many* droplets make *much* water, as *much* as the glass is *big*. It is in ca. that sense that the fish in Jonah 2:1 are *much*, rather than *many*.

it makes more sense to think of *much fish* here, NOT *many fish*, as “many” would imply an explicit plural, a focus on the plurality in potential conflict with the grammatical singular used to denote the fish’s collectiveness. Referring to Jonah’s fish as “many fishes” would go against the grammatical singular and thus be unnecessarily confusing for this analysis. Due to the semantic gray-area it can hardly be avoided that the word “many” will pop up here and there in the following chapters, and yet it cannot be stressed enough that the focus lies more on *much*, on *muchness*—and even that should be seen as merely an implicit connotation, rather than an exact translation of meaning.

To speak of “much fish” in the sense of a group of fish may sound a bit odd to the modern English-reader—comparing with “cattle”,<sup>75</sup> it would nowadays be considered odd to speak of “much cattle”, but not so in King James English, where “much cattle” is even attested in Jonah 4:11 (also Gen 30:42, Ex 12:38, Deut 3:19, Josh 22:8, 2Chr 26:10), as well as “much cattle” appearing in the old idiom “much cattle, much care”; in German it would still be “viel Vieh” (*much cattle*) and NOT “viele Vieh” (*many cattle*). So in that sense, it should not be too alienating to speak of “much fish” in order to better convey the semantic nuance.

Jonah 4:11, the very last line in the entire Book of Jonah, might be an important key-verse on this matter, even though its Hebrew text uses not גדול (gādôl) but רבה (rabbâ), which primarily means *many* or *much* but rarely *big* (although it can). Even though there is a semantic overlap between רב (rab) and גדול (gādôl) (see page 57; a possible connection between the two words’ etymological histories will be mentioned on pages 46f.), רב would be the better fit for calling the fish in Jonah 2:1 not only *much* but even *many*—this could be taken as an argument against the hypothesis of Jonah 2:1 referring to *much fish*, since the author clearly was aware of another word that would have been more fitting to refer to this piscine plenitude, BUT aside from the fact that the author was prone to a style of alternation between explicit and implicit pluralities (as has been established on page 17), Joüon-Muraoka has an interesting observation to make when discussing different kinds of collectives, namely: “See [Jonah] 4:11 בהמה רבה, which certainly does not mean ‘a great beast.’”<sup>76</sup> (This observation might even play a key role in understanding Jonah’s themes and how it relates to the fish’s obscurely formulated collectivity, see pages 147f.)

The fact that such a (hypothetical) reading for Jonah 4:11 can be observed even by experts, but has to be clarified not to be the case, subtly but strongly implies that these two very last words of the Book of Jonah technically have a certain amount of ambiguity concerning the grammatical

75 The “cattle”-comparison is not really relevant to the linguistic analysis of גדול (gādôl), but it may be a useful tool to prepare the reader’s mind for understanding that “much fish” is a legitimate semantic concept.

76 Joüon P., Muraoka T. (2018): *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, § 135 “Plurality expressed by the collective singular, the singular of species, etc.”, p. 467.

numerus, i.e. one *great animal* vs. *many animals*, as if these closing words of the book were directly hinting at the very same possibility for the *great fish*, allowing for the reading *much fish*.

While Strong's dictionary explicitly lists *much* as one of the possible connotations of גדול, other dictionaries may exclude this connotation more strictly—like *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, according to which גדול (or more specifically the root גדל) “never means the size in number” before saying a little more vaguely that “also in connection to a collective word, גדל primarily does not point to the Vielzahl,<sup>77</sup> but to the size and measure of the unit imagined as closed.”<sup>78</sup> Although this definition might at first seem to contradict what is proposed here—namely that גדול in Jonah 2:1 should be read as referring to the *muchness* of the fish—, two points stand out:

- The definition given above says that, when applied to a collective, גדל/גדול PRIMARILY does not denote Vielzahl—the subtle implication being that Vielzahl can indeed be denoted SECONDARILY. So, the connotation of *muchness* is not actually excluded entirely if גדל/גדול is used in connection with collective words, even if it is just a *secondary* connotation.
- The second point is that rather than referring to the collective's Vielzahl, i.e. *plurality* (among others meanings), גדל/גדול, if used with a collective, denotes how the collective's Vielzahl or plurality is “imagined as a closed unit” of some “size and measure”.

In light of the “collective”-definitions given on page 8, this fits well: In Jonah 2:1, the collective fish are (as has been established in the preceding chapters) rendered via the grammatical Singular, as if the multitude of fish were imagined as a singular closed unit of some size and measure—and it makes sense to imagine a swarm or a school of fish as a unit, which suits the description given in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*.

So, even the definition of גדול according to the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* reinforces the previously suggested translation of גדול as *an immense mass (of fish)*. For the sake of simplicity, however, this thesis will continue to opt for the expressions *much* and *muchness*—which can be argued to just be a simpler and more common way to refer to an *immense mass* anyway.

In this bigger chapter of the thesis, it shall be shown how surprisingly likely it might be for גדול (gādôl) to refer a complex greatness which implies *muchness*, rather than simply meaning *big/great*—also in regards to the fish in Jonah 2:1.

77 i.e. *multiplicity, plurality, plenitude, great number*, lit. *many-number(edness)*.

78 Botterweck G.J. (Ed.), Ringgren H. (Ed.) (1973): *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*.

“[...] meint *gdl* nie die Größe an Zahl, sondern immer die Größe der Dimension und des Maßes. Auch in Verbindung mit einem Kollektivbegriff [...] hat *gdl* primär nicht die Vielzahl, sondern die Größe und das Ausmaß der geschlossen vorgestellten Einheit im Blick.”

### 2.2.1.: גדול in the Light of Etymology & Language Contact

Etymology can be a flawed approach, IF it is used as an *etymological fallacy*—the simple and obviously wrong approach would be to claim that *X used to mean Y in the past, so X must still be understood as Y in the present*. This is NOT exactly what I am going to claim here.

Instead, the goal of this chapter is to present that not only does the etymological root of גדול (gādôl) indeed have the meaning *big* AND *much/many*, but that other Semitic and Non-Semitic languages of the Afroasiatic language family surrounding and interacting with the Hebrew-speakers still retained this meaning *much/many* in multiple ways, and that these historical circumstances could explain how a subtle Hebrew awareness of this *much/many*-connotation for גדול (gādôl) could have been kept alive—be it through trade relations or the diaspora of the Babylonian Exile.

In contact linguistics, it is universally understood that language contact (i.e. exchange between peoples of different languages and how it can affect their languages) very often results in the transfer of linguistic features, among them *semantic transfer* (*Bedeutungsübernahme* in German), and one of the potential effects can be *Bedeutungserweiterung*<sup>79</sup>—the closest (but not necessarily exact) English translation being *semantic widening*, according to Bloomfield's typology.<sup>80</sup> Utilizing that typology, it could be described that after a semantic *narrowing* has occurred in the different evolutionary branches of a language-family, language contact can lead to a semantic *widening* by picking up these differentiated connotations and incorporating them into one's own language.

One contemporary example would be how the word “to realize” has equivalents in German (“realisieren”) and Italian (“realizzare”), where the word's mean used to be restricted to *make something real*; the English meaning *begin to to understand* never used to be part of the word's semantic field in German or Italian up until a few years ago, when increased language contact with English started to widen the semantic field, and Germans and Italians started to incorporate the English meaning into their own language usage. The speakers' recognition of the words' etymological relatedness increases the likelihood for such a phenomenon to occur.<sup>81</sup>

For this case to be made in regards to the semantic field of Hebrew גדול (gādôl), it must first be proven (in the following chapter) that Hebrew (language) contact with Arabia and Africa did indeed occur, before the actual etymological arguments can be discussed (see page 39).

79 Riehl C.M. (2009): *Sprachkontaktforschung. Eine Einführung*. pp. 97–98.

80 Bloomfield L. (1933): *Language*.

81 Riehl C.M. (2009): *Sprachkontaktforschung. Eine Einführung*. pp. 97–98. An example given in this source are German-speakers living in Namibia, whose German vocabulary is prone to *Bedeutungserweiterung* (*semantic widening*) due to language contact with Afrikaans, and both of these languages are Germanic in nature.

### 2.2.1.1.: Hebrew (Language) Contact

Language contact will not really be addressed all that much in this chapter. A clear indicator for the Book of Jonah having been influenced by language contact might be the fact that the book has a few Akkadian loanwords (e.g. 2:5 היכל *hekal temple*, 1:6 רב *rab captain/chief*). This chapter, however, is mostly about establishing evidence that there was CONTACT between the Hebrews and both Africans and Arabs. The possible implications which LANGUAGE CONTACT might have for interpreting גדול (gādôl) will be addressed in the next chapter on etymological developments.

The fact that Ethiopian, Egyptian, and Arabic all are Semitic languages would, in and of itself, be insufficient evidence for contact and language contact, but at least it can say something about relatedness of languages, which, in turn, may suggest an awareness for connectedness to the speakers of those languages.

From a purely biblical standpoint, the traditions passed down in the OT clearly gave the Hebrews an awareness of being connected to many tribes of the Arabs and Africans, since they shared the same Abrahamic heritage—via two wives which may very well have been of Kushite/Ethiopian descent (i.e. כּוּשִׁי)<sup>82</sup>, Hagar<sup>83</sup> and Keturah,<sup>84</sup> whose sons were sent *eastward, to the east country* (Gen 25:6), which Josephus interprets as follows: “Abraham contrived to settle them in colonies; and they took possession of Troglodytis [i.e. ‘the shores of the Red Sea, both on the African and Arabian sides’]<sup>85</sup> and the country of Arabia Felix, as far as it reaches to the Red Sea.”<sup>86</sup> Josephus even thought that the continent of Africa was named after Keturah’s descendant Epher.<sup>87</sup> All of this comes to show that in ancient Hebrew/Jewish tradition, there was a very vivid

82 The OT refers to כּוּשׁ (kûš) Kush/Ethiopia and כּוּשִׁי (kûšiy) Kushite/Ethiopian (both terms occur ca. 57 times, mostly in the Prophets and in the History Books 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Chronicles). Further examples for כּוּשִׁי people in the OT are Zerah (c.f. 2Chr 14:9) and Ebed-Melech (c.f. Jer 38:7,10,12; 39:16).

83 c.f. Adamo D.T. & Eghwubare E.F. (2005): “The African wife of Abraham”, in *OTE* 18/3 (2005), pp. 455–471.

84 Keturah’s ethnicity is never clearly stated, but her grandsons Sheba and Dedan were descendants of [the tribe of] Kush, i.e. כּוּשִׁי (c.f. Gen 25:1-3, Gen 10:7)—thus, Keturah MAY have been a כּוּשִׁי, but in any case, some of her and Abraham’s descendants WERE כּוּשִׁי.

85 Hayward C.T.R. (1995): *Saint Jerome’s Hebrew Questions on Genesis. Translated with an Introduction and Commentary*. p. 189.

86 Josephus (A.D. 93): *Antiquities*, 1.15.1.

87 c.f. *ibid.*; Epher, a descendant through Keturah’s son Midian who settled in the Arabic region of Midian, where people lived as cave-dwellers—*troglydytae*, as Josephus would have put it. Josephus claimed that at some point the tribe of Epher (of Midian descent, i.e. cave-dwellers), invaded Libya and thus gave the continent of Africa its name (*Epher*, a cave-dweller > *Africa*). Josephus may of course have erred on this in his *Antiquities*—as even the smartest people of the *Antiquities* were prone to do when entertaining etymological ideas—however, modern linguists have started to entertain a very similar idea, namely that the name of the African continent might be derived from the Berber word *ifri* for cave (*ifri*, a cave to dwell in > *Africa*). (c.f. Norris, H. (1982). François Decret and M’hamed Fantar: *L’Afrique du Nord dans l’antiquité: Des origines au ve siècle*. 391 pp. Paris: Payot, 1981. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 45(3), 632-633.)

awareness of connectedness between the ancient Hebrews and the peoples of both Africa and Arabia.<sup>88</sup>

Since these tribes around the Red Sea were seen as having evolutionarily having branched off from Abraham, and Abraham's descendants had not yet entered the scene until after the linguistic confusion (c.f. Gen 11), the Jews could hardly have attributed linguistic differences between their own tongue and those of the other Abrahamic tribes entirely to the Babel incident itself. That the Hebrews were very well aware of language change just being a natural side-effect of tribal intermarriage is attested in Nehemiah 13:24, documenting Jewish language contamination<sup>89</sup> around 432 B.C., which falls into the time-frame in which Jonah was written (500–330 B.C.).

Now that the biblical and Jewish traditions have been looked at, the historical evidence for relations of trade and other kinds of exchange shall be briefly examined.

If anyone wished to cross the Red Sea, they could do so by boat or by divine intervention and part the Sea, but anyone from Africa or Arabia trying to get to the other side by foot would have had to travel across the Sinai Peninsula and through the southern parts of the Davidic Kingdom.<sup>90</sup>

However, Arabs and Africans did not only pass through the southern parts: As a matter of fact, the desert areas in the East were so inhospitable that the only viable path for anyone trying to travel from Arab or Africa to Mesopotamia or elsewhere in the North on the land-way led right through the East Mediterranean coastal regions, also known as the south-western part of the Fertile Crescent. Thus, there were several major routes and trade-routes leading through ancient Israel:

- The *Via Maris*<sup>91</sup>: Memphis → Gaza → Dor → Hazor → Damascus.
- The *King's Highway*<sup>92</sup>: Memphis → Aila / Elath → Damascus.
- The *Central Ridge Route / Way to Shur*: Memphis → Shur Desert → Jerusalem.
- The *Incense Road*<sup>93</sup>: Southern Arabia → (bifurcation) Gaza / Damascus.

The Davidic Kingdom was indeed an important bridge-region for the multiple trade-routes from the Arabia and Africa—the latter of which also includes trade from Ethiopia, since the ancient Kingdom of Kush (modern-day Ethiopia and Sudan) was one of the most important centers of trade

88 Also, Moses' wife Zipporah was a כּוּשִׁי (c.f. Ex 2:21, Num 12:1), but she and their sons Gershom and Eliezer went back to Ethiopia with no interest in following the Torah. (c.f. Exodus 18; Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 11)

89 "Language contamination" may be a negative word, but Nehemiah דּוּד express his utter disgust and anger about it.

90 Even at a later time, during the eras of the Divided Kingdom (i.e. 933–722 B.C. and 722–606 B.C.), where the kingdom did not stretch to the Red Sea, it would have been reasonable to expect at least some Hebrew settlers.

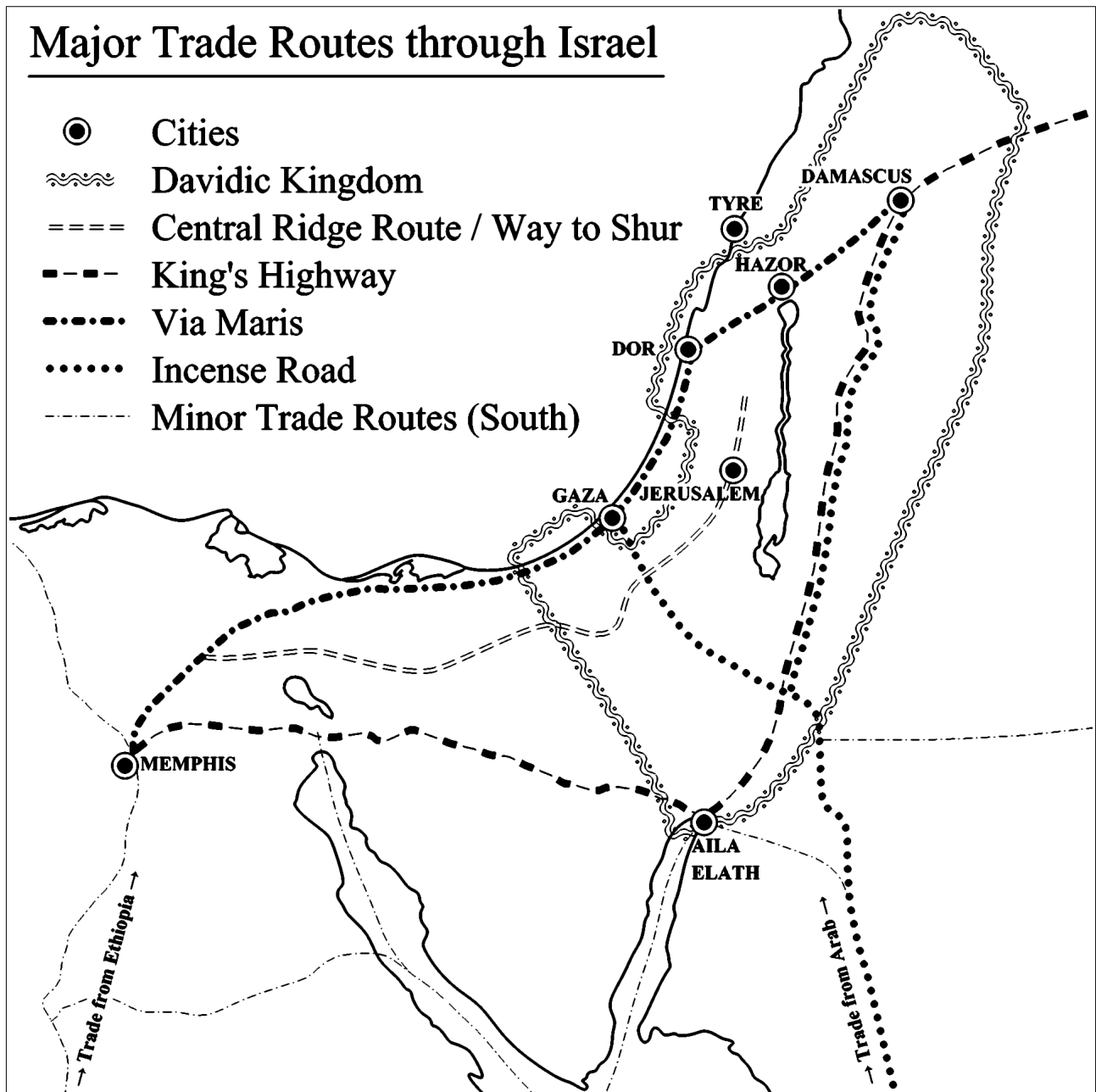
91 c.f. Is 9:1 LXX: Heb. דֶּרֶךְ הַיָּם (derek hay-yām) > Gr. ὁδὸν θαλάσσης > Lat. via maris. (Whether Isaiah had this particular road in mind is debated, but the name *Via Maris* has been lifted from this verse)

92 c.f. Num 20:17, 21:22; possibly Gen 14. The King's Highway was probably used by Moses during the Exodus.

93 The *Incense Road* could branch off to either Gaza or Damascus.

around the Red Sea (which includes Egypt, Arabia, and ultimately the Davidic Kingdom), using the usual trade-routes.<sup>94</sup> All of this means that the Hebrews had lively exchange and trading-relations with—i.e. (language) contact—with Ethiopians and Arabs.

Below is a map,<sup>95</sup> to better illustrate how all these trade-routes, connected to Ethiopia and Arabia, lead through the Hebrew-speakers' area, which is here, as an approximation, roughly marked by the borders of the original Davidic Kingdom:



94 c.f. Caryl-Sue, Evers J. (2018): “The Kingdoms of Kush”, for the *National Geographic Society*.

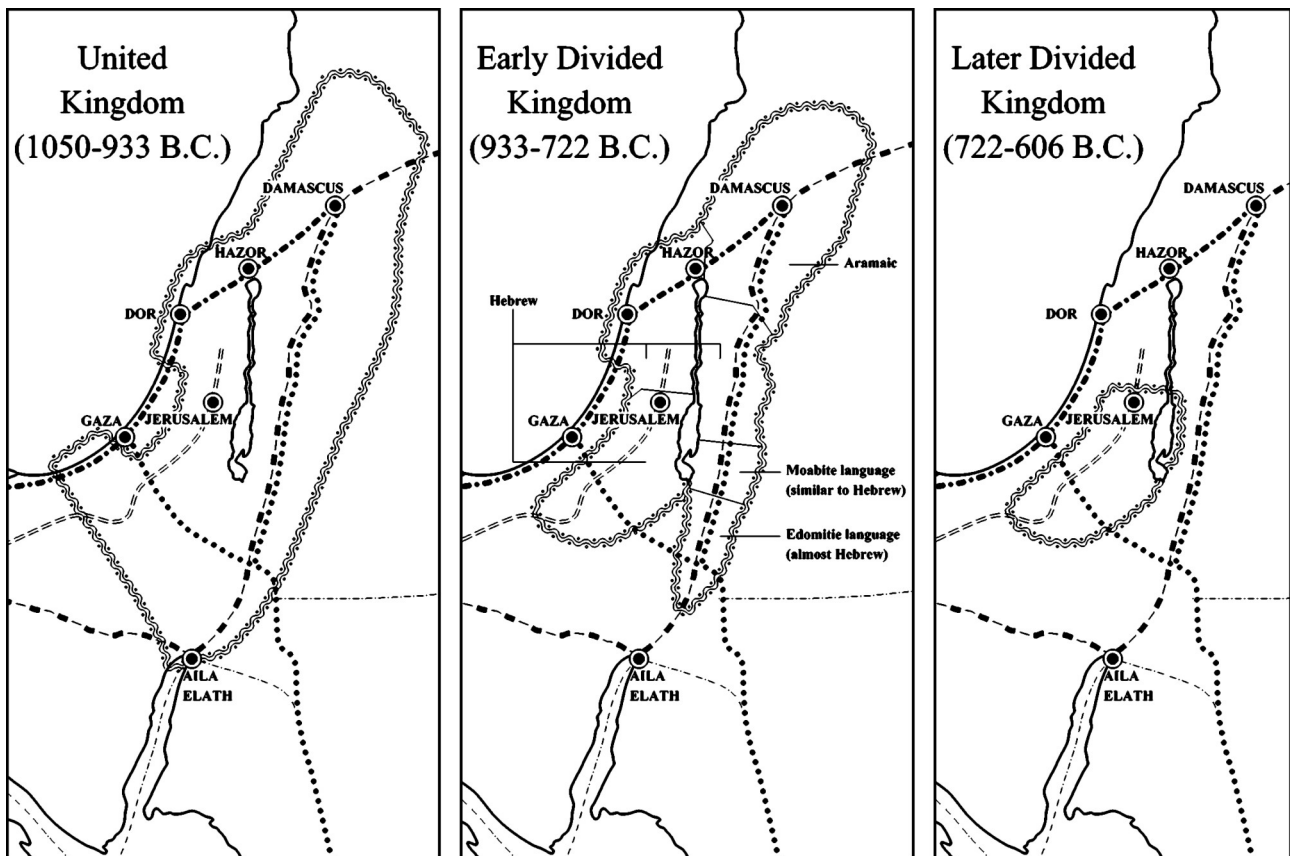
95 This map, with its borders, city locations, and routes, is roughly based on how the area is rendered in the software *Bible Mapper 3.0*, and has been reconstructed in *Blender 2.79*. This is by no means a complete map of routes in the area, be they for trade or other purposes: Further minor trade-routes and branches leading away (thus distracting) from the here discussed area have been ignored for this map, especially towards the north beyond the borders of the Davidic Kingdom, as well as the trade-routes across the Mediterranean Sea.

These trade-routes used to connect the Davidic Kingdom to Africa and Arabia, so traders and other kinds of people from both Africa and Arabia could be expected to travel through, along these routes—compare Ezekiel 27:21–22 (586 B.C.): *Arabia and merchants of Sheba and Raamah*, in Africa, used to have lively trade-relations with Tyre, the most direct way to which would have led through Israel. In 2Chr 9:1 and 1Ki 10:2 it is written that the Ethiopian (or Arabic, this is unclear) Queen of Sheba undertook a journey to Jerusalem to meet Solomon *together with caravans of spice and gold*, which could be read as a reference to her using the *Incense Road* (which is by no means conclusive). In the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C., the tribes of the Fertile Crescent fought about control over the *Incense Road*,<sup>96</sup> so it must have been very well established by then as well as later on.

Of course, the Davidic Kingdom had already shrunk immensely when tradition of the story of Jonah began, and the kingdom kept shrinking to the point of destruction—however, the borders of the Davidic Kingdom can be seen as representative for the rough area WITHIN which Hebrew-speakers lived (even if that area was not always filled entirely with Hebrew-speakers), because the vanishing of political borders in and of itself does not mean that the Hebrew speaking population just suddenly vanished with its borders... except in the case of the Exiles.

To be, therefore, more precise: For the duration of the United Kingdom (ca. 1050–933 B.C.), the borders shown on the map above would definitely have been the area where Hebrew-speakers lived; during the Early Divided Kingdom (ca. 933–722 B.C.), the borders had shrunk a bit, especially towards the South, but the area between the old and the new borders would still have had many Hebrew-speakers, and the trade-routes would still have led directly through the kingdom; it was during the Later Divided Kingdom (ca. 722–606 B.C.) where things get a bit more dire, because the Assyrians had started to take the northern Israelites captive and deported them out of Israel, largely replacing their population in the area with gentiles. Only Judah remained, Hebrew-speakers would have been in and around that area; the trade-routes *Via Maris* and *King's Highway* did not lead through Judah but instead passed Judah's borders left and right (where the presence of some Hebrew-speakers would still have been expected), while the *Incense Road* and the *Central Ridge Route* led straight through Judah. Therefore, during the time of the Later Divided Kingdom, trade-relations may have been slightly weakened, but still available (until Judah fell in 586 B.C.), since the Hebrew-speakers of that time were not strictly confined to the boundaries of Judah, but could be expected rather in and around these boundaries.

96 c.f. Edwards I.E.S., et al. (1969): *The Cambridge Ancient History*. pp. 329–330.



So, it should be fairly obvious that the Hebrews got into contact (and thus language contact) with other people located around the Red Sea, i.e. Arabs and Ethiopians, mainly through trade-relations.

However, when it comes to contact with Ethiopians in particular, not everyone may agree. For example, *Smith's Bible Dictionary* (1901) claims in its entry on *Ethiopia*: “The Hebrews do not appear to have had much practical acquaintance with Ethiopia itself, though the Ethiopians were well known to them through their intercourse with Egypt.” But to what degree does contact with Egypt imply contact with Ethiopians?

For a brief period of time, namely 745–664 B.C., the Kushites reigned over Egypt.<sup>97</sup> During that time-frame, all exchange and trade-relations between Hebrews and Egypt would have been more or less synonymous with Hebrews having such relations with Kushites, i.e. Ethiopians.

Did the Hebrews have positive relations with the Egypt during the time-frame of 745–664 B.C.? Yes. Around 967 B.C., King *Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter* (1 Kings 3:1); in the years 591–586 B.C., leading up to the destruction of Judah, the kings of Judah allied themselves with Egypt (c.f. 2 Kings 24–25; Jer 37:5), and Judah eventually found refuge in Egypt (2 Kings 25:26; c.f. Jer 43:2–7). So, from 967–586 B.C. (and the

<sup>97</sup> c.f. Caryl-Sue, Evers J. (2018): “The Kingdoms of Kush”, for the *National Geographic Society*.

here discussed 745–664 B.C. occurred during that time-frame) the Hebrews had positive relations with Egypt before and after the Kushite reign of Egypt.<sup>98</sup>

Concerning relations during that time-frame of 745–664 B.C., the Kushite pharaohs focused on violent expansion towards the Near East,<sup>99</sup> which COULD have given the ancient Israelites reason to worry that Egypt might be a dangerous imperial force that COULD swallow them up just as well, and Isaiah's *prophecies against Egypt and Kush* (c.f. Is 18–20), prophesied around 720 B.C., certainly do not evoke much positivity. HOWEVER in spite of Isaiah's (probably rather personal) stance against them due to Egypt's initial inaction—they being an *utterly useless do-nothing* (c.f. Is 30:7, as the NIV so nicely puts it)—and Kush being *an aggressive nation of strange speech* (Isaiah 18:2,7), Isaiah's sayings show that by 725 B.C. (to when these his prophecies can be dated) many Jews had already *put their trust* (or *expectation*) *in Kush and their hope* (or *boat, glory*) *in Egypt* (Is 20:5), i.e. they had already started to find allies in Egypt. By that time—725 B.C.—the alliance with Egypt had already been achieved, i.e. *their boast or glory*), but the alliance with Kush had not yet been achieved and was still *in spe* (i.e. *their expectation*).<sup>100</sup> In fewer words: Efforts for good relations with Egypt and Kush were made by the Jews around 725 B.C., and Isaiah—albeit not in the friendliest manner—even highlights how Hebrew-speakers perceived the tongue of the Kushites as rather strange (i.e. language contact and an awareness of linguistic peculiarities).

These questions of timing and language contact bring up another question, namely when the Book of Jonah was written—which would be between 500–330 B.C.—, but there is also a subtler question: When did the oral tradition of the story of Jonah begin? The Book of Jonah does not mention Nineveh's fall, which may imply that the story's oral tradition started before Nineveh's fall in 612 B.C. (even if it was only much later that it got written down, i.e. ca. 500–330 B.C.)

Assuming the story of Jonah started being told orally right after the time-frame in which it could have happened, i.e. after 746 B.C., and was told orally before the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C., then the primary stage of the oral tradition (i.e. 745–613 B.C.) likely would have happened during the rough century in which Egypt was reigned by the Kushites (i.e. 745–664 B.C.), overlapping with the time of the Later Divided Kingdom (i.e. 722–606 B.C.).

98 Granted, the time of the Kushite reign of Egypt overlaps with the time of the Later Divided Kingdom, during which trade-relations may have been slightly weakened because some of the major routes were not directly connected to Judah, but what should compensate for that is the afore-mentioned fact that the Kushites were one of the most active centers of trade around the Red Sea.

99 c.f. Caryl-Sue, Evers J. (2018): "The Kingdoms of Kush", for the *National Geographic Society*.

100c.f. Jamieson R., Fausset A.R., Brown D. (1882): *A Commentary, Critical, Practical, and Explanatory on the Old and New Testaments*, on Isaiah 20:5.

In that case, it would be quite plausible that the story told in the Book of Jonah could have developed during a time where contact and thus also language contact with Kushites, i.e. Ethiopians, was much stronger than it ever was before or after.

Stage two<sup>101</sup> of the oral tradition (612–500 B.C.) as well as the writing-down of the Book of Jonah (500–330 B.C.) would then have started around the same time as the Babylonian Exile—during a time when the Hebrews were scattered in the diaspora, meaning a lot of language contact: As is recorded in 2 Kings 25:26 and Jer 43:2–7, many Jews were able to flee Babylonian captivity, finding refuge in Egypt. In the decades and centuries to follow, many Jews started to leave Egypt and settle further down in the South—leading to Jewish diaspora in Nubia and Ethiopia in Africa (i.e. the Ethiopian Jews), and Yemen in Southern Arabia (i.e. the Temanim):

- The origin of the Jews in Yemen is not known (as of now), but there are several theories—one of them being that they Jews migrated to Yemen in multiple waves between the Assyrian and the Babylonian Exile (722–586 B.C.).<sup>102</sup>
- The African diaspora is evidenced by the Jewish temple<sup>103</sup> and settlement at the southern Egyptian border of Elephantine/Aswan, was built by Jewish mercenaries sometime before Egypt fell at the hands of Babylon in 605 B.C., since the *Petition to Bagoas* Elephantine Papyri (written in 407 B.C., in Aramaic) claims that “our forefathers built this temple in the fortress of Elephantine back in the days of the kingdom of Egypt,” i.e. pre 605 B.C.<sup>104</sup> The Jewish mercenaries who lived in this settlement have, at some point, allied themselves with the Persians, and once their Persian allies got defeated by Egypt in ca. 400 B.C., it is very likely that the Jews had to flee the region in order not to be punished as traitors for their alliance with the Persian rulers. Their flight from the Egyptian armies, coming from the north, would most likely have led them south, to Ethiopia,<sup>105</sup> where they might have become the people who are still known today as the Ethiopian Jews.

So far, only relations to Arabia and Ethiopia have been discussed in this chapter. In preparation for the next chapter, it will be important to also establish whatever contact, and language contact, the

101It is not really essential to this thesis whether or not there were separate stages in the oral tradition.

102Zadok M. (1967): *History and Customs of the Jews in the Yemen* [Hebrew]. p. 18

103This temple may or may not be referenced in Isaiah 19:19.

104Cowley A. (1923): *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*; Ginsberg H.L., in Pritchard J.B., ANET, p. 492.

105c.f. Rosenberg S.G. (2013): “Was there a Jewish temple in ancient Egypt?”, for *The Jerusalem Post*. (An online-article marked as an “opinion piece” might not seem like a great academic source, but its author Stephen Gabriel Rosenberg is credited as a Senior Fellow at the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem.)

Hebrews may have had contact with the speakers of other African language groups, namely Chadic and Berber. Even though these speakers' regions were located much farther away (which was already the case in the first millennium B.C.), they might nonetheless have been in at least some contact with the ancient Israelites, be it through trade or through migration:

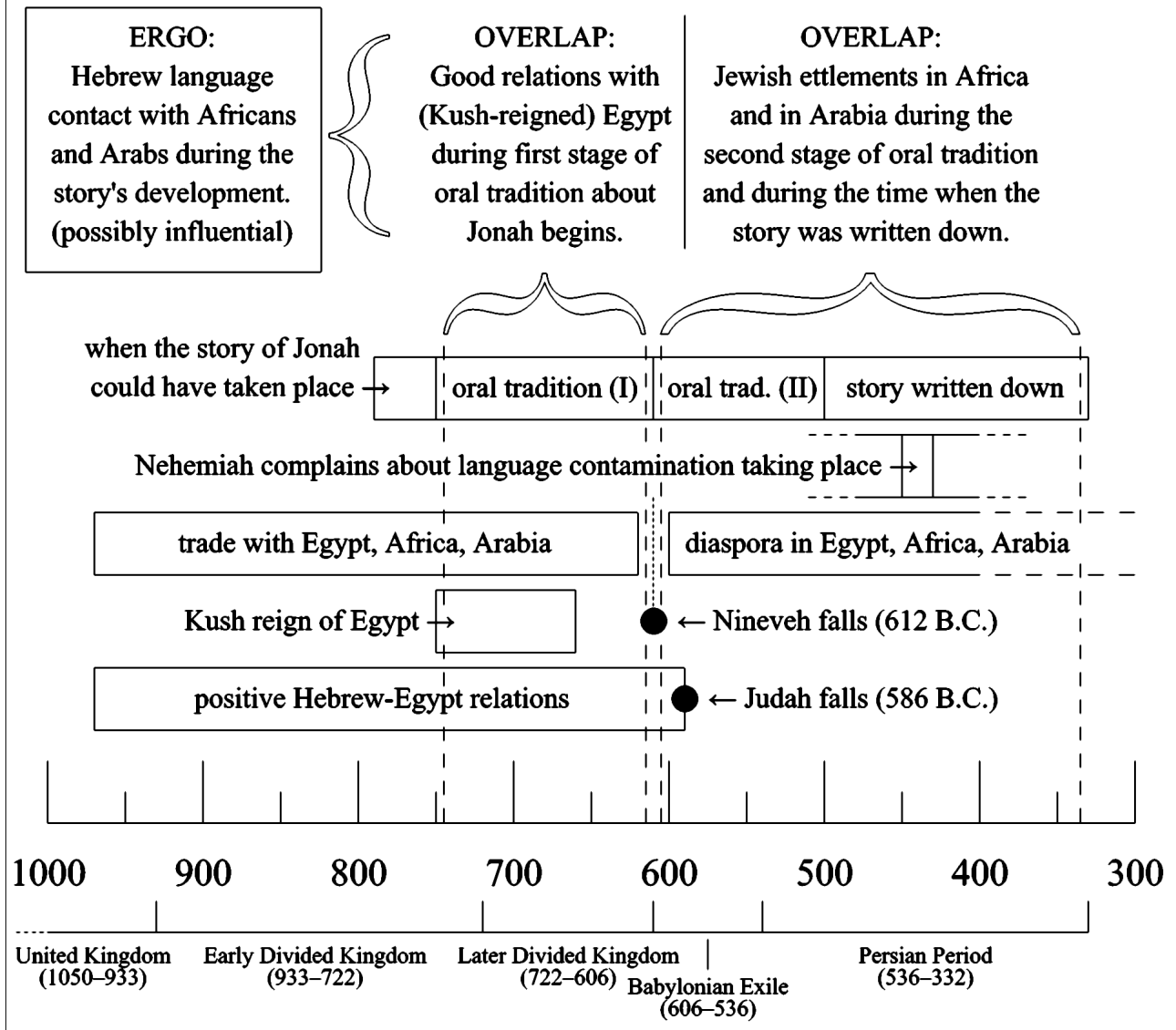
- The distribution of the Chadic languages indicates that Chadic migrants had a wide-ranging influence that also reached into the region of modern-day Sudan, i.e. the ancient Kingdom of Kush. Furthermore, Chadic may very well have a Semitic/Aramaic substrate from Syrio-Palestinian refugees who fled to the Sahara when the Assyrian Empire fell, shortly before 600 B.C.<sup>106</sup> (This theory—proposed in 2008 by Dierk Lange, Professor Emeritus of African History—could be developed further: Maybe some of these Syrio-Palestinian migrants fleeing the destruction of the Assyrian Empire possibly could have been the very people of the Assyrian city of Nineveh from the Book of Jonah, which fell in 612 B.C.—which is probably not an important thought, but nonetheless interesting to entertain.)
- The Berber speakers, located in North-Africa, used to have cultural exchange and active trade-relations with the Egyptians and the Punics in Carthage—since both of these had direct trade-routes to Phoenicia (Tyre and Sidon), along the Mediterranean coastline (maritime or by land), and the Phoenicians were the direct neighbors of the Israelites (with a very similar language), located along the very same coastline, contact via trade was at least possible. The Berbers may have adopted agriculture from Fertile Crescent societies quite early on, which means that there was indeed cultural exchange between the Berbers and the people living in the Fertile Crescent region, which is where the Davidic Kingdom was located—this does not necessarily have to mean they had direct contact to any Hebrews, but it would have been very well possible.<sup>107</sup>

Now that these things have been established, here is a little diagram to visualize the timeline of the most important things that have been addressed so far:

106Lange D. (2008): “Immigration of the Chadic-speaking Sao towards 600 BCE”, in *Borno Museum Society Newsletters* nos. 72/73 & 74/75. pp. 91, 94, 102f.

107Wester-Ebbinghaus R. (2016): “Berbers”, in *Ancient History Encyclopedia*.

## TIMELINE: Language Contact during the Tradition of Jonah



This means that during the Babylonian Exile and in the Jewish diaspora associated with it, as well as later on, further contact, i.e. language contact, between Hebrews and both Ethiopians and Arabs occurred—at the very same time as the oral tradition of the story of Jonah (or stage two of it) developed, and also when it was written down.

So, now that a hopefully credible case has been made for Hebrew contact and thus language contact with Arabs and Ethiopians before the time of writing the Book of Jonah—a glance at societal history and societal contact—, the etymological history of the language itself shall be examined.

### 2.2.1.2.: The Etymological Case (with Stemmata)

The information presented in this chapter has been gathered from *A complete etymology-based hundred wordlist of Semitic updated* by Alexander Militarev (senior researcher of the Institute of Oriental and Classical Studies at the Russian State University for the Humanities; specializing in Semitic, Berber, and general Afroasiatic studies),<sup>108</sup> with additional information from the actively maintained Afroasiatic etymology database available online via *The Tower of Babel — Evolution of Human Language Project*,<sup>109</sup> originally initiated by Sergei Anatolyevich Starostin (the late former Director of the Center of Comparative Studies at the Russian State University for the Humanities).

A stemma illustrating the gathered etymological informations as well as the here developed theory will be shown repeatedly across the next pages, starting out simple and expanding step by step with each part of the theory. (It should be stressed that all of this is hypothetical.)

First of all, Hebrew גדול (gādôl) likely stems from Semitic \*gVdVl-, which may be stemming from an older Afroasiatic (Afras.) \*gVdVl- (where V stands for an unspecified vowel) meaning *big* or *fat*. This meaning of *bigness* can also be observed in another branch of the etymological stemma, which leads to Semitic \*ga/idd- (i.e. \*gadd OR \*gidd) and ends in words like Sabaic gdd (*great*) and Tigre gädä (*be bigger; surpass*), but, on the other hand, also in Arabic židd- (*much/many, very*)—the root word which all of these are suspected to have sprung from is an older Afras. \*gVd(d)- which can mean *great/big/large* or *much/many/abound*.

The interesting detail here is that both of these Afras. roots, \*gVdVl- (*big, fat* > Heb. גדול (gādôl)) and \*gVd(d)- (*big, many/much*) SHARE FORM (\*\*gVd-) AND MEANING (*big*), though the word with the additional meaning *much/many/abound* (i.e. \*gVd(d)-) is, in its simplicity, clearly closer to that shared stem. Therefore, the shared root \*\*gVd- most likely means BOTH *great/big/large* AND *much/many/abound*.

In that case, since \*gVd(d)- and \*\*gVd- would essentially look the same and mean the same, they might, in fact, very well be one and the same word and will here be treated as such.

108c.f. Militarev A. (2010): *A complete etymology-based hundred wordlist of Semitic updated: Items 1–34*. p. 51.

(The result of several projects which are supported by the Russian Foundation for Sciences, the Russian Foundation for the Humanities, the Santa Fe Institute, and the Russian Jewish Congress.)

109c.f. Starostin S.A., Militarev A., Stolbova O., et al.: *The Tower of Babel — Evolution of Human Language Project*.

Primarily using the database for Afroasiatic etymology: “Compiled by Alexander Militarev and Olga Stolbova on the basis of multiple published sources as well as constantly on-going newer work. Both the main Afroasiatic database and all of the numerous subordinate databases are in a state of near-permanent construction, containing much raw data that still has to be polished, but nevertheless, the database even as it is is a considerable improvement on previously available etymological dictionaries. [...] Arguably the most solidly presented database is the one on Semitic languages, representing the results of the collaborative effort between A. Militarev and Leonid Kogan (which have, by now, yielded two volumes of the monumental Semitic Etymological Dictionary).”

Could *židd-*, rather than having evolved from the same root at an earlier point, have gotten into Arabic via the Jewish diaspora during the Babylonian Exile? Only if there had been a word *\*גדול(ל)* with the meaning *much/many/very* in Hebrew at that time (or ever at all), which has never been the case. Thus, a form of Arabic (or rather Proto-Arabic) *židd-* must have existed in the first millennium B.C. alongside Hebrew, having evolved from the same root: *\*\*gVd-* (*big, much/many*).<sup>110</sup>

On a highly speculative side-note, there might be an interesting (albeit contestable) etymological candidate to explain the *ל* in *גדול* via a Nostratic root. It shall, once again, be stressed that this thesis is neither meant to endorse nor to deny the Nostratic hypothesis, and whether it is true or not is ultimately not essential to this thesis either, as filling this tiny etymological gap is not necessary for this part of the thesis to work, but is simply a possibility offered for the sake of completeness.

If, then, the Nostratic (Nostr.) hypothesis is true, then the *ל* in *גדול* might have originated from Nostr. *\*wu/oļa* (*big, large, multitude*) > Afras. *\*wVl-* (*large, great, all*)—combined, *{\*gVd+\*wVl}* (the consonants of which form GDWL) makes *גדול* (*gādōl*). The composite *{\*gVd+\*wVl}* would equate to *{(big, much/many)+(large, great, all)}* and translate to things like *big-big, much-great, much-all*, etc. Noteworthy, the Afroasiatic *\*wVl-* still entails the meaning *all*, which does not directly mean *much* but nonetheless implies a plurality and thus *muchness* (because *all* can hardly refer to one singular thing).

Since the hypothetical Nostratic meaning *multitude* would lie too far back and no longer had any effect in the Afroasiatic branches, it might seem that this *\*wVl-* element would not further the claims of this thesis very much. The meaning *multitude* and from it the meaning *much* has indeed survived up to OT-times, but only for a handful of words in some non-Afroasiatic languages, most of which can hardly be expected to have had much if any language-contact with the ancient Hebrews<sup>111</sup>—except for one, namely Greek, where the Indo-European meaning *to heap* (via Euras. *\*wol[a]* (*big*)) very productively evolved into a whole range of words about *multitudes* and their *muchness*.<sup>112</sup> Whether this would have been recognizable to a Hebrew is highly questionable though, since Hebrew did no longer have a dedicated word for *\*wVl-* alone, and without the

110The use of a double asterisk is meant to signify that this is not just a reconstructed word, but my own reconstruction based on the reconstructions of others—in a sense, a reconstruction of a reconstruction.

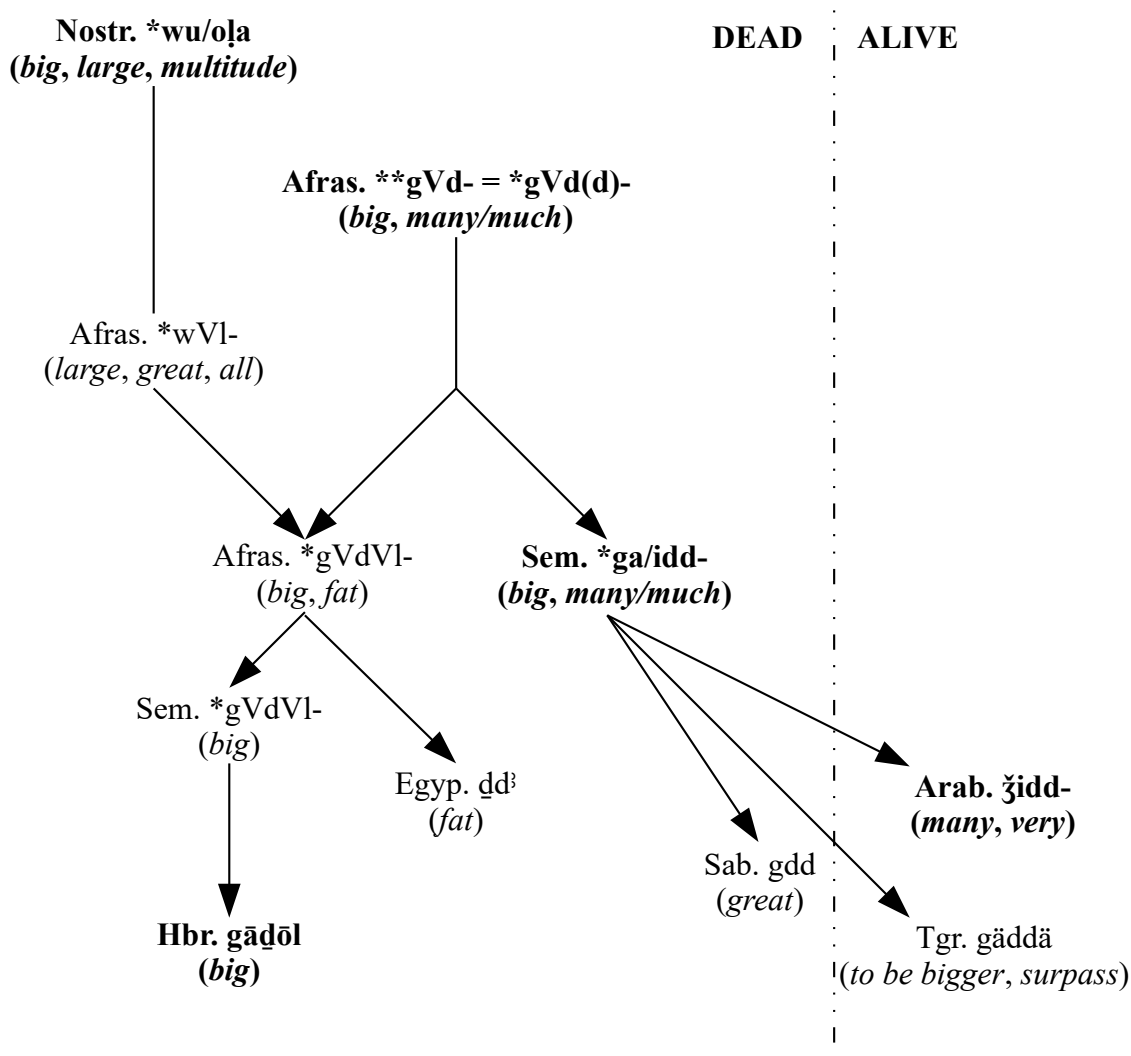
111Altaic *\*ulu* (*big, many, good*) > Proto-Mongolian *\*olon* (*much, vague amount of sth., very*); Proto-Dravidian *\*val-* (*big, much, very*) > Proto-Gondi-Kui *\*val-* (*much*); Proto-Telugu *\*val-* > *valadu* (*much*); Uralic *\*ulV(-jV)* > *\*wole* (*big, many*), *\*wilwä* (*crowd, multitude*) > Saam (Lapp) *ql'lo, qllo, qlo* (*much, many, very*), *ällō* (*much, many, big*).

112Indo-European *\*wel-* (*to heap*) > Old Greek: *ἴλα* f., ion. *ἔλα* f. (*flock, crowd, throng*), *ἰλαδόν* (*in droves, in swarms*); adv. *ἅλις* (*en masse, enough/sufficient*); *ἡλῆς*, ep., poet. *αὐλῆς* (*gathered, crowded together, in closed masses*); *ὀλαμός*-s m. (*bustle, crowdedness*).

preceding גל any recognition of גל in those Greek words would have been highly improbable (albeit not entirely impossible either).

Altogether, then, the explicit connotation of *muchness* in the roots of Afras. \*wVl- can only be found in languages too distant from Hebrew (or in forms unrecognizable to any ancient Hebrew), and is therefore only being mentioned here for the sake of completeness. This, however, does not take away from the fact that, via the meaning *all*, the Afras. stem \*wVl- nonetheless had at least an implicit connotation of *muchness*.

Here is the first stemma<sup>113</sup> to illustrate the etymology<sup>114</sup> as it has been described so far:



113Lest anyone feel inclined to feel insulted or outraged that Hebrew is here listed as a “dead” language, what is meant is, of course, the long fossilized Biblical Hebrew of ancient times, as opposed to modern-day Ivrit.

114Formulaic rendering of the important part: **Heb. gādōl big** < Sem. \*gVdVl- < Afras. \*gVdVl- *big, fat* < Afras. \*\*gVd- *big, many/much* > Afras. \*gVd(d)- *big, many* > Sem. \*ga/idd- *big, many* > **Arb. ʒidd- many/much, very**

Of these afore-mentioned words rooted in Sem. \*ga/idd-, it might be noteworthy that Arb. židd- (*much/many, very*) is still in use today (in comparison, Sab. gdd (*great*) has died out with the language around 200 B.C.). This means that although a possible emphasis on *big* was already well established for that particular branch in the stemma (for Sabaic in ancient times, and still for Tigre), another word along the same branch (in Arabic) has kept an emphasis on *much/many* unto this day. It is NOT like the connotation of *much/many* was something old and long forgotten. Rather, the awareness of the *much/many* connotation, as old as it may be, has never died out, but has always been kept alive among in some branches.

The same can be said in regards to the following list of words, all of which are still in use today, and all of which stem more or less directly<sup>115</sup> from Afras. \*gVd(d)- / \*\*gVd:

Eth.	South Omotic Dime	gd, gēd	<i>big</i>
Eth.	Omotic Ongota	gada(h/hune)	<i>big</i>
Eth.	Omotic Ongota	gaddauni	<i>big, old</i>
Eth.	Omotic Ongota	gaddahino	<i>big, many</i>
Eth.	Dasenech	guddu	<i>big</i>
Eth.	Eastern Cushitic Oromo	guddaa	<i>big, greatly, very</i>
Eth.	Eastern Cushitic Arbore	guḍḍá, gudiý-ḍa	<i>big</i>
Eth.	Eastern Cushitic Arbore	guudá	<b><i>many</i></b>
Eth.	Northern Cushitic Beja	gwud	<b><i>many</i></b>
Eth.	Cushitic Saho-Afar	gide	<b><i>amount, quantity</i></b>
Nig.	Western Chadic Bolewa	gòdo, godoŋ	<b><i>many</i></b>
Nig.	Western Chadic Sayanchi	gəət	<b><i>many, increase</i></b>
Nig.	Center Chadic Malgwa	γùḍà-te	<b><i>many</i></b>
Mor.	Berber Central Morocco	gudy	<b><i>many, much, abound</i></b>
Mor.	Berber Central Morocco	sgudy	<b><i>produce much/many, in great quantity</i></b>
Mor.	Berber Izayan	eggud	<b><i>many, be numerous</i></b>
Libya	Berber Nefusa Zwara	a-guda	<b><i>many, be numerous</i></b>
Alger.	Ahaggar	egdeh	<i>to suffice</i> (implies <b>quantity</b> )
Iran	Ayr	egdu	<i>to suffice</i> (implies <b>quantity</b> )

<sup>115</sup>Similar to Arb. židd-, Sab. gdd, and Tgr. gäddä, though not (or most probably not) via Sem. \*ga/idd-, since all of the words in this particular list are Non-Semitic.

Out of these 19 examples, only 7 mean *big*, 13 of them (almost twice as many) mean *much/many* (or imply quantity, i.e. muchness, e.g. *to suffice*).<sup>116</sup> None of the languages in this particular list is Semitic, but most of them are Afroasiatic.<sup>117</sup> Half of these languages are spoken in and around Ethiopia (i.e. the region with which the ancient Hebrews would have been more likely to have contact)—the majority of which, however, focus on the connotation *big*, the exception being Ongota and Eastern Cushitic Arbore, where the connotation *much/many* is an option, as well as Northern Cushitic Beja and Eastern Cushitic Saho-Afar (a cluster of multiple dialects), where the word has evolved to unambiguously mean *much/many*.

It might be noteworthy that Cushitic Arbore and (possibly Omotic) Ongota, both located in South West Ethiopia, have variations of the word for both *big* AND *many* side by side (i.e. Arbore guḍḍá *big* vs. guudá *many*; Ongota gaddahino *big/many*), which could have been easily noticed and considered a peculiarity by any ancient Hebrew-speaker getting into contact with these people.

It is also noteworthy that the majority of these Ethiopian **\*\*gVd** based *much/many*-words is found in Cushitic languages—i.e. the tongue of the Kushites, the ones whom the Hebrews were the most likely to have contact with when dealing with people from Ethiopia, as has been shown in the previous chapter.

The huge majority of Non-Ethiopian **\*\*gVd** based *much/many*-words listed above are found in Berber and Chadic, and it has been shown in the previous chapter that Hebrew language contact with Berber and Chadic was, albeit less likely, very well possible—especially when taking the Jewish diaspora into account.

So, altogether, it is safe to say that the ancient Hebrews could have encountered most of the languages listed above, and thus could have encountered the peculiarity of the same stem they would use for *big* being used for *much* or *many* instead.

Once again, for the sake of completion, it should be asked once more whether these words could have slipped into these Afroasiatic and Non-Semitic languages due to the Jewish diaspora, rather than having evolved from a shared root at an earlier point. If the Hebrew word was not גדול but \*(גל) גל instead (one would really have to wonder what happened to the גל at the end), then one might feel inclined to look at the words that mean *big* and entertain such an idea, but this would, once again, in no way explain those words that mean *much/many*,<sup>118</sup> except if that had already been a dominant

<sup>116</sup>The counting is of course somewhat subjective: all of the Ongota-words could be grouped together as variations of “gada”, and the same can be said of Berber “gudy” and “sgudy”.

<sup>117</sup>The exceptions being South Omotic Dime, which is Nilo-Saharan, and probably Ongota, which is unclassified, sometimes counted as Omotic, though there has been speculation that Ongota might be a separate Afras. branch.

connotation in Hebrew—which was not the case.<sup>119</sup> Thus, the only viable explanation can be the linguistically accepted one, namely that they all share the same etymological root.

What this proves is that while Afras. \*gVd(d)- / \*\*gVd- with the meaning *big* and *much/many* developed into the Hebrew גדול (gādôl) with a stronger focus on the meaning *big*, other surrounding<sup>120</sup> languages mostly within the same family had the same root<sup>121</sup> developing into words meaning both *big* and *much/many*, still in existence today—so, while the Hebrew-speakers focused more on their \*\*gVd-word meaning *big* (or rather any expression of grandeur), the linguistic awareness of \*\*gVd-words also meaning *much/many* in surrounding areas has never died out and existed alongside Hebrew גדול (gādôl).

The chapter is not yet over, but the core argument has been made. So, before some additional etymological evidence with an additional conclusion will be presented on the following pages, the core of the argument made on the previous pages shall be summarized in a few brief words:

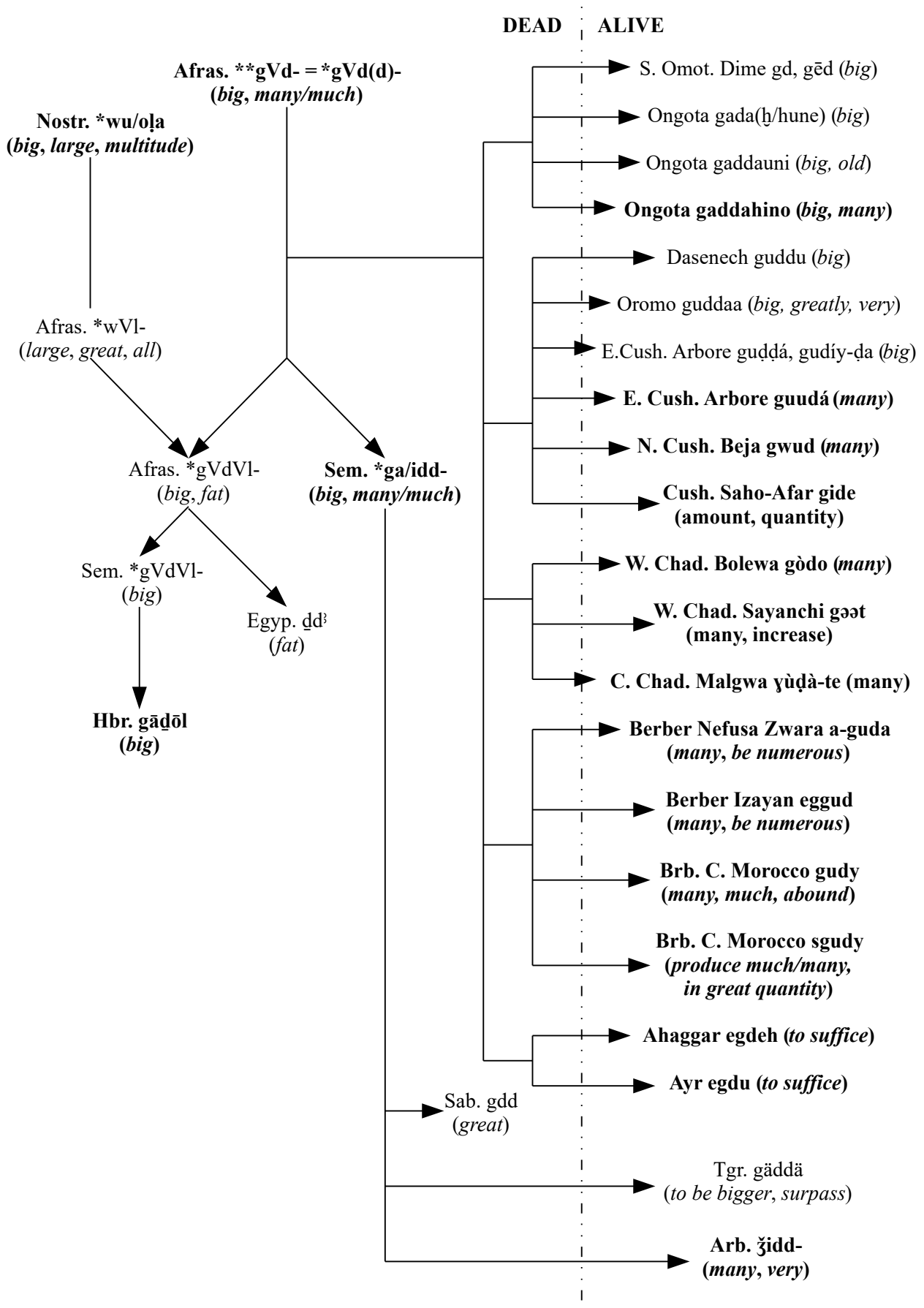
The Hebrews, using the word גדול (gādôl) with a focus on its meaning for big (albeit not exclusively, as will be shown in the following chapters), their word had evolved from an older Afras. \*\*gVd- which in other languages would evolve into words that meant *much/many*, and while a remnant of that semantic memory may or may not have existed in the Hebrew-speakers' minds, they undeniably got into contact with speakers of those other languages, keeping the Hebrew-speakers' awareness of their word גדול (gādôl) having the connotation of *much/many* for many others alive, which in turn could have influenced their own use of the Hebrew word and thus serve as a foundation to explain and ground what will be shown in the following chapters regarding גדול (gādôl) and its connotation of *much* in the OT and, in particular, in the Book of Jonah.

118Berber had Punic (i.e. Phoenician, or a dialect of it) loanwords from the language contact, but Phoenician language used rb for *big* and šgy for *many*, akin to Aramaic—so, Semitic language contact is no explanation.

119It will be argued in the following chapters that the awareness of גדול (gādôl) having the connotation *many/much* was indeed there, and that this connotation found its way into Biblical Hebrew in rather subtle ways, but by no means was that the dominant connotation.

120i.e. south-west to the Hebrew-speakers' core area, but also in the east if Arb. židd- is taken into account.

121i.e. \*\*gVd. The later and more directly connected Afras. \*gVdVl- also seems to have developed into Proto Central Chadic \*digwal- > Wamdiu digàlu, Kilba dūgōlù, Hildi dīgalu, Margi digàl, meaning *big* in all of these languages—however, it would be unlikely that the average Hebrew-speakers would have recognized these words, since the consonants /g/ and /d/ have swapped position in all of these languages. The direct Sem. root \*gVdVl has also evolved into Ugaritic gdl, Aramaic gədal, and Arabic žādīl-/ždl.



On to the final part of this chapter. In several Semitic languages (namely Arabic and several Ethiopian languages; all of them Semitic) there are words with the meanings *to grow (up)*:

Arabic	ǧdr	<i>to grow</i> (botanically)
Wolane	gädärä	<i>to grow up</i> (child), <i>to be big</i>
Zway	gädärä	<i>to grow up</i> (child), <i>to be big</i>
Amharic	(tä)gäddärä	<i>to germinate/grow</i>
Soddo	gddr	<i>to grow</i> <sup>122</sup>
Harari	g(i)dīr	<i>to grow</i> <sup>123</sup>

All of these words are reasonably thought to stem from Ethiopian-Arabic \*gdr, which in turn stems from the already mentioned Afras. \*gVd(d)- > Sem. \*ga/idd-, though combined with a fossilized suffix \*-r. This, of course, brings up the question of what this suffix \*-r actually means, and it might even shed some surprising light on Hebrew גדול (gādôl) may have been associated with *much/many*.

Obviously, the words listed above mean *to grow*, not *much/many*. However, the root they all stem from (\*ga/idd-) does indeed include that meaning *much/many*; it is the suffix \*-r alone which changes the meaning primarily to *grow*, so this connotation of growth must be strongly present in \*-r if used for Semitic verbs. To put it simple: \*-r means *to grow*.

Within the Afroasiatic languages, many several /r/-based stems with connotations of either *muchness* or *growth* (i.e. *becoming much*) can be observed. In the context of a thesis on Hebrew words, one particular /r/-based set of words for *growth* and *muchness* immediately comes to mind:

(Proto-)Sem. \*rabb- (*big/much/many, expand/extend/increase/grow*)

> Heb. rab (*many, much, big*)

> Heb. rabah (*to be(come) many/much*)

Aside from the Semitic sister-words of \*rabb-, all of which use vowels in the domain of /a/,<sup>124</sup> there also are a few (and rare) occasions where words from the same root can be found<sup>125</sup> in other Afroasiatic but Non-Semitic languages:

Western Chadic Hausa	rībà/rúbà	<i>multiply/exceed</i>
Western Chadic Hausa	rábábá	<i>in large quantity</i>
Central Chadic Bura	ribribu	<i>many</i>
Ongota	arba	<i>big</i>

<sup>122</sup>The meaning here is not explicitly stated by Militarev, but *to grow* can be gleaned from the context.

<sup>123</sup>The meaning here, too, is not explicitly stated by Militarev, but *to grow* can be gleaned from the context.

<sup>124</sup>e.g. Hebrew rab; Akkadian rapāšu/rab/rapšu; Arabic rabba/rabb/rabbā; Ge'ez rabba/rababa; Classical Syriac rabbā; Aramaic rab; Urmian Neo-Aramaic rāb-.

<sup>125</sup>c.f. Militarev A. (2010): *A complete etymology-based hundred wordlist of Semitic updated: Items 35–54*. p. 90.

Interestingly, although /a/ does appear, some of these words use /i/ or /u/ instead, which can<sup>126</sup> mean that they might stem from an older Afras. root which would also be the root for Proto-Semitic \*rabb-, and since the vowel can be anything from /a/ to /i/ to /u/, that root would most probably utilize an unspecified vowel of little strength (one might consider something akin to a Schwa /ə/). With this information, the root of these words could be something like Proto-Afras. \*\*rVb(b).

Fittingly, the Proto-Sem. \*rVp- (*eat much*) (> Arabic: rff u,1) is rendered with an unspecified vowel, and since it shares quite a most of its form and meaning with \*rabb- and its related words (i.e. a connotation of *muchness*), a connection to the same root is quite likely.

Aside from Semitic word for *eating much*, there is also a set of Afras. words for *watering much...* or *drinking much...* or *getting drunk* (i.e. *drinking much*, but a little *too much*)... but in the majority of cases, the connotation of *muchness* tends to be there:

(Proto-) Afras.: \*riway/?- & \*wur- (*to water*)

Proto-Sem.: \*riw-/\*rwy- (*abundant water, to drink one's fill, to water (soil)*)

> Hebrew: rwy (*to quench thirst, drink to saturation*)

> Syrian Aramaic: rwy (*to quench thirst, drink to saturation*)

> Arabic: riway- (*abundant water*)

> Arabic: rwy (*to drink one's fill, water much (cattle, soil)*)

> Epigraphic South Arabian: h-rwy (*to provide a water supply*)

> Geʿez (Ethiopian): rawaya (*to drink one's fill, be watered*)

> Soqotri: re (*drink*), riho (*water*)

It may be noteworthy that in Hebrew, the uninflected form of this word is רוה (rāwâ), which almost sounds like רב (rab, *much/big*) and רבה (rabbâ, *many*). Also, רבה (rabâ, *to grow*) has the connotation of increasing *muchness*—due to the similarities in form and meaning, there probably would have been an active awareness of a shared root, especially considering the ancient Semitic practice to draw connections between similar words for the purpose of word-play and poetry.<sup>127</sup>

Last but not least, there is another set of Afras. words which also imply *muchness* in the sense of *growth*, including *multiply/increase*, which also share the same root:

<sup>126</sup>An alternative explanation would be that the words all stem from a form akin to \*rabb, with /a/, but that the vowels changed afterwards in these languages due to some changes each of these languages went through. However, unless I find evidence for this more complex hypothesis, I will prefer the simpler explanation of an Afras. root \*rVb(b).

<sup>127</sup>Compare the well known examples of *Beelzebub* (ba'al zebul *lord of the high place* > ba'al-z'bul *lord of the flies*) or *Babel* (babel *Babylon* > babel *confused*; Hebrew homophony).

(Proto-) Afras.: \*riyVʕ- >

Western Chadic: \*riy- > Tangale: riye (*multiply*)

Central Chadic: \*riy- > Musgu: ríyí (*increase*)

Egyptian: ʕ³ > Old Egyptian: ʕ³ (*big*) (Pyramid Text)

Proto-Sem.: \*rVyVʕ- > Arabic: ryʕ [-i-] (*grow*)

One thing should have become obvious by now: All of these words<sup>128</sup> with the connotation of either *muchness*, *growth*, or both, are based on /r/, almost all of them directly starting with it. Also, for the latter half of these words it can be said that the /r/ tends to precede an /i/ or something close to it, which shifts the likelihood of the root-word's vowel closer to something between /a/ and /i/ (the two vowels that occur the most), which effectively could make the root-word's otherwise unspecified vowel V an /e/ or /ə/—but this cannot be said with certainty either, as that would not account for the few variations that still occur in later words. Thus, the safest assumption would still be an unspecified vowel V, but the tendency at least towards Schwa /ə/ has become more likely.

If they all share one and the same root, then this root has evolved into forms that would most likely end on /p/, /b/, /w/, /ʕ/, or no phoneme at all. Admittedly, that is quite a range of possibilities, but /p/ and /ʕ/ are rather rare outliers. The safest middle-ground between /b/ and /w/ would most likely be something like a (possibly fricative) /v/... with the option of no phoneme still given, albeit rare as well, so if there is a /v/, it would probably be a rather weak one that could even drop on some of the evolutionary branches.

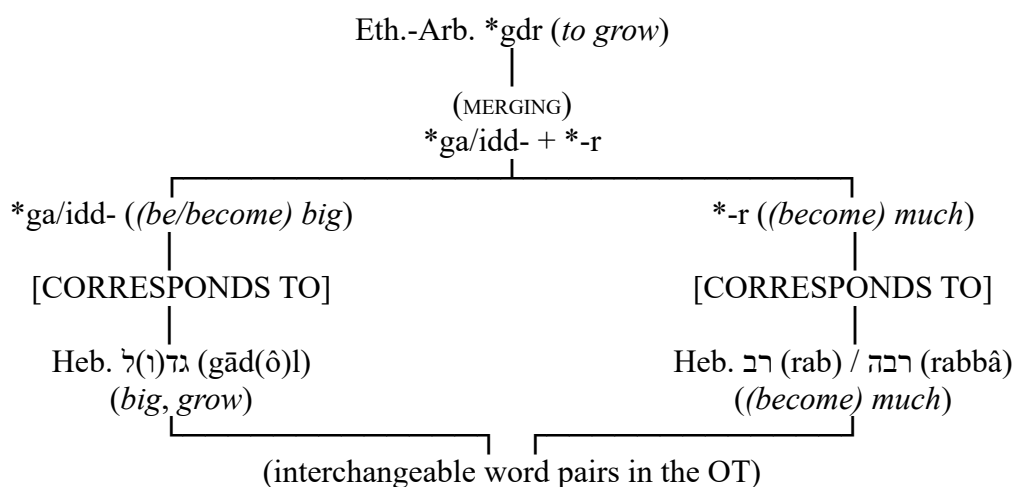
Taking all of this into account, the root at the base of all of the just presented words might look something like a Proto-Afras. \*\*rV/ə(v)-.<sup>129</sup> The shared meaning would be something like *to be(come) many/much/big*. If this reconstruction is accurate enough, then this root could easily occur as \*\*rə (and one has to keep in mind that /ə/ is not much of a vowel), at which point one would easily end up with a potential suffix \*-r which (applied to a verb) still carries the meaning of *becoming much/big* (i.e. *to grow*).

Now that all of this has been established, the question remains: How does any of this help the thesis? What does any of this have to do with Hebrew גדול (gādôl)? The answer will only truly unfold in the course of the next chapter, where the OT-evidence regarding גדול (gādôl) will be examined—however, for the next chapter's evidence to be grounded, the logical foundation must be given here first:

128All of THESE words—there are many roots for others words of *muchness* AND *growth* across the Afras. languages.

129i.e. either \*\*rə(v)- or \*\*rV(v)-, but these two options might be essentially the same anyway.

To recapitulate, there is a set of Ethiopian and Arabic verbs, all of which mean *to grow* in one way or another, and all of which have evolved from the Eth.-Arb. root \*gdr, formed as follows:



As \*ga/idd- corresponds to גדול (gādôl), so does \*-r correspond to רב (rab) / רבה (rabbâ). Technically, רב (rab) and רבה (rabbâ) can be said to be essentially the same word—the difference is whether the stem is applied as an adjective or as a verb: In case of the corresponding Eth.-Arb. \*gdr, the root is used as a verb, which turns the meaning into *grow*; however, unlike the Ethiopian-Arabic branch, Hebrew does NOT have a verb that merges the stems’ Hebrew verb-forms גדל with רבה—what Hebrew DOES have are word pairs (for lack of a better phrase): As will be shown in the next chapter (among other things), the OT contains 4 passages by 3 authors<sup>130</sup> in which גדל and רבה are used side by side as quasi interchangeable synonyms. This seems to have stemmed from the same Semitic practice that led to the \*gdr-verbs in other Semitic languages—a practice that used both words or stems as semantically belonging together. This strengthens the implication that גדול can have connotations similar to those of רב (see page 57).

What the evidence in this chapter shows is that putting these words for *big* and *much/grow* together was a common Semitic practice: While the Hebrews were surrounded by other Semites for whom this practice developed into merging the two stems into one verb (which the Hebrews may or may not have recognized), the Hebrews themselves kept this practice alive as well, but in a subtler manner, by pairing adjectives, but without merging the stems. In both scenarios, though, the stems/words were seen as semantically belonging together.

With the etymological foundation having been established, it is time to look at the Scriptures, and how גדול (gādôl) has been used in the Old Testament, and, more specifically, in the Book of Jonah.

130i.e. Is 9:2; Ezekiel 16:7,26; Ezra 9:6.

## 2.2.2.: גדול in the Old Testament

The word גדול (gādôl) occurs 525 times<sup>131</sup> outside of Jonah 2:1—in comparison to that, proper examples of גדול denoting the *abundance* of a multitude are rather rare, but they do exist:

Gen 15:14	ברכש גדול	<i>many possessions</i>
Gen 41:29	שבע גדול	<i>great abundance/plenty</i>
Num 22:18	קטנה או גדולה	<i>less or more (or: important)</i>
1Sa 17:25	עשר גדול	<i>many riches / great riches</i>
1Sa 22:15	קטן או גדול	<i>less or more</i>
1Sa 25:36	קטן וגדול	<i>less or more</i>
1Sa 30:16	השלל הגדול	<i>great spoil / much plunder</i>
1Ki 20:13,28	ההמון הגדול	<i>great/abundant multitude</i>
2Chr 28:5	ממנו שביה גדולה	<i>great/abundant multitude of captives</i>
Is 56:12	גדול יתר מאד	<i>much more abundant</i>
Jer 44:15	קהל גדול	<i>great multitude</i>
Ez 38:13	שלל גדול	<i>great spoil / much plunder</i>
Dan 11:2	עשר גדול	<i>riches (more) plentiful</i>
Dan 11:28	ברכוש גדול	<i>many riches / much plunder</i>

Furthermore, there are verses where the word גדול (gādôl) may very well be understood as *great*, but nonetheless implies a *numerous abundance*, for example<sup>132</sup> when speaking of a *great army*,<sup>133</sup> a *great nation*,<sup>134</sup> and a *great assembly*.<sup>135</sup>

Regarding (*great*) *assembly* קהל (qāhāl) in particular, its occurrence in Jer 31:8 may even hold the most subtle and yet the most important key to proving not only the potential collective quality of דג (dāg) but also the pluralistic connotation of גדול (gādôl). As is further explained in the sub-chapter on *Sg.-Adjectives for Collective-Nouns* on page 83,<sup>136</sup> Jer 31:8 appends a plural-verb

131That is minus Jonah 2:1, and one verse (Nah 1:3) had only one of its occurrences counted, since the second occurrence was merely a variation without Waw—otherwise, the total amount would be 527.

132A less important example might even be *a great heap of stones* (2Sa 18:17; Jos 7:26, 8:29).

1332Ki 7:6; Ez 17:17, 37:10; 1Chr 12:23; Dan 11:13, Dan 11:25 (x2).

134Gen 12:2, 17:20, 18:18, 21:18, 46:3; Ex 32:10; Num 14:12; Deut 4:6,7,8,38, 9:1, 11:23, 26:5; Jos 23:9; Jer 6:22, 50:41. (*Brown-Driver-Briggs* also lists *sacrifice* (2 Ki 10:19) and *slaughter* (Deut 28:59; 1 Sam 4:17).)

1351Ki 8:65; 1Chr 12:23 (Douay-Rheims: “a great number”); 2Chr 7:8; Neh 5:7, Jer 31:8, 44:15; Ez 38:15; Neh 12:31.

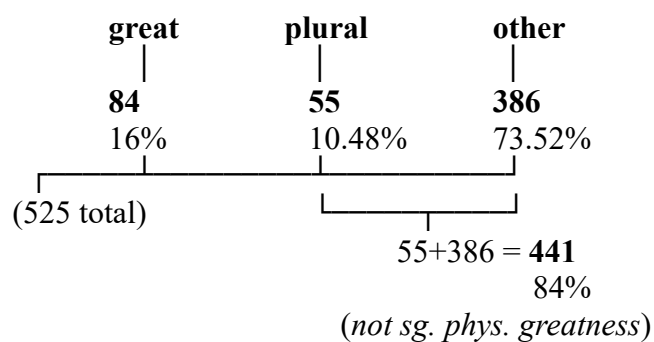
136The sub-chapter on page 83 is about grammar and thus separate from this current chapter about semantics, but due to the important semantic implications the here mentioned part of that later chapter shall be briefly summarized.

יָשׁוּבוּ (yāšûbû, *shall return*),<sup>137</sup> by which the collective nature of the grammatically singular קהל (qāhāl, *assembly*) can be recognized,<sup>138</sup> while the associated adjective גדול (gādôl) appears in the singular; thus, ALL examples for *great assembly/army/nation* etc. in this chapter may be singular collective-nouns accompanied by a singular-adjective גדול (gādôl) implying *abundance*—not only in the wishful thinking of the writer of this thesis, but proven by the grammar of the biblical text, and what counts for קהל in Jer 31:8 can just as well apply to דג in Jonah 2:1.

So, if דג (dāg) in Jonah 2:1 is indeed taken to imply a multitude, then גדול (gādôl) could mean *numerous*, implying *abundance*.

This is not meant to be a circular argument: Obviously, גדול (gādôl) should NOT be interpreted to mean *numerous* BECAUSE of Jonah’s *fish* being collectively plural—the fish’s supposed plurality is not an unshakable fact set in stone, but rather one of the things in question in this thesis. It would be foolish to attempt the use of one hypothesis in need of proof as proof for another hypothesis in need of proof. What the argument here is trying to prove is just that singular גדול (gādôl) does not have to mean *great/huge* in the typical sense of singular physical size, but that it CAN, in fact, be applied to collective-nouns and then take on connotations like *much/many/abundant*, which means that the word גדול (gādôl) is not at all an obstacle to the hypothesis of reading דג (dāg) as a collective, but that it is, in fact, perfectly compatible with this hypothesis.

What follows is a brief summary of all the גדול-occurrences in the OT and how often גדול refers to either singular physical greatness (“great”), *much/many/abundant* (“plural”), or something completely different (“other”). (The following pages will present the entirety of the list.)



137Some verses, like Ezekiel 37:10 and 38:15, describe the collective groups they talk about with several nouns and verbs in the plural, which drives home the point that these groups really are considered multitudes by the writers. It should, however, be noted that such nouns, verbs, or adjectives in the plural appearing with a collective-noun are not at all a necessity, and that a singular is just as well possible—for more information on that, see page 81.

138c.f. Joüon P., Muraoka T. (2018): *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, § 135 “Plurality expressed by the collective singular, the singular of species, etc.”, p. 466.

	<u>great</u>	<u>(pl.)</u>	<u>(other)</u>		<u>great</u>	<u>(pl.)</u>	<u>(other)</u>		<u>great</u>	<u>(pl.)</u>	<u>(other)</u>
<b>Gen</b>				<b>Num</b>				<b>Josh</b>			
1:16	x			13:28	x			1:4	x		
1:16	x			14:12		x**		1:4	x		
1:21	x			22:18		x		6:5			x
4:13			x	34:6	x			6:20			x
10:12		x*		34:7	x			7:9			x
10:21			x	35:25			x	7:26		x	
12:2		x**		35:28			x	8:29		x	
12:17			x	35:28			x	9:1	x		
15:12			x	<b>Deut</b>				10:2	x		
15:14		x		1:7	x			10:2	x		
15:18	x			1:17			x	10:10			x
17:20		x**		1:19	x			10:11	x		
18:18		x**		1:28			x	10:18	x		
19:11			x	1:28	x			10:20			x
20:9			x	2:7	x			10:27	x		
21:8			x	2:10			x	14:12	x		
21:18		x**		2:21			x	14:15			x
27:1			x	4:6		x**		15:12	x		
27:15			x	4:7		x**		15:47	x		
27:33			x	4:8		x**		17:17			x
27:34			x	4:32			x	20:6			x
27:42			x	4:34			x	22:10			x
29:2	x			4:36			x***	23:4	x		
29:7			x	4:37			x	23:9		x**	
29:16			x	4:38		x**		24:17			x
39:9			x	5:22			x	24:26	x		
39:9			x	5:25			x***	<b>Judg</b>			
39:14			x	6:10	x			2:7			x
41:29		x		6:22			x	5:15			x
44:12			x	7:19			x	5:16			x
45:7			x	7:21			x	11:33			x
46:3		x**		7:23			x	15:8			x
50:10			x	8:15	x			15:18			x
<b>Ex</b>				9:1		x**		16:5			x
3:3			x	9:1	x			16:6			x
6:6			x	9:2			x	16:15			x
7:4			x	9:29			x	16:23			x
11:3			x	10:17			x	21:2			x
11:6			x	10:21			x	21:5			x
12:30			x	11:7			x	<b>1Sam</b>			
14:31			x	11:23		x**		2:17			x
15:16			x	18:16			x***	4:5			x
18:11			x	25:13	x			4:6			x
18:22			x	25:14	x			4:10			x
32:10		x**		26:5		x**		4:17			x
32:11			x	26:8			x	5:9			x
32:21			x	27:2	x			5:9			x
32:30			x	28:59			x	6:9			x
32:31			x	29:2			x	6:14	x		
<b>Lev</b>				29:2			x	6:15	x		
19:15			x	29:23			x	6:18	x		
21:10			x	29:27			x	6:19			x
				34:12			x	7:10			x
								12:16			x
								12:22			x

	great	(pl.)	(other)		great	(pl.)	(other)		great	(pl.)	(other)
<b>1Sam</b>				<b>1Ki</b>				<b>Jer</b>			
14:20			x	20:21			x	11:16			x
14:33	x			20:28		x		14:17			x
14:45			x	22:31			x	16:6			x
17:13			x	<b>2Ki</b>				16:10			x
17:14			x	3:27			x	21:5			x
17:25		x		4:8			x	21:6			x
17:28			x	4:38	x			22:8	x		
18:17			x	5:1			x	25:14			x
19:5			x	5:13			x	25:32			x
19:8			x	6:23			x	26:19			x
19:22	x			6:25			x	27:5			x
20:2			x	7:6		x		27:7			x
22:15		x		8:4			x	28:8	x		
23:5			x	8:13			x	30:7			x
25:2			x	10:6			x	31:8		x	
25:36		x		10:11			x	31:34			x
28:12			x	10:19			x	32:17			x
30:2			x	12:11			x	32:18			x
30:16		x		16:15	x			32:19			x
30:19			x	17:21			x	32:21			x
<b>2Sam</b>				17:36			x	32:37			x
3:38			x	18:19			x	32:42			x
7:9			x	18:28			x	33:3			x
7:9			x	18:28			x	36:7			x
13:15			x	20:3			x	42:1			x
13:15			x	22:4			x	42:8			x
13:16			x	22:8			x	43:9	x		
13:36			x	22:13			x	44:7			x
15:23			x	23:2			x	44:12			x
18:7			x	23:4			x	44:15		x	
18:9	x			23:26			x	44:26			x
18:17	x			25:9			x	45:5			x
18:17		x		25:26			x	48:3			x
18:29			x	<b>Is</b>				50:9		x**	
19:5			x	5:9	x			50:22			x
19:33			x	8:1	x			50:41		x**	
20:8	x			9:1			x	51:54			x
23:10			x	12:6			x	51:55			x
23:12			x	27:1	x			52:13			x
<b>1Ki</b>				27:13			x	<b>Ezek</b>			
1:40			x	29:6			x	1:4	x		
2:22			x	34:6			x	3:12			x
3:4			x	36:4			x	3:13			x
3:6			x	36:13			x	8:6			x
4:13	x			36:13			x	8:6			x
5:31	x			38:3			x	8:13			x
7:9			x	54:7			x	8:15			x
7:10	x			56:12		x		8:18			x
7:12			x	<b>Jer</b>				9:1			x
8:42			x	4:6			x	9:9			x
8:55			x	5:5			x	11:13			x
8:65		x		6:1			x	16:46			x
10:18	x			6:13			x	16:61			x
18:27			x	6:22		x**		17:3	x		
18:28			x	8:10			x	17:3	x		
18:45			x	10:6			x	17:7	x		
19:11			x	10:6			x	17:7	x		
20:13		x		10:22			x	17:9			x

	great	(pl.)	(other)
<b>Ezek</b>			
17:17		x	
21:19			x
23:4			x
25:17			x
29:3	x		
29:18			x
36:23			x
37:10		x	
38:13		x	
38:15		x	
38:19			x
39:17			x
43:14	x		
47:10	x		
47:15	x		
47:19	x		
47:20	x		
48:28	x		
<b>Hos</b>			
2:2			x
<b>Joel</b>			
2:11			x
2:25		x	
3:4			x
<b>Amos</b>			
6:11	x		
<b>Jonah</b>			
1:2		x*	
1:4			x
1:4			x
1:10			x
1:12			x
1:16			x
(2:1 unknown quantity, not counted)			
3:2		x*	
3:3		x*	
3:5			x
3:7			x
4:1			x
4:6			x
4:11		x*	
<b>Mic</b>			
7:3			x
<b>Nah</b>			
1:3			x
3:10			x
<b>Zeph</b>			
1:10			x
1:14			x
<b>Hag</b>			
1:1			x
1:12			x
1:14			x
2:2			x
2:4			x
2:9			x

	great	(pl.)	(other)
<b>Zech</b>			
1:14			x
1:15			x
3:1			x
3:8			x
4:7	x		
6:11			x
7:12			x
8:2			x
8:2			x
14:4	x		
<b>Mal</b>			
1:11			x
1:11			x
1:14			x
3:23			x
<b>Ps</b>			
12:4			x
21:6			x
47:3			x
48:2			x
57:11			x
71:19			x
76:2			x
77:14			x
86:10			x
86:13			x
95:3			x
95:3			x
96:4			x
99:2			x
99:3			x
104:25	x		
104:25	x		
106:21			x
108:5			x
111:2			x
115:13			x
131:1			x
135:5			x
136:4			x
136:7	x		
136:17			x
138:5			x
145:3			x
145:8			x
147:5			x
<b>Job</b>			
1:3			x
1:19			x
3:19			x
5:9			x
9:10			x
37:5			x
<b>Prov</b>			
18:16			x
19:19			x
25:6			x
27:14			x

	great	(pl.)	(other)
<b>Eccl</b>			
9:13			x
9:14			x
9:14	x		
10:4			x
<b>Lam</b>			
2:13			x
<b>Esth</b>			
1:5			x
1:20			x
2:18			x
4:1			x
4:3			x
8:15	x		
9:4			x
10:3			x
<b>Dan</b>			
8:8	x		
8:21	x		
9:4			x
9:12			x
10:1			x
10:4	x		x
10:7			x
10:8			x
11:2		x	
11:13		x	
11:25		x	
11:25		x	
11:28		x	
11:44			x
12:1			x
<b>Ezra</b>			
3:11			x
3:12			x
3:13			x
9:7			x
9:13			x
10:12			x
<b>Neh</b>			
1:3			x
1:5			x
1:10			x
2:10			x
3:1			x
3:20			x
3:27	x		
4:8			x
5:1			x
5:7		x	
6:3			x
7:4	x		
8:6			x
8:12			x
8:17			x
9:4			x

<u>great (pl.) (other)</u>			<u>great (pl.) (other)</u>			<u>Results great (pl.) (other)</u>		
<b>Neh</b>			<b>2Chr</b>					
9:18		x	1:8		x	84	55	386
9:25		x	1:10		x	p = 0.16	0.1048	0.7352
9:26		x	2:4	x		(525 total)		
9:32		x	2:4		x	55+386 = 441		
9:37		x	2:8	x		p = 0.84		
11:14		x	3:5	x		(not sg. phys. Greatness)		
12:31	x		4:9	x				
12:43		x	6:32		x			
12:43		x	7:8		x			
13:5	x		9:17	x				
13:27		x	15:13		x			
13:28		x	15:14		x			
<b>1Chr</b>			16:14		x			
11:14		x	18:30		x			
12:15		x	20:19		x			
12:23	x		21:14		x			
16:25		x	26:15	x				
17:8		x	28:5		x			
22:8		x	28:5		x			
25:8		x	30:21		x			
26:13		x	30:26		x			
29:1		x	31:15		x			
29:9		x	32:18		x			
29:22		x	34:9		x			
			34:21		x			
			34:30		x			
			36:18	x				

\* i.e. Nineveh as *the great city*; it is explained on page 61 why this implies a sort of subtle plurality.

\*\* Phrases like *great nation* or *great army* imply greatness by plurality, albeit only a secondary connotation.

\*\*\* The *great fire of God* is probably more about its divine awesomeness than about physical size.

There are ca. 55 גדול-occurrences in the OT which have plural connotations, and compared to the 525 occurrences in total, this makes just 10.48%—not very much. It may seem that the likelihood of גדול (gādôl) implying *muchness* rather than singular physical *greatness* might NOT exactly shine through its own abundance of evidence—this, however, must be put into perspective:

Although only 10.48% of גדול (gādôl) in the OT imply *muchness* or something similar, that does NOT automatically mean that the other 89.52% all mean *great* in physical size. Instead, only 16% actually have that true, physical and singular meaning of *great*. This also means that these 10.48% are to be pit against NOT 100% BUT ONLY against 16%, which means that the 10.48% for the connotation of *muchness* are almost two-thirds as likely as the 16% for the expected standard meaning *great*—65.50% as likely, to be exact. Whether the 10.48% should be judged relative to the entirety of גדול-occurrences (i.e. as just 10.48%) or rather relative to its direct 16%-competitor (i.e. as 65.50%) is unclear—so, for now the average of the two values shall be taken: 38% (i.e. 37.99%).

Since this chapter of the thesis has already shown that the word גדול (gādôl) has evolved from an earlier root which originally had a stronger connotation of *muchness*, which got somewhat lost over time (albeit not entirely), it might be useful to examine the connotations of גדול as it appears in the

earliest story of the Bible. This would most probably be the Book of Job,<sup>139</sup> where גדול can be found in Job 1:3, 5:9, 9:10, and 37:5.

- Job 1:3 reads: “*His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest (גדול) of all the men of the east.*” (KJV) Job is גדול due to his richness, or more specifically by virtue of him possessing an abundance of things and having the company of a multitude of living beings. The greatness has an implicit *muchness*.
- Job 5:9 and Job 9:10 are essentially the same saying,<sup>140</sup> namely a synonymous parallelism—a very common rhetorical device in Hebrew poetry,<sup>141</sup> where the same sense is repeated with synonyms, showing that the words have a similar meaning (similar passages can be seen on pages 58 and 75 of this thesis):

Job 9:10a	חקר ḥeqer <i>search (?)</i>	אין ’en <i>is-not</i>	עד- ’ad <i>until</i>	גדלות g <sup>e</sup> dōlōt <i>great-things</i>	עשה ’ōśē <i>does</i>
Job 9:10b	מספר mispār <i>number</i>	אין ’en <i>is-not</i>	עד- ’ad <i>until</i>	נפלאות niplā’ōt <i>marvels</i>	ו w <sup>e</sup> <i>and</i>

In this parallelism, גדלות (g<sup>e</sup>dōlōt, *great things*) correlates to נפלאות (niplā’ōt, *marvellous things*), both of which act as synonyms for godly acts that are characterized by how impressive they are. More interestingly, though, both of these nominalizations are further described: Just as the גדלות (g<sup>e</sup>dōlōt) are described as *so much so there is no searching/enumerating/numbering* (חקר ḥeqer), so are the נפלאות (niplā’ōt) described as *so much so there is no telling/numbering* (מספר mispār). One would be forgiven for interpreting the parallelism in such a manner that the two nouns חקר (ḥeqer) and מספר (mispār) were meant to convey entirely different meanings (since the usage of two different words might give that impression), but just as the nominalizations גדלות (g<sup>e</sup>dōlōt) and נפלאות (niplā’ōt) convey the same meaning, their further characterizations via חקר (ḥeqer) and מספר (mispār) should equally be understood as conveying the very same meaning. Since, then, both חקר (ḥeqer) and מספר (mispār) include the meaning *number* in their respective semantic fields, *number* must be the one shared sense which is meant to be conveyed by comparing the two

139The Book of Job is considered the oldest story to be found in the Bible, not only because of its archaic language (which could, of course, be archaizing for poetic reasons), but also because the content suggests a setting in the Patristic era (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, ...) where later developments of the Hebrew faith may not have been known yet. Some scholars think that Job may be Post-Exilic, in which case the Book of Job might be just as representative—not as the Bible’s most ancient use of גדול, but as a use of גדול contemporary to the Book of Jonah.

140The only difference being that Job 5:9 is missing one עד (’ad) instead moving the ו (w<sup>e</sup>) where Job 9:10 has עד.

141e.g. Ps 120:2; Prov 3:11; Is 53:5.

nouns in the parallelism. Therefore, both גדלות (*gēdōlōt*) and נפלאות (*niplā'ōt*) are further characterized by their innumerability. In other words: The great things are great by virtue of their abundant plenitude. The greatness has an implicit *muchness*.

- Job 37:5 says: “*God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.*” (KJV) On its own, this verse does not imply any *muchness* for the “great things”; however, both the *marvels* (נפלאות *niplā'ōt*) and the *great things* (גדלות *gēdōlōt*) utilize the very same nominalizations as in Job 5:9 and Job 9:10 (גדלות *gēdōlōt*; נפלאות *niplā'ōt*). So, since Job 5:9, 9:10 and Job 37:5 both speak of the same kind of *great things*, these *great things* here have the same quality of *muchness* as the *great things* there.

So, of the four times that גדול appears in Job (which is probably the earliest book of the OT, making its occurrences of גדול the earliest occurrences of the word in the OT), all of these occurrences of גדול can be argued to have a connotation of *muchness*.

Another already mentioned Hebrew word which more prominently means *much* or *many* is רב (*rab*). On the one hand, one could argue that it would fit the semantic bill better and should have been used for Jonah 2:1 if the intent really had been to express a multitude of fish—on the other hand, though, it is important to note that there is a semantic overlap between רב and גדול. Although the adjective form רב primarily means *much/many* (to be *numerous*), it can sometimes denote *greatness*.<sup>142</sup> For the Aramaic word רבא (*rava*) of the same root (which is being used in Targum Jonah 2:1), *great* (NOT *many*) even is the primary meaning (if not even the only meaning).<sup>143</sup>

So, where רב (*rab*) could be used to express a great number of beings, גדול (*gādōl*) can be used just as well. This can be seen in Joel 2:11, which uses both רב and גדול—גדול in the figurative sense of God’s greatness, and רב for a *great* (i.e. numerous) *army*, which in other verses would be expressed with גדול instead (as has been shown above already).<sup>144</sup> Indeed, Ezekiel 38:15 (קהל גדול)

142For example: In Gen 7:11 (תהום רבה—same in the Aramaic Targum) and 25:23, as well as in Prov 28:16 (ורב מעשקות) *a great oppressor*) the word רב is used for *greatness*, rather than for being numerous.

143Here is an additional hypothesis: Since the Aramaic equivalent to Hebrew גדול is רבא, the Aramaic Targum translation of Jonah 2:1 utilizes רבא (*rava*) for the *great fish* (נונא רבא). The Targum translation of Jonah is rather late (i.e. late 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> c. A.D.) and does not reflect the original, but it hints at the possibility that in a time of linguistic confusion (like the post-exilic era in which the Book of Jonah was written), a story could have been told between Hebrew- and Aramaic-speakers where the intended meaning of Hebrew רב and/or Aramaic רבא would get lost in translation. This is, of course, entirely speculative! However, it is known that concerning the Book of Jonah “philological study has revealed a number of words or phrases which show late Hebrew or Aramaic influence.” (Cartledge T.W. (1990): “Jonah, Book of”, in *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 465), so some cultural and linguistic exchange has indeed trickled into the book, so there might be something to this speculative hypothesis. Due to the speculative nature of this idea, it shall not be counted as part of the evidence for the main hypothesis of this thesis. (Of course, I am only referencing the Targum to bring up the Aramaic רבא (*rava*)—the Targum itself is far too late; e.g. it also uses, as would be expected, נונא (*nuna'*, fem. sg.) for the *fish*, which can never be a collective (although a phonetic similarity to the plural נוני (*nune*) cannot be denied).

144As a reminder: 2Ki 7:6; Ez 17:17, 37:10; 1Chr 12:23; Dan 11:13, Dan 11:25 (x2)

והיל רב, *a great company and a mighty army*) even goes so far as to use both רב and גדול in a clear parallelism, as if they were just interchangeable—which implies that they really are interchangeable, at least when calling a group of beings *great* in number.

Jenni-Westermann argues that “[t]he semantic range [of גדול] may be somewhat more restricted in view of the fact that not gādôl but → rab ‘much, many’ is used with some terms of volume”, citing “r<sup>c</sup>kûš ‘possessions,’ Gen 13:6” as first example,<sup>145</sup> but Gen 15:14 and Dan 11:28 use גדול for the that exact word (ברכש גדול), and so do other terms of volume like ים (i.e. *the great sea*, see Num 34:6,7; Josh 1:4, 9:1, (15:47), 23:4; Ezek 47:10,15,19,20, 48:28; Ps 104:25; Lam 2:13). So, akin to רב, the word גדול can very well be used with some other terms of volume (e.g. ים), or even with the very same ones (e.g. רכש)—proving some interchangeability between גדול and רב.

Both adjectives also have verb forms, גדל (gādôl) and רב (rab), between which a semantic overlap can be seen as well. The verb גדל (gādôl) occurs 123 times in the OT and usually means *to be great, to become great, to make so./sth. become great, or to do a great thing*—and (just as with the adjective) it is sometimes used for physical greatness, but is oft used more figuratively. The verb-form of רב (rab) usually tends to mean *to grow/increase, i.e. to be/become numerous (much/many)*—this meaning is one which both verbs have in common. There are even a few occasions where the two verbs are directly being utilized in synonymous parallelisms:<sup>146</sup>

Isaiah 9:2 הרבית הגוי לא [לו] הגדלת השמחה  
*Thou hast **multiplied** the nation,  
 and not **increased** the joy*

Ezekiel 16:7 ותרבי ותגדלי  
*thou hast **increased** and **waxen great***

Ezekiel 16:26 גדלי בשר ותרבי את־תזונתך  
*the Egyptians [**have grown**] **great** of flesh;  
 and [thou] hast **increased** thy whoredoms*

Ezra 9:6 כי עונותינו רבו למעלה ראש ואשמתנו גדלה עד לשמים  
*our iniquities are **increased** over our head,  
 and our trespass is **grown up** unto the heavens.*

145Jenni E., Westermann C. (1997): *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Vol. 1. p. 303.

146The רב גדול ורב in Deut 2:10 and 2:21, utilizing both גדל (gādôl) and רב (rab) right after one another to describe a group of people can be understood as a similar scenario meaning *a people great* (i.e. *numerous*) *and numerous*—however, this is unlikely because the whole phrase in both verses attributes not two but three adjectives to those people, גדול ורב ורם (*great and numerous and tall*), and it makes more sense to assume that all three adjectives should convey something different, rather than combining one pair of semantically similar/equal adjectives with one additional different adjective. So, in both of these verses, גדל (gādôl) most certainly does NOT mean *numerous*; for the very same reason, though, גדל (gādôl) is also NOT to be considered as meaning *great* (i.e. *tall*)—it most probably means *strong* or *powerful*.

Of course, these are the verb forms, not the adjective which in this thesis is primarily being discussed for גדול (gādôl)—however, the root is the same, the semantic connection is there.

These data-points about parallelisms and semantic overlaps between גדל / גדול and רב do by no means indefinitely prove the main hypothesis about Jonah being surrounded by multiple fish, but they are at least slight hints in favor of the hypothesis. So, the probability of גדול (gādôl) implying *muchness* can be raised by one arbitrary percent, from 38% to 39%—this is the positive side of the probability-coin.

On its flip side—the negative probability, one could say—, the very fact that there is a 16%-chance that גדול (gādôl) would convey the expected *great* in turn means that there is a 84%-chance that גדול (gādôl) might indeed mean *anything other than physically great*—things like *mighty, strong, very, marvelous, old(er)* (the occurrences where there are plural connotations are included in this number, as shown in the afore-mentioned summary). A 84%-chance of גדול (gādôl) meaning *anything other than physically great* (i.e. not matching the traditional reading of Jonah 2:1) can hardly be ignored.

Beyond the 84%-chance of the adjective גדול (gādôl) meaning things other than physical greatness, as a noun, גדל occurs 13 times in the OT and generally means *greatness*, but ALMOST ALWAYS FIGURATIVELY (mostly for the metaphorical greatness of God):

Num 14:19	כגדל חסדך	<i>the <b>greatness</b> of thy mercy</i>
Deut 3:24	את־גדלך ואת־ידך החזקה	<i>thy <b>greatness</b>, and thy mighty hand</i>
Deut 5:24	את־כבודו ואת גדלו	<i>his glory and his <b>greatness</b></i>
Deut 9:26	פדית בגדלך	<i>redeemed through thy <b>greatness</b></i>
Deut 11:2	יהוה אלהיכם את־גדלו את־ידו	the Lord your <i>God, his <b>greatness</b>, his mighty hand</i>
Deut 32:3	הבו גדל לאלהינו	<i>ascribe ye <b>greatness</b> unto our God</i>
Is 9:8[9]	בגאווה ובגדל לבב	<i>in the pride and <b>stoutness</b> of heart</i>
Is 10:12	גדל לבב מלך־אשור	<i>the <b>stout</b> heart of the king of Assyria</i>
Ezek 31:2	אלימי דמית בגדלך	<i>Whom art thou like in thy <b>greatness</b>?</i>
Ezek 31:7	וייף בגדלו	<i>Thus was he fair in his <b>greatness</b></i>
Ezek 31:18	בכבוד ובגדל	<i>in glory and in <b>greatness</b></i>
Ps 79:11	כגדל זרועך	<i>the <b>greatness</b> of thy power</i>
Ps 150:2	הללוהו כרב גדלו	<i>praise him for his excellent <b>greatness</b></i>

Ezekiel 31:7 is the only entry in the list above in which גדל seems to be literal. However, the entire passage describes a beautiful tree as a symbol of Assyria and is thus, albeit in a subtler and broader

sense, still figurative. This extends to Ezekiel 31:18, where the tree's greatness seems to be as literal (pertaining to a tree, albeit a tree as a symbol) as it is figurative ("in glory and in greatness"), but it echoes the question from Ezekiel 31:2 which is clearly using *greatness* in a figurative sense. From beginning to end, Ezekiel 31 seems to be playing with how literal or how figurative *greatness* can be understood in one and the same context.

Furthermore, it should be noted that while the here quoted Ezekiel 31:7 says that the tree "was fair in his greatness" right before mentioning the tree's branches, Ezekiel 31:9 then explains that "I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches", using the same root for "fair" as in Ezekiel 31:7, which suggests that the fairness from *greatness* (גדל) and the fairness from *multitude* (רב) are one and the same, further implying that the *greatness* here is also a reference to *multitude*.

So, the 84%-probability of גול / גדול altogether (i.e. as a verb, an adjective, or a noun) meaning *anything other than physically great* can also confidently be raised by one arbitrary percent, to 85%. In conclusion, the average probability between גדול (gādôl) implying *muchness* (39%) and *anything other than physically great* (85%) is 62%.

This, so far, is only concerning the general occurrences of גדול (gādôl) all across the OT. How the Book of Jonah in particular deals with the meaning of גדול (gādôl) will be shown in the next chapter.

### 2.2.3.: גדול in the Book of Jonah

In addition to these general גדול-occurrences across the OT, the context within the Book of Jonah alone should be taken into consideration as well, because throughout the entire Book of Jonah, the author (applying a stylistic choice, it seems) uses גדול (gādôl)—a central and recurring word in this book—in many different ways (not including 2:1 as the unknown quantity):

1:2 <i>great</i> ([in circumference is] the city)	3:2 <i>great</i> ([in circumference is] the city)
1:4 <i>strong/heavy</i> (wind)	3:3 <i>great</i> ([in circumference is] the city)
1:4 <i>wild/rough/mighty</i> (tempest)	3:7 <i>the nobles</i> (of the king)
1:10 <i>very/exceedingly</i> (afraid)	4:1 <i>very/exceedingly</i> (angry)
1:12 <i>wild/rough/mighty</i> (tempest)	4:6 <i>very/exceedingly</i> (pleased)
1:16 <i>very/exceedingly</i> (afraid)	4:11 <i>great</i> ([in circumference is] the city)

The repetitions might be grouped together, in which case the meaning *very/exceedingly* would still be applicable to three different instances (*afraid, angry, pleased*), and next to other meanings such as *strong, wild/rough/mighty*, and *nobles*, the meaning of *great in size* appears only with the city – just one of many options.

So, the semantic diversity with which the author applies גדול (gādôl) offers good reason to expect that the word might possibly mean something DIFFERENT than *great in size* concerning its application to the fish to Jonah 2:1.

Putting this into numbers, out of 5 different uses (*great, strong, wild, very, nobles*), there is only 1 (20%) which does indeed mean *great* in a physical sense, which means that 80% of all גדול (gādôl) in the Book of Jonah mean different things, NOT physically *great*.<sup>147</sup>

However, it is noteworthy that even for Nineveh being called *the great city* (העיר הגדולה hā-ʿir hag-gēdōlâ, Jonah 1:2, 3:2, 4:11, 3:3), this does not necessarily have to be a reference to the city's circumference (physical greatness). A case can be made that גדול (gādôl) is here, too, implying plurality: As is revealed in Genesis 10:11,12, *the great city* is the name given to a set of multiple cities (Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, Resen) categorized as the one large composite city (or German *Mehrstädtebund*):

<sup>147</sup>Including repetitions, it could be counted so that 4 out of 12 (33.33%) mean *great*, and 66.67% mean something else. The average between 80% and 66.67% – if one cannot decide which way to count – would be 73.33%. However, the question is really not how often the word appears in certain semantic contexts time and again, but rather the amount of the different semantic contexts in which it appears (no matter how often) – therefore, counting the repetitions would be the wrong approach on this particular point, and the ratio of 20–80% should be preferred.

“[...] Nineveh was renowned in antiquity for its remarkable size (*vid.*, Jonah 3:3), the words “this is the great city” must apply not to Resen, but to Nineveh. This is grammatically admissible, if we regard the last three names as subordinate to the first, taking as the sign of subordination (Ewald, 339a), and render the passage thus: “he built Nineveh, with Rehoboth-Ir, Cheloch, and Resen between Nineveh and Chelach, this is the great city.” From this it follows that the four places formed a large composite city, a large range of towns, to which the name of the (well-known) great city of Nineveh was applied, in distinction from Nineveh in the more restricted sense, with which Nimrod probably connected the other three places so as to form one great capital, [...]”<sup>148</sup>

So, when the Book of Jonah refers to Nineveh as *the great city*,<sup>149</sup> then *great* actually refers to a sort of greatness that stems from consisting of multiple smaller parts—*greatness via plurality*.

Thus, although 20% of Jonah’s גָּדוֹל (gādōl) refer to *physical size* (namely that of Nineveh), 0% of these occurrences refer to *singular physical size*—*physical size*, yes, *singular*, no, so counting the average of 10% seems fitting to count these occurrences as *physical size through plurality*. Therefore, the probability for גָּדוֹל (gādōl) in the Book of Jonah to mean something other than *singular physical size* turns from 80% to 90%.<sup>150</sup> Nineveh and the fish are metaphorical mirror-images, so the city’s greatness through collectivity hints at the fish’s collectivity; see pages 147f.

Alternatively, there are two more possibilities:

- The first alternative strengthens the idea of Nineveh’s greatness implying *greatness via plurality* (a different approach to the previous argument, one could say), namely that it is a reference to Nineveh’s huge population, its many inhabitants: As stated in Jonah 4:11, there are more than 120,000 who *do not know their right hand from their left*, an expression limited to children and youth—so, these 120,000 mentioned in Jonah 4:11 constitute only a small portion, and Nineveh’s population must have been far greater.<sup>151</sup> If the youth

148Keil C.F., Delitzsch F. (1857-78): *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*. (This notion is mentioned by several commentators: Knobel, Lange, Wordsworth, Keil, Delitzsch, Rawlinson, Grote, M. v. Niebuhr, Ewald.)

149Another occurrence of the expression (lā-‘īr hag-gēdōlā, *great city*) is attested in Jer 22:8, but there it says *this great city* and contextually seems to refer to Judah, as that passage is about the impending destruction of the palace of the king of Judah—therefore, this occurrence does not have anything to do with Nineveh.

150Lest anyone accuse me of stretching the data to just better suit my own thesis, I was first reluctant to truly consider this subtle implication that even these few occurrences of גָּדוֹל (gādōl) in the Book of Jonah would imply plurality, constituting 0% occurrences with the primary, usual meaning—this detail, once it was being pointed out to me, just seemed too strong, supporting my thesis too well to be true. It is for exactly that reason that that I have actually bent the given interpretation to NOT support my thesis 100% but ONLY 90%.

151c.f. Martin G. (2001, 2004): *Angles on Jonah: Five Approaches to the Study of the Text of Jonah*, p. 19.

constituted 25% to 33% of Nineveh's population (numbers on such a topic are subject to pure speculation), then its overall population might have been three or four times as big, i.e. 360,000 or 480,000 people. So, Nineveh may have been a *great city* by virtue of consisting of a multitude of living beings.

- The other alternative might be that Nineveh's greatness is one of value, of importance—it being the one of Nimrod's *greatest* cities because it was one of the very first cities he had founded, possibly implied by the quasi superlative nature of גדול when applied to Nineveh (Jonah 3:3 עיר־גדולה לאלהים literally reads that it was *a city great (even) to God*, having a subtle tone of value rather than size; also, העיר הגדולה with the articular adjective (determinate adjective) might have a superlative nature).<sup>152</sup>

So, if the greatness of Nineveh, *the great(est) city*, really was one not in terms of physical greatness, but of *importance*, then that would be one more point in favor of the possibility that גדול (gādôl) would equate to 0% physical greatness in the Book of Jonah.

At the very least, this is an interesting option worthy of being mentioned. What speaks against it is the *three day walk* in 3:3, which rather implies some sort of physical greatness (even the previous explanation of Nineveh's greatness from the city's huge population would be a better fit for that, since there would be many people to preach to).<sup>153</sup>

So, in the end, the best argument seems to be one that implies Nineveh's greatness to be *greatness via plurality*: The city's greatness, albeit physical, may stem from its inherent plurality either by virtue of the city consisting of several smaller towns, or possibly its plenitude of inhabitants—not too unlike the here hypothesized plurality of fish that engulfed Jonah.

Eventually, the average between OT-context and Jonah-context should be used to evaluate how likely it is that גדול (gādôl) means something other than *singular physical size* (implying the possibility for it to instead mean *physical size through plurality*): In the context of the entirety of the OT that probability would be 62%, but in the context of Jonah that probability is 90%—the average of them both (which is what shall be accepted) being 76%.<sup>154</sup>

152c.f. Martin G. (2001, 2004): *Angles on Jonah: Five Approaches to the Study of the Text of Jonah*, p. 16–17.

153A counterargument to that could be Luther's interpretation that Nineveh could have been small but complex, and thus it would take Jonah three days to traverse all its streets at a leisurely pace. In that case, the three day walk in Jonah 3:3 would not negate that Nineveh might have been physically small in circumference, and the idea of it just being a great city in terms of value and importance would still be a possibility. (The reason this entire argument, albeit mentioned, may be dismissed, is its sheer amount of conjecture—just a little too much vague possibility, rather than solid probability.)

154Possible numbers are: **Accepted result: 76**=(62+90)/2; High result: 81=(62+100)/2; Low result: 71=(62+80)/2

### 2.3.: *swallow* vs. *engulf* (2:1)

The word בלע (bāla'), which is used to the fish's act of supposedly literally *swallowing* Jonah in 2:1, occurs 48 times in the OT, but has a range of (partially overlapping) meanings:

	<u>engulf</u>	<u>destroy</u>	<u>swallow</u>		<u>engulf</u>	<u>destroy</u>	<u>swallow</u>
Gen 41:7	x	x		Ps 106:17	x	x	fig.
Gen 41:24	x	x		Ps 107:27		x	
Ex 7:12			lit.?	Ps 124:3		x	
Ex 15:12	x	x	fig.	Prov 1:12		x	fig.
Num 4:20	?		fig. (suddenly)	Prov 19:28			fig.
Num 16:30	x	x	fig.	Prov 21:20			lit.
Num 16:32	x	x	fig.	Eccl 10:12		x	
Num 16:34	x	x	fig.	Is 3:12		x	
Num 26:10	x	x	fig.	Is 9:16		x	
Deut 11:6	x	x	fig.	Is 19:3		x	
2Sam 17:16		x		Is 25:7		x	
2Sam 20:19		x		Is 25:8		x	
2Sam 20:20		x		Is 28:4			lit.
Job 2:3		x		Is 28:7		x	
Job 7:19			fig. (suddenly)	Is 49:19		x	fig.
Job 8:18		x		Jer 51:34		x	fig.
Job 10:8		x		Lam 2:2		x	
Job 20:15			fig.	Lam 2:5a		x	
Job 20:18			fig.	Lam 2:5b		x	
Job 37:20		x		Lam 2:8		x	
Ps 21:9		x		Lam 2:16		x	
Ps 35:25		x		Hos 8:7			lit.
Ps 55:9		x		Hos 8:8		x	fig.
Ps 69:15	x	x	fig.	Hab 1:13		x	

PLUS: 2x Bekhorot 1:2 (Mishna) lit.

The attentive reader may notice that the list above has not just the OT's 48 occurrences (which would include literal swallowing only 4 times), but also includes the 2 times the verb occurs in the Mishna's Bekhorot 1:2<sup>155</sup> (which the attentive reader may also recognize from page 20) where בלע (bāla') is used for fish swallowing other fish in an entirely literal sense:

דג טמא שבלע דג טהור מותר באכילה וטהור שבלע דג טמא אסור באכילה לפי שאינו גידולי

Searching the Mishna or other extra-biblical texts for בלע (bāla') was by no means the intent of the research and has not been done, but this one particular verse should be included due to its topical gravitas: Bekhorot 1:2 is the only occurrence within any text (outside of Jonah) which have been searched for this thesis which actually speaks of actual fish actually swallowing something<sup>156</sup>

155Translation: *If [an] unclean fish swallows [a?] clean fish, [the latter] is permitted in food, and if [a] clean [fish] swallows [an?] unclean fish, [the latter] is forbidden in food, for it is not its product [lit. "for [its] mouth is not [the] breeding-organ (lit. growth, the organ in which offspring is grown)"]*.

156Tobit 6:2 from the Greek Deuterocanon speaks of a fish *wanting to swallow/devour* the protagonist (ἐβουλήθη καταπιεῖν). The themes present in that scene might be comparable to Jonah, which is further discussed in a separate chapter on page 99. In any case, though, that text is in ancient Greek, which makes it not applicable to this list here.

—a direct (albeit unintended) linguistic parallel to the traditional reading of Jonah 2 (same noun, same verb), and therefore quite relevant to this part of the thesis (although it runs counter to the thesis, but that is exactly why honesty demands the inclusion of Bekhorot 1:2).

Also of interest is Num 4:20, for which there are mainly two different readings:

- *But not shall they go in to watch the holy things as they are covered, or else they die.*
- *But not shall they go in to watch the holy things even for a moment [lit. as swallow(ed), i.e. at a gulp], or else they die.*

The question here is how to read the infinitivus constructus כבלע (k<sup>ə</sup>b-balla‘).

What speaks in favor of the *moment*-reading is that the expression is also used in Job 7:19 to convey suddenness, and the LXX has כבלע in Num 4:20 rendered ἐξάπινα, which means *suddenly*.

One might consider the *covered*-reading as one found in older translations like the KJV, but it also appears in some modern translations like the NET (1996–2006), ISV (1996–2012), JUB (2000–2013), HCSB (2003–2017).

The JPS Tanakh from 1917 (OJPS), which also has that reading (*covered*), is still being published by the Jewish Publication Society. However, the newer version from 1985 (NJPS) goes a step further and speaks of the sanctuary’s *dismantling*.<sup>157</sup> The *Good News Translation* safely speaks of the priests *preparing the sacred objects for moving*—this could be an act of *dismantling*, but probably still implies their *covering*, as Num 4:15 already mentions both the covering (utilizing a different word), the movement, and the Kohathites; the ISV also includes a footnote for Num 4:20 explaining that the holy things were being covered “in preparation for travel”. In regards to Num 4:15, a reading in which the holy things are being covered at least makes sense.

So, whether or not the holy things in Num 4:20 are being covered—i.e. being *surrounded* with some sort of cloth, like certain fish surrounding a certain prophet—, or whether they are briefly seen *at a gulp*, it is, in any case, clear that there is no literal swallowing going on in Num 4:20.

Only 6 out of 50 occurrences are to be taken literal (12.00%)—the other 44 (88.00%) have some non-literal meaning, being in a figurative or metaphorical sense. (The list above marks only those occurrences where indeed some form of illustrative metaphor<sup>158</sup> is being used as *figurative*, but of course, any occurrence not marked as *literal* is figurative—this entirety of 44 occurrences counts.)

<sup>157</sup>Which probably puts כבלע in Num 4:20 in the *destroy*-category of semantic possibilities, as odd as it may sound.

<sup>158</sup>The word occurs once in Job 20:15 for an evildoer having to vomit the riches he has swallowed up from his belly—the sentence and its context are highly metaphorical, because Job 20:12 explicates that what has been swallowed as (metaphorical) food to feed on are *evils* (which cannot be literal), comparable to Proverbs 19:28. Also noteworthy: The words used for *vomit*, *swallow* and *belly* in Job 20:15 are the very same words as are used in Jonah 2:1.

Of these 44 (88.00%) non-literal applications,

- 11 (22.00% of 50; 25.00% of 44) imply being *engulfed* by something (mostly the earth).
- 39 (78.00% of the 50; 88.64% of the 44) imply *destruction*, even *death*. (This does not affect the probability-results of the word studies, but especially due to Jonah 2:3, the connotation of *death* or *near-death* shall be further explored in a separate chapter—see page 150.)

A probability of 22% that בלע (bālaʿ) meaning *engulfed* might not look like much, but one must keep in mind that the presumed default meaning of the word and the traditional reading for Jonah 2:1, namely literal swallowing, has a probability of only 12%. So, in comparison, the alternative reading—that Jonah was *engulfed* by fish and NOT lit. *swallowed*—is 1.8333 (22/12) times as likely as the traditional reading, which would give it a probability of 183.33%. This would, of course, be a little too good a value to keep it using here (no matter how true it may be), so the average between 22% and 183.33% shall be taken, which is 102.67%.

There is also the afore-mentioned 88.00% probability that בלע (bālaʿ) might just generally be non-literal, and since that also has its value for the thesis, the afore-mentioned value of 102.67% shall be lowered to the average between it and these 88% non-literal, which results in 95.34%.

#### 2.4.: prepared vs. gathered (2:1)

Jonah 2:1 says that God *appointed, commanded* or *provided* what may be one or more fish. The Hebrew word מָנָה (mānâ) used here can indeed mean exactly that, but it also has another semantic dimension which—although not necessarily changing the meaning—should be of great interest in light of the possibility that it may indeed have been a multitude of fish and not just one. The word occurs 27 times in the OT (aside from Jonah 2:1), of which 21 (i.e. 78%) clearly or implicitly refer to *numbering* or *counting*, or at least imply a countable multitude:

- *number / count*: 16 (always implying a multitude of some sort)
- *number* OR *appoint*: 5 (2 on gathering a group or army; 2 about rations; 1 is Job 7:3)
- *command / appoint*: 6 (with a substantially singular object)<sup>159</sup>

A few of these occurrences have interesting semantic implications which go together with the idea of God *gathering* a swarm or school of fish rather well:

- Jer 33:13 applies the word to flocks of sheep. Does one just count them, lead and command them? Are they akin to an “army” (albeit quite pacifist)? In any case, the usage of the word for a shepherd counting or tending to his flock of sheep is a pretty close call for God leading a swarm (or quasi “flock”) of fish towards Jonah.
- The word is used for *raising an army* (1 Kings 20:25), i.e. gathering a multitude of people.
- The word can mean *taking a census* (2 Samuel 24:1, 1 Chronicles 21:1,17, 27:24), which does imply a gathering of the people (to be counted), possibly even in a particular place.<sup>160</sup>
- Putting together a group of people (1 Chronicles 9:29) to take care of something.
- Job 7:3 is often translated as “appointed” in most English translations, but a semantically more fitting translation would be that for Job the wearisome nights *have been numbered* or *have been made to be a multitude* (like *Douay-Rheims* “[I] have numbered to myself”, or

<sup>159</sup>These are occasions where the object appearing with the verb actually (or probably) is a singular object – this does not include verses where the object may grammatically be in the singular but still implies a multitude, as e.g. in Gen 13:16. Three out of these following six occurrences could possibly be understood as implying multitudes (the rest is clearly in the singular)—however, two of these three that could be understood as plural objects also happen to be two of the other three occurrences in the Book of Jonah:

- Jonah 4:8 sg.
- Jonah 4:7 sg./pl. (the noun is technically a collective and can be understood as such—here as well)
- Jonah 4:6 sg./pl. (the exact plant is unknown, but it consists of multiple vines)
- Psalm 61:7 sg./pl. (two objects in the sg.)
- Isaiah 65:12 sg.
- Daniel 1:11 sg.

<sup>160</sup>In 1Chr 21:17, *count* is accompanied by a different word for *command*, i.e. *commanded to count* – this example highlights that there is another, possibly clearer word in the Hebrew if one intends to speak of *commanding*.

even better the German *Textbibel 1899* “wurden mir zugezählt” and (somewhat awkwardly but fittingly worded) *Luther* “sind mir viel geworden”, i.e. *became much/many to me*).

- In Daniel 1:5,10 there can be no doubt that the word means *allot/assign/allocate*, though since it is referring to a *ration/portion/amount/provision* of drink and food, the presence of a countable amount of something and thereby the implication of a multitude cannot be denied.

In the Aramaic Targum translation, Jonah 2:1 as well as 4:6,7,8 all use זמן (zaman), which can mean to *fix, prepare, or invite*, but also to *assemble* or to *band together*, implying plurality. Once again, the implication is an act of *gathering* a larger amount of several elements into one united group.

So, other possible interpretations would be that God *gathered* the swarm of fish—like a flock of sheep, like an army of the sea, like a populace for a census—, or that he just (comparable to Job 7:3) *made them to be a multitude* to burden Jonah.

Though as has been stated before, the semantic implication of a multitude stands in no conflict with and does not necessarily have to change the usual interpretations of the verb itself. The LXX equivalent προστάσσω appears 8 times in the NT and 72 more times (aside from Jon 2:1) in the LXX itself, where it generally means something in the range of *command, order* or *appoint*. So, the verse may indeed be saying that God *commanded, appointed* or *assigned* this piscine threat to engulf Jonah, independent of whether it was but one or more.

Considering that 78% of the occurrences have this implication of referencing a countable multitude, this tendency heavily implies that the word being used in John 2:1 *CAN* refer to not just one but multiple fish. Since the amount of fish is the very thing in question (and thereby the unknown quantity, especially if the collective connotation one verse later were to be ignored), the tendency is in favor of interpreting it as a multitude of fish.

Only if, however, it clearly were a single fish, then this tendency would obviously have no effect. For example, the exact same word in the very same conjugation זמן (way-y<sup>e</sup>man, LXX προσέταξεν in all four verses) appears in Jonah 4:6,7,8, once for each verse: There it speaks of objects which are probably to be understood in the singular (a *leafy plant* (6), a *worm* (7), and an *east wind* (8)), and the impression certainly is that God provides, appoints, commands these things to appear and do their job. Should these three occurrences, since they are all in the Book of Jonah, more heavily impact how the same word be judged in Jonah 2:1?

On the one hand: Yes, absolutely. The author seems to be utilizing מנה (mānâ) for singular objects in 100% of all three occurrences outside of Jonah 2:1—if this is so, then that would be

highly significant. That being said, it must be pointed out that *the worm* תולעת in Jonah 4:7 might be a COLLECTIVE—similar to מנה in Jonah 2:2, but using the related ending *-at*. BDB, for example, identifies the worm תולעת as a collective in Deut 28:39 and in Is 66:24, even though both of these instances of תולעת occur with a singular verb—just like the one occurrence of תולעת in Jonah 4:7. So, whether Jonah 4:7 speaks of a single worm or of a collective is debatable—it might actually be a collective.

On the other hand: The general tendencies across the OT cannot be denied either, and the author's usage of מנה (mānâ) does not necessarily look like a stylistic choice. Other particularities of the author's writing style like switching between Pl.- and Sg.-forms for collective nouns (see page 17) or גדול (gādôl) being used for anything other than singular physical greatness (see page 61) are particularities which can be seen spread across the whole book, and that is what gives good reason to think of these particularities as stylistic choices. The usage of מנה (mānâ) in the Book of Jonah is very different, as the word appears only once at the start of chapter 2 and a second time in a threefold cluster in the middle of chapter 4—so, the word is not at all spread across the whole book, and this makes it a bit more difficult to truly consider it a stylistic choice by the author.

Any attempt to calculate how the things<sup>161</sup> mentioned throughout this chapter would affect the likelihood of מנה-collectivity in Jonah 2:1 would ultimately be far too arbitrary, so the most honest solution is to just suggest an increase by an arbitrary but small 1%,<sup>162</sup> as has already been mentioned on page 23.

So, the likelihood of מנה-collectivity of 80% in Jonah 2:1 can be increased by 1% via the syntactical implications of מנה (mānâ), resulting in 81%; combined with the other increases by 2% and 1% also mentioned on page 23, collective מנה ends up with a probability of 84%.

This should, of course, not detract from the main point of this chapter, namely that מנה (mānâ) has a 78% probability to be used with countable pluralities or collective objects, and that, matching the idea of a swarm of fish, מנה (mānâ) in Jonah 2:1 may very well be translated as *gathered*.

That being said, to use the word *gather* might potentially seem slightly far-fetched, as not a single Hebrew dictionary (at least none known to me) would translate מנה (mānâ) as *gather*—that, however, does not mean that the implication of *gather* is not at all semantically implied, although a closer look might be needed to see that the semantic connotation is indeed there.

161Mainly the 78% chance that מנה occurs with a plural or collective, and the two or maybe even three מנה-occurrences in Jonah which occur with singulative objects (with one possible exception, the *worm* in Jonah 4:7).

162Attempts at calculating the increase have ranged from +0.93% to 4.46%, so 1% is one of the lower estimates.

The *Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* lists three meanings for מנה (mānâ). Assuming that the most important or more likely meanings are listed first (as per dictionary convention), it is noteworthy that this dictionary lists “appoint, assign” only as the tertiary meaning,<sup>163</sup> while “count, number” is the primary meaning.<sup>164</sup>

However, even though *to number* may be closer to the meaning of מנה suggested in this thesis, the transitive intensifier Pi'el of מנה used in Jonah 2:1 does not mean *to count* or *to number*, but rather *to make countable*—in that light, Jonah 2:1 could be understood as *YHWH made-countable fish*, i.e. *YHWH made it so that there was a countable set of fish*.

Correct as this reading may be, though, *to make countable* is an awfully technical way of phrasing the concept at hand. This is where the afore-mentioned tertiary meaning *to appoint* comes into play again, as the afore-mentioned dictionary further describes the tertiary meaning as “appoint, assign someone to sword” and gives Isaiah 65:12 as an example, about sending people into battle... not unlike the secondary and thus more relevant meaning given in the same dictionary: “muster [army] (1Ki 20:23)”.

What does it mean to muster any army or any other kind of group? Opening one or two thesauri quickly reveals a multitude of synonyms, almost all of which conceptually revolve around and even directly include the word *gather*.<sup>165</sup>

None of this is really meant to diminish the typical reading of מנה (mānâ) in Jonah 2:1 as *appoint*—rather, just like an army can be *appointed* to the sword, so is that same army thereby *mustered*, is *gathered* for a certain purpose, *building a countable set* of soldiers. In the same sense, YHWH did indeed appoint the fish, in as much as he gathered them together as if to muster an army—he made it so there is a countable set of fish directed towards a certain purpose.<sup>166</sup>

So, it is indeed a legitimate reading to interpret מנה (mānâ) in Jonah 2:1 as *gathered*.

163Potentially with the underlying concept of *adding/portioning X to Y* (like *adding a person to a task*).

164Other dictionaries also agree upon *count/number* as the primary meaning of מנה, c.f. *OT Word Study Dictionary*, *BDB*, *NAS Exhaustive Concordance*.

165English synonyms for *muster* include: *to assemble, to bring together, to call together, collect, convene, corral, gather, gather together, to group, to form group, to rally, to round up*. German words to translate English *muster* (all of which directly correspond to the general meaning of *gather* or the other afore-mentioned synonyms) include: *zusammenbringen, zusammenrufen [Soldaten etc.], sich versammeln, zusammentrommeln*.

166An expression of the desired concept that would more exact than simply saying *gather* might look as follows: *The bringing together of multiple smaller units into one larger unit, which, albeit put together from multiple smaller units, may be perceived as one collective unit, so that they can be lead towards a particular place and purpose*.

2.5.: belly vs. inside (2:1,2)

The Hebrew word מעה (me'â / me'ê) used for the fish's *belly* is an extremely vague word and does not at all denote one specific organ like the *stomach* (as is assumed for Jonah's traditional reading).

2.5.1.: מעה not stomach in the OT

The word מעה can have the following meanings:

	LITERAL			FIGURATIVE
	stomach	reprod. sys.	organs	inner being (often <i>compassion</i> )
Gen 15:4		*		
Gen 25:23		*		
Num 5:22	0.5	0.5		
2Sam 7:12		*		
2Sam 16:11		*		
2Sam 20:10			*	
Is 16:11				*
Is 48:19		*		
Is 49:1		*		
Is 63:15				*
Jer 4:19			* (chest)	
Jer 4:19			* (chest)	
Jer 31:20				*
Ezek 3:3	*			(?)
Ezek 7:19	*			(?)
Ps 22:15			* (chest)	
Ps 40:9				*
Ps 71:6		*		
Job 20:14	* (metaphor)			(?)
Job 30:27				*
Ruth 1:11		*		
Song 5:4				*
Song 5:14	* (outer torso)			
Lam 1:20				*
Lam 2:11				*
2Chr 21:15			*	
2Chr 21:15			*	
2Chr 21:18			*	
2Chr 21:19			*	
2Chr 32:21		*		
<b>TOTAL:</b>	4.5	9.5	8	8

The word מַעָה (me'â) occurs 30 times (minus the 2 occurrences in Jonah), only 3.5 of these occurrences show the word to mean a *stomach* into which food and drink are being swallowed (since the last occurrence in Song 5:14 seems to describe the torso as a whole; yes, it is the *belly*, but NOT the inner *stomach*) – of these 3.5, only 0.5 is obviously literal (Num 5:22) but also only half certain, while the other three occurrences (Job 20:14; Ezekiel 3:3, 7:19) PROBABLY mean *stomach*, but maybe not:

- In Ezekiel 3:3, a scroll is being swallowed into the בֶּטֶן (beten) to fill the מַעָה (me'â)—these might just be synonyms, or the two words are chosen for some contrast (maybe that after having been digested in the stomach, the content of the scroll shall spread to the whole inner being—compare German *einverleiben*).
- In Ezekiel 7:19, it is said that *silver cannot satisfy their beings or fill bellies*, which most probably refers to the stomach not getting fed; it is just not entirely clear whether מַעָה (me'â) is here meant to be contrasted with the *soul* (נֶפֶשׁ nepeš) mentioned before it, or whether this מַעָה (me'â) is meant to be of more a spiritual kind for the very reason that it is mentioned together with the *soul* (נֶפֶשׁ nepeš)—although the imagery doubtlessly makes use of the *stomach* organ, it may or may not be figurative/metaphorical usage.
- Job 20:14 is quite clearly phrased with imagery utilizing the *stomach* organ—however, the context is highly metaphorical and figurative, which puts even this occurrence into question. (The same applies in the next chapter on the word for *vomit*, see page 79.)
- Num 5:22 is clearly just a literal stomach, because the verse describes a liquid being drunk and entering the belly/bowels (מַעָה me'â). However, the context implies a connection to the *reproductive system*, since the female בֶּטֶן (beten) paralleled with מַעָה (me'â) in Num 5:22 is said to be connected to the יָרֵךְ (yārēk), i.e. the *thighs* or *genitals* (and the entire passage is about illegitimate sexual relations). So, the bowels (מַעָה me'â) in Num 5:22 may indeed be the *stomach*, as the liquid is said to go into these *bowels*, but since the organs affected by this liquid are the *reproductive organs*, the *bowels* (מַעָה me'â) the liquid is said to go into may just as well be those *reproductive organs*.<sup>167</sup>

So, only 1 of these 4 *stomach*-occurrences really cannot be called into question as being entirely literal, and even that one may or may not really refer to to *stomach* as a digestive organ (thus only a 0.5-occurrence); the other three do indeed refer to the *stomach*, but are none the less using it in some metaphorical or figurative context, so much so that all three of them might not even be counted among the *stomach*-occurrences, but rather the *inner being*-occurrences.

<sup>167</sup>The time when this passage was written was long before Bekhorot 1:2 in the Mishna explicated that the stomach and the generative womb are not the same, and maybe the anatomical knowledge of the author or the culture at the time was restricted.

If all 4 occurrences were counted as meaning *stomach*, then that would make 13.33%. If, however, only the one clear occurrence were to be counted, then that would be 1 out of 30: 3.33%. Since both interpretations could make sense, the probability for מעה (me'â) to mean *stomach* across the OT, be it literally or figuratively, ranges from 3.33% to 13.33%, the average being 8.33%.

This, in turn, means that there is a probability of 91.67% (or  $100-3.33=96.67\%$  to  $100-13.33=86.67\%$ ) that the word is indeed NOT referring to a literal stomach but something else—which may be a metaphorical stomach, the physical inner being, or the metaphysical inner being. This should NOT be taken to mean that Jonah was inside the fish's reproductive system<sup>168</sup> ( $p=9/30$ ), any other inner organs ( $p=8/30$ ) or the fish's spiritual inner being ( $p=8/30$ ); it is just much more likely (roughly 91.67%) that the מעה (me'â) in which Jonah spends three days and from which Jonah prays to God is not the stomach, but a more vague form of *inward part* (other than *stomach*).

It should be stressed that in its physical sense, not only does מעה (me'â) not necessarily refer to the *stomach*, but not even necessarily to the *belly*—it can also refer to the *chest*.

Jer 4:19 begins with מעי מעי—*my belly/bowels, my belly/bowels!*—, but then goes on to define this supposed *belly* or these *bowels* as קירות לבי—*walls of my heart*, which CANNOT describe the *belly* or even *stomach*.

On a side note, one might be inclined to argue that, since לב is mostly used to refer to the merely figurative heart, the according organ in the Hebrew's mind may not even have been the actual heart, and that this phrasing is just a translation mistake... which would be entirely wrong: The literal heart is also referred to as לב and is explicitly described as being in the chest-area (Ex 28:29) and right between the arms (2Ki 9:24). So, there can be no doubt that when the Hebrew used the word לב to refer to even just a figurative heart, the organ in the Hebrew's mind was still the heart in the chest-area, or at the very least an organ inside the chest, not inside the belly. This, by the way, also puts Ps 22:15 about the wax-like heart being *melted in the midst of my bowels* (מעה) into an even more reasonable light, since this can be read as *melted in the midst of my chest*.

So, if the מעה (me'â) is, according to Jer 4:19, the *walls of the heart*, then this cannot be synonymous with the *stomach*- or *belly*-area. Altogether, this just adds to the vagueness of מעה (me'â) in the physical sense.

<sup>168</sup>As is described in the Midrash presented on page 87. The fact that such a reading would not only be statistically more likely (9/30 as opposed to max. 4/30) might, in part, explain what led to that somewhat bizarre Midrash.

Taking all 11 figurative/spiritual occurrences (8 *inner being*, 3 *stomach* but metaphorical) as the likelihood for מַעָה (me'â) being metaphorical and figurative, the probability for that would be 36.67% (as opposed to a 63.33%-probability for מַעָה (me'â) being some literal, entirely physical form of *inward part*)—this roughly rounds to a ratio of one third of OT-occurrences being metaphorical vs. two thirds of OT-occurrences being physical.

The proposition here is that מַעָה (me'â) does not necessarily denote a literal, physical *stomach*, but it is not entirely clear to what degree this should imply it only being a figurative metaphor (36.67%), or whether this may include literal physical *insideness* (91.67%). So, the average between the two shall be used, which is 64.17%.<sup>169</sup>

### 2.5.2.: Figurative מַעָה in Jonah

When looking at the Text of Jonah directly, the usage of מַעָה (me'â) appears in a somewhat peculiar context which heavily implies a metaphorical connotation: In Jonah 2:1,2 Jonah is described to be inside the *belly* of the fish, and this may sound very literal, but then one verse later in Jonah 2:3 Jonah is said to have been thrown not into the *belly of a fish* but the *belly of Sheol*. Quite obviously, Sheol—the realm of the dead—can hardly be thought of as being equipped with a literal belly, a literal stomach. That Jonah is, however, said to be in the belly of both the fish and Sheol in two consecutive verses heavily implies that the *belly of the fish* and the *belly of Sheol* are one and the same—that the fish is a symbol of Sheol, a symbol of death, and the fish's *belly* is as figurative as the *belly* of Sheol would be. This makes it very likely that מַעָה (me'â) in Jonah 2:1,2 should be taken in a figurative or metaphorical sense, which is very much in line with the tendencies across the OT mentioned on the previous pages.<sup>170</sup> So, the probability for מַעָה (me'â) to not mean a literal stomach but be used in a more metaphorical sense just refer to the inside of something can be increased by an arbitrary 2%, increasing the previous probability from 64.17% to 66.17%.<sup>171</sup>

169Metaphorical usage of מַעָה as *stomach* being three times more likely than literal *stomach* is, in comparison, a 300% probability. Though even my best average-calculation for a low value  $(64.17 + ((300 + 13.33) / 2)) / 2$  would still make 110.42%, and utilizing a result of over 100% might just look like cheating. So, 64.17% shall be seen as sufficient.

170It also increases the likelihood for the fish being metaphorical/figurative, but that is a topic for a different chapter.

171It must be admitted that this probability-increase is indeed entirely arbitrary, and that no number can be reasonably calculated in this particular case. The amount of 2% is primarily symbolic of the fact that word-usage inside the Book of Jonah is rather relevant and may deserve more than just 1%. Whilst admitting the arbitrary nature of this decision, the fact that ALL three occurrences of Hebrew words for *belly* in the Book of Jonah seem to metaphorically refer to one and the same abstract thing, that means 100% of them do so (and there are no other occurrences inside that book). With this in mind, an increase by only 2% seems rather humble after all.

That being said, it has to be pointed out that although later Versions like the Greek LXX Jonah do indeed use one and the same word for both the *belly of the fish/sea-creature* (ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας τοῦ κήτους) and the *belly of Sheol/Hades* (ἐκ κοιλίας ᾗδου), in the original Hebrew text the *belly* of the fish in Jonah 2:1,2 does (as has been well established at this point) use the word מַעָה (me'â), while the *belly* of Sheol in Jonah 2:3 uses a different word, namely בֶּטֶן (beṭen).

This, however, does not mean that these two words could not refer to the same concept—they absolutely can: In 5 OT-verses (Gen 25:23; Num 5:22; Is 49:1; Ez 3:3; Ps 71:6), בֶּטֶן (beṭen) occurs together with מַעָה (me'â) in one and the same verse (within a range of 2 to 6 words), seemingly (if not even obviously) as synonyms of one another. In 3 of these 5 verses, both words refer to the *reproductive system*, in one verse (Num 5:22) it may be the *reproductive system* or the *stomach*, in one other verse (Ezek 3:3) it may be the *stomach* or possibly the spiritual *inner being*:

- Gen 25:23     [...] Two nations are in thy **womb** (בֶּטֶן), and two manner  
of people shall be separated from thy **bowels** (מַעָה) [...]
- Num 5:22     [A liquid] shall go into thy **bowels** (מַעָה),  
to make thy **belly** (בֶּטֶן) to swell, [...]
- Is 49:1        [...] The LORD hath called me from the **womb** (בֶּטֶן);  
from the **bowels** (מַעָה) of my mother [...]
- Ezek 3:3       [...] cause thy **belly** (בֶּטֶן) to eat, and fill thy  
**bowels** (מַעָה) with this roll that I give thee. [...]
- Ps 71:6        [...] By thee have I been holden up from the **womb** (בֶּטֶן):  
thou art he that took me out of my mother's **bowels** (מַעָה) [...]

It is quite safe to say that utilizing מַעָה (me'â) and בֶּטֶן (beṭen) do occur in some places in the OT, and are then used as synonyms of one another, referring to the very same thing. So, the fact that Jonah 2:1,2 and 2:3 are using these two different words is no hindrance in considering them synonyms for one and the same thing either (i.e. the *belly* of the fish and of Sheol), and it is entirely plausible to go with an increase from 64.17% to 66.17%.

It could, of course, still be deemed implausible by some that, even if only in a figurative sense, a singular belly/stomach should or even could be used for a multitude of fish, as this thesis has

proposed (and still does). However, linguistically speaking, this is no impossibility in biblical language and further religious language that has stemmed from it:

There is a rather prominent passage in the OT (Ezekiel 36:26), where God says:

<i>I will give <b>you</b></i>	(לכם lā-ḵem, Pl.)
<i>a new <b>heart</b></i>	(לב lêḇ, Sg.)
<i>and put a new <b>spirit</b></i>	(רוח rūaḥ, Sg.)
<i><b>within you</b></i>	(בִּקְרִבְכֶם b <sup>e</sup> -qirb <sup>e</sup> -ḵem, Pl.);
<i>I will remove your <b>heart</b></i>	(לב lêḇ, Sg.)
<i>of stone <b>from your flesh</b></i>	(מִבְּשָׂרְכֶם mib-b <sup>e</sup> -śarḵem, Pl.)
<i>and give <b>you</b></i>	(לכם lā-ḵem, Pl.)
<i>a <b>heart</b> of flesh.</i>	(לב lêḇ, Sg.)

Very similar language is used by St. Augustine (Confessions 1:1): *Thou hast made us for thyself, and **our heart is restless*** (lat. “cor (Sg.) nostrum (Pl.) inquietum est (Sg.)”, i.e. one heart of multiple people) *until it finds its rest in thee.*

The examples given above are, of course, utilizing the metaphor of being united in one *heart*, instead of utilizing any *belly*-language—the examples are merely meant to show the linguistic possibility of using a metaphorical singular organ for a plurality of living beings.

OT-based metaphorical possibilities concerning the *belly* will be further explored in the larger chapter on metaphors, see page 121.

### 2.5.3.: קרב-Hypothesis

There is one last linguistic possibility that should be mentioned within the scope of this chapter; no matter how unlikely it may be, it may still be a possibility.

There is a Hebrew word in the OT which also means something like *bowels*—*innards/entrails* even—, which is קרב (qereb). Compared to the overall 32 OT-occurrences of מעה (me‘â), קרב (qereb) is much more common with its 227 OT-occurrences. At their core, the two words are synonyms. However, another and even much more common use of קרב (qereb) is as part of phrases where the word is used figuratively to mean *in, within, inside*, or even explicitly *in the midst* of a group or multitude via the phrase בקרב (b<sup>e</sup>-qereb) (e.g. Gen 24:3; Jos 13:13, 16:10; Judg 1:30, 1:32, 1:33, 3:5; Ps 74:4).

So, here is a highly speculative hypothesis: Could it be that, even though Jonah 2:1,2 use מעה (me'â), the original tale of Jonah may have used קרב (qereb) instead? If that would have been the case, then the story could have read in an ambivalent way which would offer two readings, either *Jonah was in the midst of the fish* (Pl.), or *Jonah was in the bowels of the fish* (Sg.). Under such circumstances, it would make sense for the story to develop into two separate traditions (both traditions eventually having come together again in the Midrash presented on page 87).

Not only that, but there would also be a reason to prefer reading קרב (qereb) in the sense of literal מעה (me'â), i.e. *belly/stomach/womb*: In the sense of *inner organs*, קרב (qereb) is only ever used for the innards of animals throughout the OT.<sup>172</sup> In contrast, all OT-occurrences of מעה (me'â) only have to do with humans, never with animals (except Jonah 2:1,2), which makes it even more peculiar that in Jonah 2:1,2 the word is even applied to a fish at all.

With this in mind, it would indeed have made sense (more sense?) for any ancient Hebrew to interpret the ambiguous word קרב (qereb) as referring to being in a fish's *bowels*, even though it really was meant to refer to being *inside/among* many fish. Eventually, the story would have been told with the word מעה (me'â) to extinguish the ambivalence in favor of the *belly of the fish*-reading.

The problem is, of course, that this קרב-hypothesis is purely speculative, since there is no early manuscript evidence for Jonah whatsoever to support it.

It is not at all unthinkable that such a seemingly minor change to the story could have happened over the roughly 200 year long course of oral tradition between the supposed events and their scriptural recording, but such speculation about some potential pre-textual oral tradition would be utter guesswork.

So, is there any other evidence in the OT to support the קרב-hypothesis? Possibly: In the OT, there are indeed a few passages which seem to use מעה (me'â) and קרב (qereb) interchangeably in the same verse (Is 16:11;<sup>173</sup> Job 20:14;<sup>174</sup> Lam 1:20;<sup>175</sup> within a range of 6 to 8 words) or within a passage (Jer 4:14,19;<sup>176</sup> Gen 25:22,23).

<sup>172</sup>Ex 12:9, 29:13,17,22; Lev 1:9,13, {3:3,9,14, 4:8} x2, 4:11, 7:3, 8:16,21,25, 9:14.

<sup>173</sup>Is 16:11a vaguely parallels Is 15:5 and Jer 48:36, both of which utilize לבי, *my heart*, instead of this verse's מעי, *my belly/bowels*; this underlines the semantic connotation of מעה (me'â) just referring to the more vague and even figurative *inner being*.

<sup>174</sup>Job 20:14 in particular is a verse in the context of poetic parallelisms in each of the surrounding verses, which makes it even more likely that Job 20:14 intentionally utilizes מעה (meeh) and קרב (qereb) as parallel words.

<sup>175</sup>Admittedly, in Lam 1:20 the parallel is not simply קרב (qereb) but the phrase לבי בקרבי, i.e. *my heart in my קרב*—it is a close parallel, but not as exact as Is 16:11 or Job 20:14.

<sup>176</sup>The connection between Jer 4:14 and 4:19 is subtle: In 4:14, the evils of Israel's *heart* are bemoaned, ere the same verse equates this with Jerusalem's evil thoughts *within her bowels* (בִּקְרָבָהּ בִּקְרָבָהּ); then Jer 4:18 and 19 mention

Is 16:11 על־כן מעי למואב ככנור יהמו וקרבי לקיר חרש

Job 20:14 לחמו במעיו נהפך מרורת פתנים בקרבו

Lam 1:20 ראה יהוה כייצר־לי מעי חמרמרו נהפך לבי בקרבי כי מרו מריתי מחוץ שכלה־חרב בבית כמות

Jer 4:14,19 כבסי מרעה לבך ירושלם למען תושעי עד־מתי תלין בקרבך מחשבות אונך

מעַי | מעַי | [אחולה כ] [אוחילה ק] קירות לבי המה־לי לבי לא אחריש [...]

Gen 25:22,23 ויתרצו הבנים בקרבה ותאמר אם־כן למה זה אנכי ותלך לדרש את־יהוה

ויאמר יהוה לה שני [גיים כ] [גוים ק] בבטנך ושני לאמים ממעיך יפרדו ולאם [...]

This may at least imply a certain interchangeability between מעה (me'â) and קרב (qereb), to some degree attested in the OT. Of course, this is by no means proof (or even evidence) that Jonah 2:1,2 ever may have utilized קרב (qereb, i.e. *in the midst of the fish*) instead of מעה (me'â, i.e. *in the belly of the fish*), but at least it comes to show that there may be some possibility for the קרב-hypothesis.

the heart as being pierced by God as a punishment, and (nested between these mentions of *heart*) this piercing of the heart is bemoaned by Jerusalem by exclaiming *my bowels, my bowels* (מעַי מעַי). This means that both מעה (me'â) and קרב (qereb) are used as interchangeable synonyms for *heart* (לב lēb).

## 2.6.: vomit as a metaphor (2:11)

After all these hints leading toward the conclusion that there never may have been one big fish swallowing Jonah down into his actual belly, the phrasing of Jonah 2:11 still leaves one question: How can the fish then “spit” or “vomit” (Hebrew קאוֹ qô’) Jonah onto the dry land? The wording is rather graphic, and would certainly suggest that Jonah had actually been swallowed, had actually been in that literal belly... except if it was but a mere metaphor. This may seem like a caveat to just explain away this one lingering problem (as “it’s just a metaphor” is all too often used as a quick cop-out), but there are indeed good reasons to assume that there is a strong metaphorical dimension.

The 7 remaining occurrences of קאוֹ (qô’, i.e. *vomit, spit*) in the OT are almost all *metaphors*:

- Four times in Leviticus 18:25,28 and 20:22, for the land (Israel) vomiting out its inhabitants—a pure metaphor, because lands cannot literally vomit out people.
- Once in Job 20:15 for an evildoer who swallowed up riches and now has to vomit them out from his belly—the sentence and its context are highly metaphorical, because Job 20:12 has explicated that what has been swallowed as (metaphorical) food to feed on are *evils*, comparable to Proverbs 19:28. The attentive reader may notice that the passage has been mentioned in the previous chapter, and that the stomach/belly was deemed as appearing in a metaphorical context (see page 72)—the same applies here. (It is also noteworthy: The words used for *vomit, swallowed* and *belly* are the very same words as are used in Jonah.)
- Once in Proverbs 25:16 about not eating too much honey, which sounds literal at first, but then turns out to be an allegorical metaphor when compared to 25:27 a few verses later, which starts out in a very similar fashion but then draws a comparison between the act of eating of too much honey and an overdose of self-indulgent glory—so, the vomiting-out of the honey here is really part of a metaphor, and not literal (albeit based on a real and literal thing).
- Proverbs 23:8 about begrudging a meal not cooked with love is the only example which may very well be entirely literal, but even then the verse seems to merely address the idea or wish to vomit, not the actual action (as several commentators have noted).

So, in roughly 5 out of 7 occurrences (71%), the verb can clearly be taken in a figurative sense, and the two remaining are still in a metaphorical or merely imaginative setting—while Proverbs 23:8 may nonetheless be taken very literal, Proverbs 25:16 about the honey seems to be half literal, half metaphorical. So, it is fair to count the ratio less like 5 vs. 2 and more like 5.5 vs. 1.5, which means that the probability for קאוֹ, i.e. *vomit* or *spit*, to be taken in a figurative sense is 78.57% (i.e. 5.5/7).

Compare Revelation 3:16 in the NT, where Christ says that he will *spit* or *vomit* (ἐμέσαι) lukewarm Christians out of his mouth—which is obviously, albeit true, a metaphor, namely for rejection, or more precisely, expulsion from a particular system (comparable to Lev 18:25,28, 20:22): In Rev 3:16 it is expulsion from God’s kingdom, whereas in Jonah 2:11 it is expulsion from the abyss (the opposite of God’s kingdom).

Rev 3:16 is here brought up because it serves the comparison thematically and illustrates the matter of metaphorical vomiting-out as a symbol of expulsion from a system well, but the Greek word used in LXX Jonah 2:11 is a different word, NOT ἐμέω (*vomit, spit*) as in Rev 3:16. The word ἐμέω (c.f. Rev 3:15) would be the proper direct translation for the Hebrew verb אק (qô’), and similar words found in the Septuagint utilize the same root-word, e.g. ἐξέμεω (LXX Job 20:15, LXX Proverbs 23:8, 25:16), ἔμετον (Proverbs 26:11, noun-form)—so, (ἐξ)ἐμέω would have been known to the LXX translators and therefore the best and most obvious translation for אק (qô’) in Jonah 2:11. (More alternatives include ἐξεράω (2 Peter 2:22) and ἐπαφρίζω (Jude 1:13).)

Of the afore-mentioned OT-passages which speak of strictly metaphorical *vomiting*, LXX Lev 18:25,28, 20:22 are the only verses which have אק (qô’) NOT directly translated in the sense of *vomit* but which are instead paraphrased with the word προσοχθίζω (*to be angry with so.*)—those verses which are the most obviously metaphorical in their use of *vomit*, as they are about expulsion from a particular system, go out of their way to render Hebrew אק (qô’) as an explanation of what is meant, rather than a direct translation.

But, as stated before, LXX Jonah 2:11 does NOT use ἐμέω. Instead, it uses ἐξέβαλεν (lit. *threw out* or *expelled*), which IS NEVER used for *spit* or *vomit*, but only for *banish* or *cast out*—here in the LXX, the verb is less metaphorical and instead a very concrete word used almost exclusively for expulsion from a place, group, state or any kind of system (or the casting out of demons).

Furthermore, the Targum translates Hebrew אק (qô’) with the Aramaic verb פלט (plat), which never ever means *to vomit*, but *to escape, to take to safety, to bring forth*, describing *deliverance or rescue from threatening situations*.

So, it seems very obvious that the translators of the Greek Septuagint as well as the Aramaic Targum, and by extension the Israelite cultures of antiquity, understood the *vomiting out* of Jonah in a less literal but a more meaningful sense: That Jonah was being delivered into safety, that he was *cast out* and *expelled* from the abyss, from the ungodly watery grave pictured as a dangerous sea-creature (see later chapters on metaphorical connotations, especially pages 121ff.).

## 2.7.: On the Grammar of the Numerus for Verb & Adjective

Last but not least, one important question needs to be answered: If the fish is a collective-noun, should the adjective גדול (gādôl) for *great* (or *much*) in Jonah 2:1 and the verb<sup>177</sup> קוא (qô') for *vomit* in Jonah 2:11 match the noun's superficial singularity, or should the verb and adjective be in the plural to convey the plurality implicit in the singular noun?

- The adjective גדול (gādôl) is Sg., appears with Sg.-looking דג (dāg)
- The verb קוא (qô') is Sg., appears with Sg.-looking דג (dāg)

In *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Joüon-Muraoka) it is, concerning both verbs and adjectives, explained that “[a] collective can be recognized when an adjective, a pronoun or a verb referring to it is in the plural” and they say this in the context of “Plurality expressed by the collective singular, the singular of species, etc.”<sup>178</sup> If this was entirely true, then this would clearly speak against the whole idea of Jonah's fish, singular דג (dāg), being a collective-noun at all. Does this weaken the entire thesis? Some of the evidence actually says the opposite.

### 2.7.1.: Sg.-Verbs for Collective-Nouns

Two of the pieces of evidence are, in fact, themselves two of the collective-examples given in Joüon-Muraoka<sup>179</sup> (which implies that the rule quoted above—“[a] collective can be recognized when [...] a verb referring to it is in the plural”—is probably not meant to be understood as universally applicable anyway):

- Is 2:9 parallels the man-synonyms אדם ('ādām) and איש ('îš) as collective-nouns using the singular (verses 11 and 17 clarify that general multitudes are being talked about), both being accompanied by the synonymous verbs ישה (yiššah) and ישפל (yišpal) for being humbled, both of which are in the singular.
- Judg 21:16 speaks of plural women נשים (nāšîm) before switching to refer to the same women via singular אשה ('îššâ), accompanied by the singular verb נשמדה (nišm<sup>e</sup>dâ) for being destroyed.

<sup>177</sup>The other verb, בלע (bāla') in Jonah 2:1, is in the infinitive, i.e. neither sg. nor pl., and thus of no importance here.

<sup>178</sup>Joüon P., Muraoka T. (2018): *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, § 135 “Plurality expressed by the collective singular, the singular of species, etc.”, p. 466.

<sup>179</sup>c.f. Joüon P., Muraoka T. (2018), § 135c, p. 467.

Furthermore, the following three primary examples for collective-nouns given by Wilhelm Gesenius<sup>180</sup> illustrate very well that at least verbs associated with a collective-noun utilizing the singular-form can very well be in the singular as well:

Gen 13:7      והכנעני והפרזי אז ישב בארץ

*and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt in the land*

The verb ישב (yōšeb) for *dwelt* is masculine singular.

Both collective-nouns are articular masculine Singular-nouns, like דג (dāg) in Jonah 2:1,11.

Gen 18:25      והיה כצדיק כרשע

*and that the righteous should be as the wicked*

The verb והיה (w<sup>e</sup>-hāyâ) for *should be* is masculine singular.

Both collectives (adjectives as nouns) are masculine singular with a compound preposition-article (כְּ / כִּי),<sup>181</sup> and are thus articular masculine singular akin to דג (dāg) in Jonah 2:1,11.

Eccl 7:26c      וחוטא ילכד בה

*[the] sinner shall be taken by her*

The verb ילכד (yīllākēd) for *shall be taken* is masculine singular.

The collective-noun חוטא (hōtê') for *sinner* is masculine singular.

Each one of these examples come to show that collective-nouns in the OT that are utilizing the singular-form by no means need to their verbs to appear in the plural, as singular verbs for collective-nouns are attested in multiple places. So, the verb קוא (qô') in Jonah 2:11 can very well appear in the singular, even if the masculine singular noun דג (dāg) is a collective and thus implies plurality.

This is, of course, not to say that the rule of plural verbs (or adjectives) for singular collective-nouns never applies. It just should be emphasized that a collective CAN be recognized by verbs or adjectives in the plural, but that this is NOT A MUST.<sup>182</sup>

Indeed, concerning the verb, Joüon-Muraoka also says that “[w]ith a collective the verb can be used in the singular or in the plural”,<sup>183</sup> so both scenarios are perfectly possible. They also say that the usage of a plural-verb (unlike קוא (qô') in Jonah 2:11) “becomes more frequent in later

180c.f. Gesenius W. (1848): *Hebräisches Elementarbuch*, § 107 “Gebrauch des Artikels”, p. 211.

181The Niqqud-marks—which this thesis usually does not show—are shown here to make the presence of the article as part of the compound preposition-article noticeable.

182c.f. Waltke B.K., O'Connor M. (1990): *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, § 6.6b, p. 109.

183Joüon P., Muraoka T. (2018), § 150e, p. 518.

books”<sup>184</sup> where *later books* can certainly be understood as *written in the post-exilic age*, of which Jonah would be one of the earliest books,<sup>185</sup> and some occurrences of plural-verbs for collective-nouns can indeed be found in there.<sup>186</sup> However, Joüon-Muraoka, qualifying the previous statement, also says that “there can be an alternation even in two adjacent verses”,<sup>187</sup> giving Judges 9:36,37 as an example—so, the author of Jonah would not even be expected to stick to either rule, and could just as well switch between one or the other.

So, in short, both scenarios are possible when it comes to the verb.

An example which, in this respect, may seem almost bizarre, might be Jer 31:8 קהל גדול ישובו *a great (sg.) company (sg.) shall return (pl.)*, where the collective-noun’s verb is in the plural, while the adjective is in the singular. This, of course, leads right into the next segment: adjectives.

### 2.7.2.: Sg.-Adjectives for Collective-Nouns

Concerning the adjective (which, in the case of Jonah 2:1, would be sg. גדול (gādôl)), the examples given by Gesenius and Joüon-Muraoka so far do not happen to include representative adjectives for the collective-nouns. A different paragraph from Joüon-Muraoka mostly talks about the agreement of participles in connection to collective-nouns (which is not representative of Jonah 2:1), that it tends to be in the plural, but also that “[t]his phenomenon is rather rare with an adjective”<sup>188</sup> and give Num 14:35 as an example for a singular adjective with a collective-noun: לכל-העדה הרעה (*unto all this evil (sg.) congregation (sg. as collective-noun)*).

This already speaks for Jonah 2:1 and its adjective’s singularity agreeing with that of its collective-noun—but since this is not a whole lot of evidence, some more should be produced.

184Joüon P., Muraoka T. (2018), § 150e, p. 518.

185Babylonian Exile: 597–539 B.C. (6th century); Book of Jonah (written): 500–330 B.C. (5th/4th century).

186An example for plural verbs used with collective-nouns in the singular can be found in Jonah 3:8 (ויתכסו שקים האדם) (והבהמה ויקראו אל-אלהים), but even there it should be noted that the first verb יתכסו (*to be covered with*) quite likely should be seen in connection to the pl. *sackcloths*, not the collective *man* and the *animal* wearing them; and at the very least for the other verb יקראו (*to call out*) it can be argued that they are in the plural because reference is not being made to only one single collective-noun, but to two, *the man and the animal*. However, later on in the verse it also says ישבו איש, i.e. *let [the] men (sg., coll.-noun) turn around (pl.)*—so, there definitely are examples which can be given in favor of the claim that a collective can be recognized when a verb referring to it is in the plural. The same can be said for ויזעקו איש אל-אלהיו ויטלו את-הכלים (i.e. [the] *men (sg.) cried out (pl.) to their gods and hurled (pl.) the wares*, in Jonah 1:5, and very similarly in Jonah 1:7.

187Joüon P., Muraoka T. (2018), § 150e, p. 518.

188Joüon P., Muraoka T. (2018), § 148a, p. 514.

The example of Jer 31:8 just given above might be a good starting point: קהל גדול ישובו translates to *a great (sg.) company (sg.) shall return (pl.)*, and (as has just been established) the collective nature of the noun CAN (but does not have to) be recognized by the associated verb ישובו (yāšûbû) being in the plural—so, there is no denying that קהל (qāhāl), the company, is indeed a collective-noun; and yet, the associated adjective גדול (gādôl) can (and does!) very well appear in the singular.

From this standpoint, it can (and should) be argued that ALL examples for *great army/assembly/nation* as well as the other examples given at the beginning of the chapter on גדול (gādôl) on pages 50 and following are indeed collective-nouns in the singular accompanied by singular-adjectives; and all of these examples directly relate to the use of גדול (gādôl), which makes them highly relevant. If all of those examples, or even just those for examples for *great army/assembly/nation*, are being accepted, then that would highly speak in favor of the possibility that דג (dāg) in Jonah 2:1 would NOT have to have a plural-adjective at all, but could very well be a collective-noun with a singular-adjective.

Some examples directly relating to collective *fish* with singular adjectives may be found in the Mishna: The *impure fish* (דג טמא) and the *pure fish* (דג טהור) in Ter 10:8 and Bek 1:2, or the *salted fish* (דג מליח) in Ned 6:3; these occurrences can be argued to be collectives, but they are not the safest contenders for collective-nouns. What IS, however, a safe contender, is the occurrence of *Egyptian fish* (דג המצרי) numbered among several kinds of fish mentioned as wares in the plural and with כל (meaning *all*) in Maksh 6:3 (undoubtedly a collective-noun). All of these examples utilize adjectives in the singular.

Altogether, it has been shown that both, verbs and adjectives for a collective-noun in the singular, CAN themselves be in the plural, but by no means they have to, and there is enough evidence that both can also appear in the singular, just like the collective-noun they belong to.

So, the adjective גדול (gādôl) in Jonah 2:1 and the verb קוא (qô') in Jonah 2:11 both appearing in the singular, just like the collective-noun דג (dāg) they belong to, is entirely possible.

## 2.8.: Conclusions of the Word Studies

After all these word studies concerning the key words in Jonah 2:1 as well as the *belly* (2:1, 2:2) and the *vomiting* (2:11), the results of these studies can be collected and the words, read in a new light, looked at together, so they appear in the proper context of a full sentence. For this purpose, Jonah 2:1 shall here be depicted in an interlinear form contrasting the traditional reading with the new one:

<b>Hebrew:</b>	וימן	יהוה	דג	גדול	לבלע	את	יונה
<b>Transliteration:</b>	way-y <sup>e</sup> man	YHWH	dāg	gādôl	li-b <sup>e</sup> lōa <sup>ʿ</sup>	’et	yōnâ
<b>Trad. reading:</b>	<i>and appointed</i>	<i>God</i>	<i>a fish</i>	<i>great</i>	<i>to swallow</i>	(Acc.)	<i>Jonah</i>
<b>New reading:</b>	<b><i>and gathered</i></b>	<b><i>God</i></b>	<b><i>fish (coll.)</i></b>	<b><i>much</i></b>	<b><i>to engulf</i></b>	(Acc.)	<b><i>Jonah</i></b>

<b>Hebrew:</b>	ויהי	יונה	במעו	הדג	[...]
<b>Transliteration:</b>	wa-y <sup>e</sup> hī	yōnâ	bi-m <sup>e</sup> ‘ê	had-dāg	[...]
<b>Trad. reading:</b>	<i>and was</i>	<i>Jonah</i>	<i>in (the) belly</i>	<i>(of) the fish</i>	[...]
<b>New reading:</b>	<b><i>and was</i></b>	<b><i>Jonah</i></b>	<b><i>in (the) midst</i></b>	<b><i>(of) the fish (coll.)</i></b>	[...]

So, in conclusion (and in proper English), this alternative reading of Jonah 2:1 may read as follows:

***And God gathered much fish to engulf Jonah,  
and Jonah was amidst the fish(es)  
for three days and three nights.***

In addition, regarding the other verses of Jonah 2 discussed on the previous pages so far, there is good reason to suspect that, as has been discussed on the preceding pages, the *belly* in Jonah 2:1,2:2 and the *vomiting* in 2:11 should be seen as metaphorical or figurative—the *belly* meaning the *inside* or *midst*, but possibly having even deeper implications connected to the Sheol in 2:3 (as will be discussed in the metaphor-chapters, esp. on pages 121ff.), and *vomiting* likely meaning the *exclusion* from a system such as Sheol.

It has also been shown that grammatical elements like the articularity of the noun (p. 24) or the singular form of the verb (p. 81) and of the adjective (p. 83) associated with the noun are very well possible or even common phenomena for collective-nouns, thus being no hindrance in reading Jonah’s *fish* as such a collective as well.

Throughout the course of these word studies, several percentages have been estimated (or rather “guesstimated”, since there is hardly an objective standard to approach putting such considerations into numbers) as to how likely each of the results might be—in sum, these probabilities are as follows:

<u>Trad. reading</u>		<u>New reading</u>	<u>Probability</u>
<i>appointed</i>	→	<i>gathered</i>	78.00%
<i>fish</i> (sg.)	→	<i>fish</i> (coll.)	84.00%
<i>great</i>	→	<i>much</i>	76.00%
<i>to swallow</i>	→	<i>to engulf</i>	95.34%
<i>in the belly</i>	→	<i>in the midst</i>	66.17%
<i>vomited</i> (lit.)	→	<i>vomited</i> (fig.)	78.57%

$$(78+84.00+76+95.34+66.17+78.57)/6 = 79.68\% = \text{ca. } \mathbf{80\%}$$

Listed in such close proximity, the results look almost overwhelming. Of course, this brings up the question of how these values should be counted. Should the average of all probabilities simply be taken together? Should the more important elements (like the plurality/collectivity of the *fish*) have more weight for the calculation?

The simple average probability would be ca. 80%, but should this value be shifted towards that of the element most important for the thesis—the probability for the plurality of the *fish*—, then (using the average of ca. 80% and 84%) the overall average probability is 82%.

In addition, the thematic dissonance between Jonah being swallowed and spat out by (a) fish (2:1,2,11) and Jonah's prayer describing him sinking through the water (2:4–10) clearly increases the probability for the thesis to be correct. It is, however, not possible to put this particular increase into numbers, so the probability should simply be understood as  $p > 82\%$ .

### 3.: Jonah's Fish in Jewish Tradition

In this chapter of the thesis, several parts of primarily Jewish tradition (both biblical and extra-biblical) directly or indirectly related to the story of Jonah shall be examined, and some of the subtler elements which these traditions contain—elements which can be interpreted in favor of the main theory of this thesis or may shine a new light on the traditional reading in other ways.

#### 3.1.: A Midrash of 365,000 fetal Fish

That the fish seems to swap genders back and forth is nothing new: The Rabbis have also noticed and pondered this peculiarity, and their answers are well-documented in rabbinic literature. One Midrash tries to explain this piscine gender-swap in a somewhat flawed but eye-opening way:

*“Jonah was in the fish three days and did not pray. So God said, I prepared for him a wide space in the fish and he doesn't pray to me. I will bring a **fish pregnant with three hundred and sixty five thousand little fish so that he will be uncomfortable** and pray to me. [...]”<sup>189</sup> The [first] fish disgorged him and the [pregnant] fish swallowed him. When he entered the second fish, he felt great discomfort, so that right away he directed his heart to God and prayed.”<sup>190</sup>*

As interesting as it may be—and the already somewhat hilarious imagery of a man swallowed by a big fish is made even more amusing with Jonah being vomited from fish to fish and getting annoyed by a plenitude of fish babies—, there are two<sup>191</sup> minor problems with this Midrash:

<sup>189</sup>The part that is being omitted here mentions a conversation with Leviathan, which is unimportant for this chapter of the thesis, but will play a bigger role on pages 129 and 138.

<sup>190</sup>Otzar Ha-Midrashim (A.D. 400–1200), *Jonah*, Eizenstein, p. 217. Quoted in Helm P. (2013): *Referring to God: Jewish and Christian Perspectives*. Abingdon: Routledge. p. 133. (EMPHASIS MINE.)

c.f. Midrash Yonah Version 1 (Beit Midrash ha-1; Small Midrashim File 16):

יונה שלשה ימים במעי הדג ולא התפלל, אמר הקב"ה אני הרחבתי לו מקום במעי הדג כדי שלא יצטער והוא אינו מתפלל לפני, אני מזמין לו דגה מעוברת בשלש מאות וששים וחמשה אלפים דגים קטנים כדי שיצטער ויתפלל לפני, שאני מתאוה לתפילתן של צדיקים. [...] מעוברת בשלש מאות וששים וחמשה אלפים דגים קטנים כדי שיצטער ויתפלל לפני, שאני מתאוה לתפילתן של צדיקים. [...] פלטו הדג ובלעה אותו הדגה. כיון שנכנס לתוך מעיה היה מצטער בצער גדול מתוך הטינוף ומתוך זוהמתה של דגה, מיד כיון לבו לתפלה לפני הקב"ה ויתפלל יונה אל ה'. אלהיו ממעי הדגה.

<sup>191</sup>Not taking into account that the people of ancient times (though it be mentioned that the Midrashim on Jonah were compiled in medieval times) should have been just as aware as we are today that fish lay their eggs instead of breeding their offspring inside of their wombs (except for the extremely rare 1% of viviparous fish that hatch their eggs inside of their bodies), so this may imply that whoever came up with this Midrash may indeed have thought of something closer to a whale. While it may be unlikely that ancient people generally knew whales to be mammals, as whales give birth underwater, they sometimes do so close to the surface—so, such knowledge would not have been impossible (which, however, does not necessarily imply such intent for the Book of Jonah).

- In the Book of Jonah, the fish swallowing Jonah is male, then the Midrash assumes he was vomited out and got into a second fish which was female, in which he prayed before being vomited out once more... by a male fish again. The Midrash does not explain why the last vomiting-out of Jonah would be done by a male fish again, and is therefore an insufficient explanation, and the reasons for the grammatical gender-switch must be found elsewhere.
- Even though Jonah 2:1 seems to speak of a *great fish (m.)*, 2:2 only speaks of a *fish (f.)* but does NOT specify it to be a *great* one—so, assuming there were two fish, the most obvious explanation would be that the female fish simply was not quite as big as the male one. The idea that the female fish was pregnant (with 365,000 little fish) is not at all present in the biblical text—as opposed to the two different genders, which are indeed part of the text. So, this explanation seems to add unbiblical elements which the gaps to be filled do not even call for... at least according to the traditional reading of Jonah 2:1,2,11—a reading that would take the one (or both) fish as singular instead of an even greater multitude.

And this last point is the crux of the matter: The multitude of fish is not an unbiblical reading, it is merely uncommon. The Midrash quoted above may have been the result of two traditions being merged into one (*two genders for two fish + a swarm of fish around Jonah*), but in any case this Midrash serves as sufficient proof that there was indeed some rabbinical tradition according to which Jonah is claimed to have been surrounded by a multitude of fish.<sup>192</sup>

The best explanation might be as follows: The multitude of fish was a tradition known well enough early on, but—edged aside by the more intriguing interpretation of Jonah being swallowed by a singular fish—it became a less common reading over time, and only remained as a secondary tradition, found in such Midrashîm as the one quoted above.

The last part of the Mishna's Bekhorot 1:2 (lit. “for [its] mouth is not [the] breeding-organ (lit. growth, the organ in which offspring is grown)”) shows a clear Judean/Rabbinic awareness that the stomach into which Jonah would have been swallowed could not have been a place in which he would be surrounded by baby-fish, which makes this particular Midrash even stranger (but maybe its author just was not aware of the knowledge recorded in Bekhorot 1:2).

In any case though, it can be concluded that this Midrash supports the possible existence of a tradition where Jonah would be surrounded by a multitude of smaller fish.

<sup>192</sup>Another Midrash which further hints at an older secondary tradition (possibly the same, though evolved into a very different form) where Jonah is surrounded by a multitude of fish will be presented on page 91.

### 3.2.: A Midrash of Fish-Eye Windows & a Genesis Fish

One of the Jewish Midrash-interpretations claims that the fish's eyes were like windows through which Jonah was able to see the surrounding depths of the ocean (thereby attempting to explain the narrative dissonance throughout Jonah 2).<sup>193</sup> Of course, this explanation does not exactly help bringing the story onto a more realistic level, as it is rather absurd. Even if the possibility of eyes functioning like windows in such a literal manner (which is not the case) be considered a possibility, one would still have to wonder how the eyes could possibly connect to the stomach. A few unlikely explanations shall be presented here.

- The fish had its eyes not on its head but on its torso or on its belly—entirely absurd.
- The fish had no innards at all and was but a mere hollow shell—just as absurd.
- The fish was really just a sort of submarine—reasonable, but truly absurd in ancient times.
- All the fish's innards were transparent, so the eyes in the head would be visible from the stomach—not quite as absurd as the previous options, but rather far-fetched.<sup>194</sup>
- Jonah was NOT inside the fish's *belly* but in its *head* (behind its eyes)—which the biblical text does not seem to say, but it would allow Jonah to see through the fish's eyes.<sup>195</sup>

However, this last option might, in a sense, work: The subtle implication might indeed be that those Jewish readers who came up with the idea of window-eyes did NOT necessarily interpret מעה (me'â) to strictly mean *belly* but just some (other) place *inside* the fish. So, מעה would just refer to the fish's *inside* in some vague sense, as has been argued in the chapter on מעה (see p. 71).

193“[...] the fish shows Jonah the mysteries of the great deep through his eyes, which serve as illuminated windows. (Of course, the creature's window-like eyes explain how Jonah could have seen anything from the stomach of the fish.)” (Noegel S.B. (2015): *Jonah and Leviathan, Inner-Biblical Allusions and the Problem with Dragons*, p. 237.)

c.f. Otzar Midrashim: Midrashim on Sefer Yonah, Midrash Yonah (From Pirkei d'Rabi Eliezer, ca. 8th c. A.D.): רבי טרפון אומר ממונה היה אותו הדג לבלוע את יונה מששת ימי בראשית שנאמר וימן ה' דג גדול לבלוע את יונה, נכנס בפיו כאדם שהוא נכנס בבית הכנסת הגדולה ועמד, והיו שתי עיניו של דג כחלונות אפומיות מאירות ליונה. ר' מאיר אומר מרגלית אחת היתה תלויה במעייו של דג שמאירה ליונה כשמש הזה שהוא מאיר בצהרים ומראה לו כל מה שבים ובהומוות, ועליו הכתוב אומר אור זרוע לצדיק (תהילים צ"ז:יא)

(Rabbi Tarfon says that the same fish would have swallowed Jonah from the six days of Genesis. As it is written: "And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah." He entered his mouth as a man who entered the Great Synagogue and stood, and the two eyes of a fish. Rabbi Meir says that a [lamp made of] Margalit hung in the bowels of the fish, shining unto Jonah like the sun that shines at noon, showing him everything that is in the sea and in the abyss, and on [the lamp] it was written on it: "Light to the Righteous." (Tehillim 7:11))

194Mostly transparent aquatic lifeforms are well-known (and pretty fascinating), but if anything, their organs tend to be less transparent than their outer parts—the inverse would be truly odd—, and if an entirely transparent fish had been envisioned by the Jewish readers who came up with the window-eye hypothesis, then the eyes functioning as windows would be an utterly unnecessary detail, since the entire fish would serve as a “window” already. So, this option would be implausible after all.

195As a side-note, the idea of an otherwise non-transparent fish's head being transparent around its eyes—like a window, or rather a glass-dome—is not impossible; compare the *barreleye fish* (which, however, are rather small).

Another peculiar thing about this particular Midrash is that it includes the following side-note: “Rabbi Tarfon says, the fish that swallowed Jonah was the same as from the six days of Creation.”<sup>196</sup>

This is interesting because Genesis 1 never actually speaks of one particular *great fish*. The Text most probably refers to Gen 1:21, which speaks of the creation of the “great whales” (KJV) or more literally *the (sea-)dragons the great (ones)* (הַתַּיִמִּים הַגְּדֹלִים). This, however, is a reference to a collective of creatures, very clearly expressed in the plural—not at all about one particular creature.

The idea of connecting Jonah’s fish to Gen 1:21 might be influenced by Septuagint tradition, which uses the same words in both verses, namely μέγας and κῆτος—however, in the entire Septuagint, these two words appear together only thrice, and the third occurrence would be the better match, as it uses them in the singular: Job (LXX) 3:8, about Leviathan (see page 131).

If another part of the creation account was meant, the afore-mentioned great sea-dragons are followed up by what can be identified as fish (albeit not specifically great ones), which are described as וְאֵת כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה הַרְמֵשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר שָׂרְצוּ הַמַּיִם, i.e. *and all/each soul the living the creeping which swarms (/has swarmed) the waters*; yes, נֶפֶשׁ (soul) is singular, but it is also prefixed by כָּל (all/each), so this is more of a collective, not to mention that they explicitly *swarm the waters* (i.e. they are many). The same counts for the previous verse Gen 1:20, יִשְׂרְצוּ הַמַּיִם שָׂרָץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה, where God commands *let the waters be swarmed with swarming-thing (of) living soul*—but also here, the singular must be a collective, especially as the word יִשְׂרְצוּ (swarmed) and שָׂרָץ (swarming-thing) implies a multitude. In either verse, there is no explicit mention made of any one *fish*, but the context makes it very clear that the passage is about the creation of all animals of the deep, including fish, which are explicitly mentioned as created beings a few verses later in Gen 1:26 as דָּגָת (d<sup>e</sup>gat, a form of dāgâ).

So, in any case the Creation account in Genesis 1 never mentions any one particular great fish, only fish and other sea-creatures in general, as kinds, as species, as well as a multitude of great dragons/serpents/sea-creatures. When Rabbi Tarfon is, in this Midrash, quoted as saying that Jonah’s fish was the same as the one from the six days of Creation, one must wonder what sort of tradition Rabbi Tarfon has been passing down, and whether that tradition originally really meant to refer to any particular fish or great sea-creature.

רבי טרפון אומר ממונה היה אותו הדג לבלוע את יונה מששת ימי בראשית 196

### 3.3.: A Midrash of Death and Many Fish

A peculiar detail can be found in the Kabbalistic Zohar from around A.D. 1270–1300,<sup>197</sup> which combines themes from the two previously mentioned Midrashîm (presented on pages 87 and 89): Jonah gets swallowed by one giant fish with window-eyes and a glowing, illuminating stone in its interior cavern, but rather than being shown the wonders of the deep, Jonah finds pleasure in this palace-like and well-lit hall within which Jonah has found himself, and thus drives God to do something against Jonah’s complacency, akin to to the Midrash about the great male fish vs. the female fish with 365.000 little baby-fish. In this rendition of the story, however, “*God, seeing his [i.e. Jonah’s] enjoyment, killed the fish, and other fishes ate its carcass from all sides so that Jonah found himself in dire straits, and it was then that he prayed ‘from out of the belly of sheol’*”.<sup>198</sup>

The interesting detail here is that the one great fish is being devoured by a multitude of other (presumably smaller) fish to shake Jonah out of his complacency. Although this is very similar to the Midrash with the pregnant fish and the 365.000 baby-fish, it is, at the same time, obviously quite different: One story depicts the piscine plenitude as an element of birth, an element of new life inside of the fish, having sprung from that fish; the other story depicts the piscine plenitude as an element of death, an element of ending life, outside of the fish, and being of an origin other than that one fish. This leads to two possibilities:

- a) One author purposefully took the other author’s elements and inverted their symbolism.
- b) The two authors did not influence on another (and might not even have known each other’s version of the story), but both of them told their own version of an older tradition which had forked into two separate branches—one of life and one of death.

There is an argument to be made against (a): Considering that the part of the story about the window-eyed fish with its hall-like interior and illuminating stone-lamp is (almost verbatim) the same concept as is seen in the Midrash presented on page 89, it could be considered rather odd that the author would not stay just as true to the other Midrash (presented on page 87).<sup>199</sup>

So, (b) might be more likely, which would suggest that the theme of Jonah being surrounded by a multitude of fish (in both of these Midrashîm) might be based on a much older tradition.

<sup>197</sup>It has been a matter of debate as to whether the Zohar was indeed based on ancient writings (not uncommon for medieval Spain where the Zohar was written, since it was at the other end of the Mediterranean Sea and thus sometimes conserved older traditions; compare the *vetus latina*) or whether the author Moses de Leon merely made that claim to pretend that his forgery had the authority which would likely be ascribed to works of antiquity. Which of these scenarios is more likely is, however, not really relevant to this thesis—either way the Zohar can be treated as a not entirely original medieval manuscript which likely drew from older sources.

<sup>198</sup>Knoche G.F. (2006): *Theosophy in the Qabbalah*, p. 135. (c.f. Zohar 3:48a, Sperling 3:146–7) [EMPHASIS MINE]

<sup>199</sup>But then again, the intent of an artist does not necessarily have to follow anyone’s expectations or logic.

### 3.4.: Jonah Echoing the Psalms

A chapter about Jonah in the context of Jewish tradition should present how the Book of Jonah echoes the Psalms. This may, at first glance, only look like an interesting little exercise in intertextuality, but the true relevance of the following comparisons between Jonah and the Psalms will come to light in later chapters of this thesis (see pages 115 and 179).

Some expressions in Jonah are verbatim quotations from the Psalms (or get pretty close to that):

- Jonah 2:4b and Ps 42:7b[8b] (*all your waves and breakers (have) swept/passed over me*) use exactly the same expression in Hebrew, word for word (כל־משבר־יך וגליך עלי עברו). This verse also contains *Deep calls to deep (תהום) in the roar of your waterfalls (צנור־יך, sluices/sewers/water-channels/-spouts)*—so, the expression of God’s *waves and breakers* is embedded in other imagery of watery depths, quite similar to that of Jonah.
- Both Jonah 2:6 and Psalm 69:1/2 contain the very same expression מים עד־נפש which literally means *waters to (my) soul/throat*. This is immediately preceded by a call for God’s salvation, and followed one verse later by the words *I sink in the miry depths, [...] I have come into the deep waters, the floods engulf me*—embedding the phrase מים עד־נפש in themes quite similar to Jonah 2.<sup>200</sup> Furthermore, Psalm 69 utters strong words of animosity and damnation for the pagans and enemies of Israel, but proposing that God will save Zion—in Jonah, this theme is subverted and expanded by not condemning the pagans and offering them salvation as well.
- The expression *In my distress I called to the Lord* in Jonah 2:4a occurs almost verbatim in Ps 18:6/7 / 2Sa 22:7. (Jonah 2:4a קראתי מצרה לי אלי־יהוה ↔ Ps 18:6/7 / 2Sa 22:7 בצר־לי אקרא יהוה) The two sentences are slightly different, but they utilize the same key-words (קרא qārā’ *call*, צר/צרה ṣār(â) *distress*, לי lî *my*, יהוה YHWH *Lord*).
  - Another psalmic passage that also resembles the beginning of Jonah 2 is Ps 130:1–2 (*De Profundis*): *Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.*) Psalm 130 ends with the proposal that God will save and redeem Israel—this theme gets expanded to other nations in the Book of Jonah.

On the following pages, a table will present some of the psalmic passages that are echoed in the Book of Jonah—but first a few introductory Explanations:

<sup>200</sup>Also Ps 69:14–15[15–16]: *Rescue me from the mire, do not let me sink; deliver me from those who hate me, from the deep waters. Do not let the floodwaters engulf me, or the depths swallow me up, or the pit close its mouth over me.*

- The following table’s “Miscellaneous”-row contains passages from psalms which include only few but nonetheless very close similarities (also verbatim expressions) and important parallels, like Ps 42:7b[8b]. The Psalm most prominently featured in this row is Psalm 69.
- Palm 88 reflects on *Sheol*, the *dead*, whether they can *cry out* to God, whether he would *hear their calls*, and embeds these themes in imagery of *watery depths*—just like Jonah.
- Psalm 18 & 2 Samuel 22: Jonah 2 reads like a shortened and jumbled up version of the *Song of Praise* in Psalm 18<sup>201</sup> and 2 Samuel 22,<sup>202</sup> both of which predate the Book of Jonah. The themes and expressions may not be exactly the same, but quite similar nonetheless. The most obvious similarity is the expression *In my distress I called to the Lord*, utilizing the same key-words<sup>203</sup> as the beginning of Jonah 2 (in Ps 18 & 2Sa 22 the expression appears in verse 7, still close to the beginning.) Ancient audiences would have recognized this and other similarities, including metaphors about *watery depths* and *Sheol*.<sup>204</sup>
- Another psalm with vague but undeniable thematic similarities to Jonah 1 and 2 is Psalm 107, which is a reflection on God’s people having lived in the diaspora of the two Exiles (possibly written around 536 B.C.), and their deeds in foreign lands—a theme still fresh in the minds of the people when Jonah got written, and the Book of Jonah, too, is itself a reflection on how Jews relate to foreigners. So, starting the Book of Jonah with these thematic similarities could very well have been intentional, to remind the ancient audiences of the rather recent Psalm 107 and its themes for the Book of Jonah to then build upon.
- It should be mentioned that even though the following table will not focus on that, some of the referenced Psalms include references to *God the Rock* (Ps 18:3,32,47; 2Sa 22:2,3,32,47; Ps 42:9[10]), which will play a more important role on page 179.

201Psalm 88 may or may not be an authentic Davidic psalm composed during the Egyptian affliction in 1531 B.C.

202The composition of 2 Samuel may have begun during the 8th century (when the story of Jonah would have taken place), and even during the Hellenistic period 2 Samuel was still being edited, but the bulk of 2 Samuel was essentially completed by ca. 550 B.C. (shortly before the time when the Book of Jonah was written).

203The two sentences are slightly different, but they utilize the same words (קרא qārā’ *call*, צר/צרה šār(â) *distress*, יהוה YHWH *Lord*) with different inflections/prefixes. (Jonah 2:3 אלהי יהוה לי מצרה, and 2 Sam 22:7 יהוה אקרא יהוה )

204The table below will use the Hebrew verse-numbering for Ps 18, which aligns with the numbering for 2Sa 22.

<u>Miscellaneous</u>	<u>Psalm 18, 2Sa 22</u>	<u>Psalm 88</u>	<u>Psalm 107</u>	<u>Jonah 1</u>
			2 Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story – those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,	2 “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”
			3 those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south. (Hebrew: <i>from north and from (the) sea</i> , stronger theme of seas and waters) 11 because they rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High. 23 Others went out to sea in ships, conducting trade on the mighty waters.	3 But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarsus. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarsus to flee from the Lord.
			25 For He spoke and raised a tempest that lifted the waves of the sea.	4 Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up.
			29 He calmed the storm to a whisper, and hushed were the waves of the sea. (Hebrew: גליהם <i>their waves</i> )	15 [...] and the raging sea grew calm.
			(Also 21, 22) 30 They were glad when it grew	16 At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they

			<p>calm, and he guided them to their desired haven.</p> <p>31 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind.</p> <p>32 Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.</p>	<p>offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.</p>
			<p>26 They mounted up to the heavens, then sunk to the depths; their courage melted in their anguish.</p>	<p>(Compare the theme of Jonah being above and going below, first by sleeping below deck (1:5), then by being thrown overboard and sinking to the roots of the mountains. (1:15, 2:4,7))</p>
			<p>24 They saw the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep.</p>	<p>(Compare the Midrash in which Jonah is shown the wonders of the deep through the fish's eyes; see page 89.)</p>
<b><u>Miscellaneous</u></b>	<b><u>Psalms 18 / 2Sa 22</u></b>	<b><u>Psalms 88</u></b>	<b><u>Psalms 107</u></b>	<b><u>Jonah 2</u></b>
		<p>1 [...] day and night I cry out to you.</p>		<p>1 Now the Lord provided a huge fish (אִי) to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish (אִי) three days and three nights.</p>
		<p>1 Lord, you are the God who saves me [...]</p>	<p>(x4:) 6, 13, 19, 28 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and</p>	<p>2 From inside the fish (אִי) Jonah prayed to the Lord his God.</p>

			He saved them from their distress.	
<p>Ps 130:1-2 Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.</p> <p>Ps 69:1[2] Save me, O God, [...] (continued as parallel to Jonah 2:6)</p> <p>Ps 42:7[8] Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; [...]</p> <p>Ps 69:14[15] Rescue me from the mire, do not let me sink; deliver me from those who hate me, from the deep waters.</p>	<p>7 In my distress I called to the Lord (ALMOST VERBATIM); I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.</p>	<p>15 From my youth I have suffered and been close to death; I have borne your terrors and am in despair.</p> <p>3 I am overwhelmed with troubles and my life draws near to death.</p> <p>4 I am counted among those who go down to the pit; [...]</p> <p>5 I am set apart (<i>/adrift/forsaken</i>) with the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, [...]</p> <p>2 May my prayer come before you; turn your ear to my cry.</p>		<p>3 He said: “In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry.</p>
<p>Ps 69:2[3] I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. [...]</p> <p>Ps 42:7/8 Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers swept over me.</p> <p>(VERBATIM: כל־משבר־יך וגליך עלי עברו) (shortly followed by <i>God my Rock</i> in Ps 42:9/10)</p>	<p>5 [...] the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me (lit. <i>the torrents of ungodliness made me afraid</i>).</p>	<p>6 You have put me in the lowest pit, in the darkest depths.</p> <p>7 Your wrath lies heavily on me; you have overwhelmed me with all your waves.</p> <p>16 Your wrath has swept over me; your terrors have destroyed me.</p>		<p>4 You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.</p>
<p>Ps 69:3[4] [...] My eyes fail, looking for my God.</p> <p>Ps 69:17[18] Do not hide your face</p>	<p>25 The Lord has rewarded me according to [...] my cleanness in his sight.</p> <p>7 [...] From his</p>	<p>9 my eyes are dim with grief. [...]</p> <p>14 Why, Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?</p>		<p>5 I said, ‘I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.’</p>

from your servant; [...]	temple he heard my voice [...]			
Ps 69:2[3] [...] I have come into the deep waters, the floods engulf me. Ps 69:1[2] [...] for the waters have come up to my neck. (VERBATIM: מים עד־נפש, <i>waters to (my) soul/throat</i> )	5 The cords of death entangled me; [...] 6 The cords of Sheol coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me.	17 All day long they [i.e. the terrors of your wrath] surround me like a flood; they have completely engulfed me.	5 [...] their soul fainted within them (/ their lives ebbed away). 10-11 Some sat in darkness, in utter darkness, prisoners suffering in iron chains, because they rebelled against God's commands and despised the plans of the Most High.	6 The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. (מים עד־נפש, <i>waters to (my) soul/throat</i> )
Ps 69:15[16] Do not let the floodwaters engulf me, or the depths swallow me up, or the pit close its mouth over me.	Ps 18:8 [...] the foundations of the mountains (ומוסדי הרים) [...] (Interestingly, the later parallel 2Sa 22:8 speaks of <i>the foundations of the heavens</i> ) 16 The valleys (/channels/ravines) of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare [...] 17 [...] he drew me out of deep waters. [...]	8 [...] I am confined and cannot escape;	26 They mounted up to the heavens, then sunk to the depths; their courage melted in their anguish. 20 He sent forth His word and healed them; He rescued them from the Pit. 14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and broke away their chains.	7 To the roots of the mountains (לקצבי הרים) I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit.
	7 [...] From his temple he heard my voice; [...]	4,10–12 (wondering if God remembers the dead and listens to their prayers) 13 But I cry to you for help, Lord; [...]	5 [...] their soul fainted within them (/ their lives ebbed away).	8 “When my life was ebbing away (lit. <i>When my soul fainted within me</i> ), I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.
	22 [...] I am not guilty of turning from my God.			9 “Those who cling to worthless idols turn away

	23 [...] I have not turned away from his decrees.			from God's love for them.
	50 Therefore I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing the praises of your name. 4 I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and have been saved from my enemies. 47 The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation. 3 The Lord is my rock, [...] my deliverer; my God is my rock, [...] the horn of my salvation, [...]	9 [...] I call to you, Lord, every day; I spread out my hands to you. 1 Lord, you are the God who saves me [...]		10 But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.' ”
	20 He brought me out into a spacious place [...]			11 And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

### 3.5.: Themes of Jonah in Tobit

Another book from Jewish tradition which may be in a tradition of Jonah-related themes is the Book of Tobit. Tobit is primarily known from the Greek Septuagint and may thus have been written around 200 B.C., probably in Greek.<sup>205</sup>

Since, however, the ending of the book reports the fall of Nineveh as a very recent event, the tradition of the story told in the book (and the time-frame of when the story took place, if it is historical) may go back to ca. the same time in which the story of the Book of Jonah took place.

The story of Tobit, akin to Jonah, partially takes place in Nineveh as well, which is depicted as an enemy of the Israelites. Further similarities include different kinds of regret over having shown compassion in the name of God,<sup>206</sup> protagonists telling God that it would be better for them to die than to live,<sup>207</sup> and a prophet's departure into faraway and foreign regions.<sup>208</sup>

If these thematic similarities can be seen in a line of tradition of shared themes and shared ideas, then the most peculiar similarity between Tobit and Jonah might be found in Tobit 6:2, where Tobit's son Tobias—a prophet who is being sent off into a faraway land, like Jonah—, has a strange encounter with a greedy fish:

*“And as they went on their journey, they came in the evening to the river Tigris, and they lodged there. And when the young man went down to wash himself, a fish leaped out of the river, and would have devoured him.”* (Tobit 6:1–2, KJV)

Reading this passage is somewhat bizarre, especially due to the translation. It must be noted that the Greek text does not claim that the fish “would have devoured him” (implying that Tobias was in real danger to be completely swallowed by this fish), but instead reads ἐβουλήθη καταπιεῖν τὸ παιδάριον (*[the fish] wanted/willed/wished to swallow/devour the boy*)—so, Tobias never was in any real danger of getting into a supposedly “jonahesque” situation and end up in the fish's belly as a whole. The swallowing would be literal, but it seems to remain hypothetical.

205Fragments of Aramaic and Hebrew versions have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, but their mere existence does not necessarily prove that either of those versions preceded the much better known Greek Tobit. That a text from the Hellenistic period might originally have been written in Greek would not be all that far-fetched, but if better evidence of an Aramaic or even a Hebrew original should ever emerge, that would be very welcome.

206In Tob 3:1–6, Tobit laments that after having helped his Israelite brethren, his compassion is paid off with him turning blind (Tob 2:10); In Jonah 4:1, Jonah laments that he has helped his Non-Israelite enemies, and that the success of his God-given mission now makes him look like a false prophet.

207Tobit in Tob 3:6, Sarah in Tob 3:13–15, Jonah in Jonah 4:3.

208Tobias in Tob 5, Jonah in Jonah 3. Tobias, too, is identified as a prophet, i.e. one of the sons of the prophets, about which the reader is informed in Tobit's speech to his son Tobias before his departure. A contrast is that Jonah's journey into foreign lands is INTO Nineveh, whilst Tobias has to journey OUT OF Nineveh.

Since, however, the fish even considered devouring a human, one may wonder how big this fish may have been. A longer parallel version<sup>209</sup> of the same verse, partially utilized e.g. in the English Douay-Rheims and fully utilized in the Italian CEI 2008/1974, does not only speak of an *ἰχθὺς* but of an *ἰχθὺς μέγας* (a *big fish*, compare “un grosso pesce” (CEI 2008/1974), “a monstrous fish” (Douay-Rheims)). This makes Tobit 6:2 quite a bit more comparable to the Jonah-story. Should Tobit’s fish, then, indeed be envisioned as large enough that it could have devoured Tobias as a whole, akin to the fish in Jonah’s traditional reading?

No. Interestingly, the very same longer version which emphasizes the *ἰχθὺς* to be *μέγας*, which easily could conjure up such jonahesque imagery, also adds, in the very same verse, that not only did the fish *ἐβουλήθη καταπιεῖν τὸ παιδάριον* (*wish to devour the boy*), but actually *καταπιεῖν τὸν πόδα τοῦ παιδαρίου, καὶ ἔκραξεν* (*devour the foot of the boy, and he screamed*).<sup>210</sup> That the fish is merely clinging to the boy’s foot is indeed a reasonable reading, albeit not comparable to the traditional interpretation of Jonah.

This could be considered a discrepancy when trying to compare Tobit to Jonah—or it could be considered at least tangentially in favor of the alternative reading of Jonah presented in this thesis: The fish can be called *big* and yet be a fish of normal size and only big enough to *swallow a young man’s foot*, which an alternative tradition of the very same story simply phrases as the fish *wanting to swallow the boy* (i.e. as if to swallow him as a whole). A similar thought could thus be conceptualized in regards to Jonah.

What is quite different about Jonah, is, of course, the idea that Jonah *dwelt in the belly of the fish*—as long as this is taken literal, one will surely think that this would be the biggest discrepancy between Tobit and Jonah, and that the two stories are not to be compared. On the one hand, this thesis has emphasized and will further emphasize that the belly of the fish can be seen a metaphor for being in the midst of the fish-filled waters (see pp. 71ff., 74ff., and 121ff.), but on the other hand, there might even be a subtle thematic connection between the insides Jonah’s fish and Tobit’s fish.

As has been pointed out in the earlier chapters concerning the *fish-belly* already, the multiple words which Hebrew has for *belly*, including the one which is actually used in Jonah, can also refer

<sup>209</sup>There are different textual traditions of the Book of Tobit, generally categorized as one longer version (G<sup>I</sup>—c.f. Codex Vaticanus, Codex Alexandrinus; Vulgata (a different longer version)) and one shorter version (G<sup>II</sup>—c.f. Codex Sinaiticus; Vetus Latina (a different shorter version)), as well as scriptural versions which consist of a mixture of the long and the short version (G<sup>III</sup>). Since the Aramaic and Hebrew fragments found in Qumran seem to resemble the longer versions more closely, the longer version of Greek Tobit may be closer to the original.

<sup>210</sup>This, too, has been picked up by the Italian CEI 2008/1974 (“tentò di divorare il piede del ragazzo”), but not by the English Douay-Rheims (it may have been based on a mixed version of Tobit (G<sup>III</sup>)).

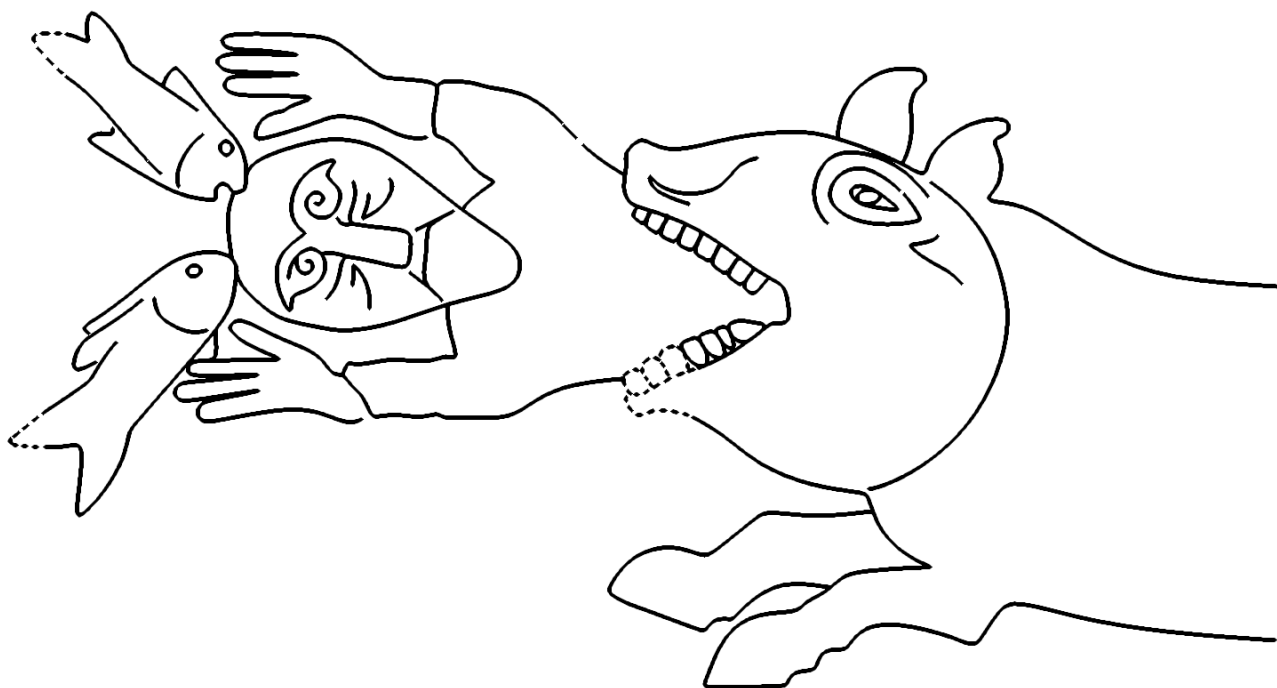
to the inner organs in general. With this in mind, it seems rather noteworthy that right after being attacked by the fish, Tobias is told (by his companion Raphael) to catch the fish and disembowel it, extracting and keeping its heart, liver and gall, so that they could later be used as medicinal and spiritual antidotes to heal blindness and exorcise demons (c.f. Tobit 6:3–8). So, not only does the fish, which at first appears to be a threat, turn out to be a saving force—very similar to the Book of Jonah—, but the healing properties which would later save the other protagonists are described to be the fish’s inner organs—dwelling in the fish’s belly.

There seems to be a spiritual or rather psychological metaphor present in both of these stories, implying that it is in the very midst of the creature which represents the waters of chaos and vice that a device against vice and a tool for healing conversion be found—that the path to salvation leads right through the hellish abyss.

The two stories are, in regards to the fish, far more similar to one another than they are dissimilar, and thus the seeming discrepancies are better explained as an invitation to read Jonah in a light other than the traditional reading: Just like the belly of the fish can be read in a literal light or can be seen as a symbol of healing, the ἰχθὺς may just as well be μέγας, but the text stating this does not necessitate the fish to be bigger than the prophet whom it tries to devour; and the *attempt to swallow the prophet* in one reading can easily equate to the fish merely *swallowing the prophet’s foot* in another reading—as if some fish(es) were merely nibbling on the prophet’s head... please turn the page.

### 3.6.: A Relief at the Khakhuli Monastery

One artistic depiction can be found as a relief in a 10<sup>th</sup> century Georgian Orthodox monastery located in Khakhuli,<sup>211</sup> depicting Jonah as he is being swallowed by some creature:



While the devouring sea-creature, here being pictured as a dragon, looks a bit like a dog-pig hybrid, what is much more interesting is at the other end: Rather than one great fish swallowing Jonah, two normal-sized fish surround his head, possibly nibbling at it but by no means able to swallow him.

The fact that the relief depicts not one, not many, but two fish may suggest that this depiction was inspired by the Jewish tradition about Jonah having been swallowed by two different fish, one male and one female (see page 87). This means that around A.D. 950 this tradition was not just a minority opinion among a handful of Jewish Rabbis, but established among Georgian Orthodox Christians as well. However, these two fish are not swallowing Jonah—they don't even seem able to. If the Jewish tradition about the two fish served as an inspiration, then only partially.

It seems likely that this relief is the result of three traditions having been merged: Jonah being actually swallowed by a sea-creature that is not a fish; Jonah dealing with two actual fishes (although he is not being swallowed entirely, and the fishes are not great); surrounded by multiple normal-sized fish (albeit only two). The very fact that the tradition of the male and female fish has not been adopted in its entirety does suggest a third substrate, namely that Jonah was surrounded by multiple normal-sized fish—which befits and benefits this paper's core thesis.

<sup>211</sup>This used to be a monastery in the medieval kingdom of Tao, Georgia; after the Ottoman conquest of Tao during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the region became part of Turkey and the monastery's main church is nowadays used as a mosque.

### 3.7.: A Mosaic at the Huqoq Synagogue

Recent excavations at a digging-site in Huqoq, Israel, have revealed mosaics in a Jewish synagogue from ca. A.D. 400, depicting several scenes from the Bible. One of these mosaics shows Jonah being thrown overboard into the water, where he is not only being surrounded by multiple fish, but also being swallowed by a great fish... which, in turn, gets swallowed by another great fish... which, eventually, gets swallowed by a third great fish.



A comment made by *National Geographic* explains this as “an exaggeration of the story”—artistic liberty, one might call it. Very obviously though, the mosaic—albeit different—also bears a strong resemblance to the here proposed hypothesis that Jonah was engulfed by multiple fish, be it the many fish surrounding him in the distance (over a dozen different fish, including one sea-serpent and one octopus, and one fish which is not included in the image above because it would have been cut off) or the three fish literally swallowing him.

The mosaic seems to reflect that the Jews in Northern Israel around A.D. 400 had a living and lively awareness of the secondary tradition that there was more than one fish, as is also hinted

at in the afore-mentioned Midrashîm—though the mosaic tells a story quite different from any of these Midrashîm, so there must have been a broader idea of piscine plurality.

In contrast to this Jewish depiction from ca. A.D. 400, Christian depictions of the same story from around the same time (and the time leading up to that point) rather tend to depict a single draconian sea-serpent.<sup>212</sup> A possible explanation for this difference in Jewish vs. Christian tradition might be the fact that after several conflicts with different Goyîm ever since the first century A.D., Israelite Jews had lost all interest in the Greek Septuagint translation, which was commonly used by the Christians and which speaks of Jonah’s fish as a κῆτος, while Jews preferred the Hebrew text which goes with דָּג (dāg) and דָּגָא (dāgâ).<sup>213</sup> So, the fact that Jews did not rely on the Greek (speaking of one reptilian sea-creature) and preferred the Hebrew (speaking of fish while using different words) may have made them more likely to keep that secondary tradition about there being multiple fish.

212 Christian depictions of the scene leading up to A.D. 400, showing a draconian sea-serpent, include:

- Late 3<sup>rd</sup> c. Sarcophagus front with Jonah and Christian scenes (marble) — Rome
- Late 3<sup>rd</sup> c. (280–290) Cleveland sculpture group aka. “Jonah Marbles” (marble) — Asia Minor (Phrygia)
- Early 4<sup>th</sup> c. Table base with Jonah swallowed and cast up (marble) — Asia Minor (but Roman)
- Late 4<sup>th</sup> c. Fresco in the catacomb of St. Marcellinus & St. Peter — Rome

213 For this reason, the κῆτος-based Christian understanding of the story historically tends to lean more towards Jonah’s fish or κῆτος being a *Hellmouth*-metaphor, which is not so commonly the case for the Jewish interpretations of the story. For more on that, see page 138.

#### 4. Metaphors

A thesis about Jonah's words and their meaning(s) needs a chapter about metaphors and symbolism. Albeit not the focus of this thesis, a set of metaphors, idioms, proverbs, and symbols shall be presented—some of which might be old hat, others may be new to the reader.

It must be stressed that metaphors do not necessarily negate a literal reading—elements like e.g. the sea are clearly introduced as literal in Jonah 1, but can none the less carry additional symbolic meaning in Jonah 2. They are NOT ONLY metaphorical, BUT ALSO metaphorical.

As has been done with *collectives* in an earlier chapter, so, too, should the term *metaphor* be defined before this larger chapter will continue to make repeated use of it. A *metaphor* is “a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them”.<sup>214</sup> Furthermore: “In poetry a metaphor may perform varied functions, from noting simple similarity between things to evoking a broad set of associations; it may exist as a minor element, or it may be the central concept and controlling image of the poem.”<sup>215</sup> So, *metaphor* can be used in a rather broad sense—dead or alive, implicit or explicit, subtle or forthright, essential to a text or just as a side-note.

Metaphors can be fossilized parts of language, hardly recognizable as metaphors, comparable to English *foot of the mountain* (compare the “roots of the mountains” (NASB, ESV, NIV, NLT) in Jonah 2:7)—arguably, some of the words which have been presented during the word-studies could be counted as such (swallow = engulf; stomach = insiderness; vomit = expulsion).

However, there are also other ways of utilizing metaphor. While this thesis would at no point deny that actual fish were present regarding Jonah's incident, it is possible that the fish would symbolize something quite different at the very same time—such symbolism never needs to be explicit and can reference a culturally present idea, like the fish representing the ocean, chaos, sin, anxiety, and by extension the Leviathan who is, in turn, a symbol of all the afore-mentioned things.

The metaphors which will be presented over the course of this larger chapter are also of different kinds, mostly two. On the one hand, there are more idiomatic metaphors, figures of speech which are an explicit part of language usage, e.g. “feeding the fish” (see p. 106), the Homeric *ἰχθυόεντα* (see pp. 111, 113), or the Palestinian proverbs (see p. 114). On the other hand, there are also subtler metaphors which are more like poetic symbols, representing culturally ingrained ideas in a somewhat more abstract manner, e.g. the implied imagery of the Hellmouth (see p. 138), the Hellhound (see p. 135), and the personified abyss with its leviathanic connotations of chaos (see p.

<sup>214</sup>“metaphor”, in *Merriam-Webster*. (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metaphor>, retrieved: 14.8.2020).

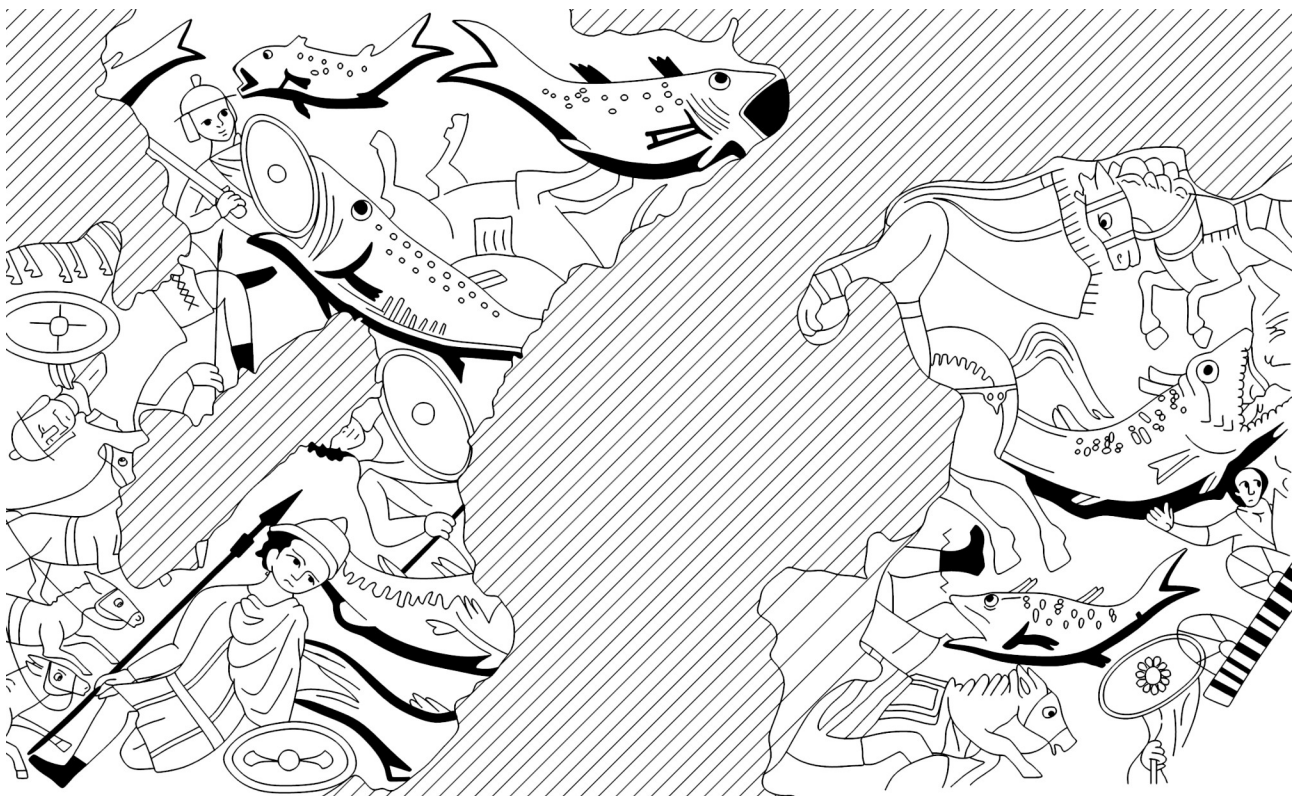
<sup>215</sup>Ibid.

128). Of course, there is no such thing as a clear distinction between categories of metaphors (since metaphor is essential to all language), so some of the metaphors which will be shown here may very well be in a gray-area between direct idiomatic figures of speech and abstract poetic symbols, e.g. the connection between *fish* and *anxiety* (see p. 117), the womb-symbolism hinted at via the vocabulary of Jonah 2 (see p. 121), possible *abyss*-connotations in the LXX κῆτος (see p. 124), and possibly the question of how literal or figurative Jonah's references to death may be (see p. 149).

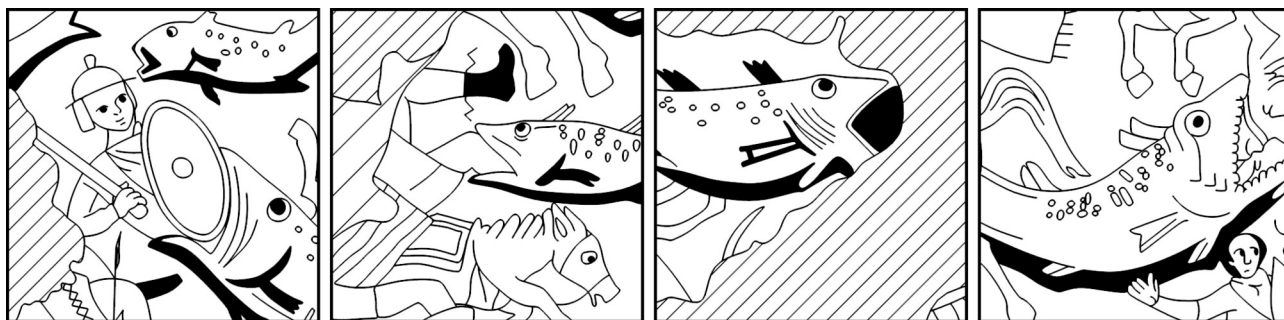
With all of these definitions of *metaphor* out of the way, the thesis can now pick up where it left off: The Huqoq-mosaics.

#### 4.1.: Huqoq & Homer – Feeding the Fish

The Huqoq-mosaics do not depict their scenes exactly the same as the original biblical scenes, but the symbolism utilized in their embellishments is itself none the less biblical, and thus the embellishments can say something about how the biblical texts should be understood (or at least how they were understood back in the say). Interestingly enough, the most telling symbolism might not even be found in the mosaic depicting the Jonah-scene, but the other afore-mentioned mosaic, depicting the Egyptian soldiers drowning in the Red Sea (according to National Geographic):



This scene’s description in the Book of Exodus mentions the soldiers as drowning and perishing in the water, but not as being swallowed by any fish, as the following details highlight:



And yet, this mosaic depicts that act of drowning in the water as being swallowed by a fish, combining the scene from Exodus with imagery or symbolism similar to that of Jonah. The most likely explanation is that the act of being eaten by fish is (and was) just a metaphor for *drowning*.<sup>216</sup>

So, this hints at an ancient awareness that also Jonah’s fish-swallowing really was just a metaphor for Jonah drowning in the sea, surrounded by a plenitude of fish.

Comparably, there are nowadays the idioms “[to] feed the fish(es)” (English), “[zu] Fischfutter werden” (German), and “cibo per [i] pesci” (Italian, unusual)—all of which are humorous idioms for *drowning*—, as well as “[to] swim/sleep with the fish(es)” as idioms for being dead in the sea (which can also be said of Jonah, see page 149). But can any of these idioms, popular today as evocations of stereotypical Mafia-speech, be traced back to antiquity? Yes: Homer’s famous poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (late 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C., around the time the story of Jonah would have taken place), contain multiple expressions of that kind—8 altogether, 7 of which equate to *feeding the fish*, and 1 of them equating to *sleeping with the fishes*, all of them relating to someone’s death:

- **II. 19:268** *[to be] food for the fishes* (βόσιν ἰχθύσιν) — Literally “feeding the fishes”, even closer to the German “Fischfutter [werden]” and Italian “cibo per [i] pesci”.
- **II. 21:122** *make your bed with the fishes / lie there now among the fishes* (ἐνταυθοῖ νῦν κεῖσο μετ’ ἰχθύσιν) — This expression (similar to the modern “sleep with the fishes”), which Homer calls *winged words* (ἔπεα πτερόεντ’), implying that the idiom was well known when Homer wrote the *Iliad*, is uttered by Achilles as he throws somebody into deep waters to die.
- **II. 21:126–127** *Many a fish<sup>217</sup> as he leapeth amid the waves, shall dart up beneath the black ripple to eat the white fat of Lycaon* (θρόσκων τις κατὰ κῦμα μέλαιναν φρήχ’ ὑπαίξει ἰχθύς,

<sup>216</sup>Another (and maybe subtly connected) explanation: The mosaic may rearrange themes present in Ps 74:13–14 (see page 130) which compares Pharaoh’s soldiers in that scene to the (multiple) heads of Leviathan.

<sup>217</sup>The Greek text actually speaks only of *fish*—grammatically speaking, singular, not plural (compare the two sg. verbs that accompany ἰχθύς, namely ὑπαίξει *dart beneath* and φάγησι *eat*). The author of the translation used here (A.T. Murray) understood the expression in a collective sense and emphasized this plurality in the translation.

- ὅς κε φάγησι Λυκάονος ἀργέτα δημόν) — This comes right after the previous passage, putting the two concepts *sleeping with the fish* and *feeding the fish* right next to one another.
- **II. 21:201b–204** [...] *when he had robbed him of his life, lying in the sands; and the dark water wetted him. With him then the eels and fishes dealt, plucking and tearing the fat about his kidneys* ([...] ἐπεὶ φίλον ἦτορ ἀπηύρα, κείμενον ἐν ψαμάθοισι, δίαίνε δέ μιν μέλαν ὕδωρ. τὸν μὲν ἄρ' ἐγγέλυές τε καὶ ἰχθύες ἀμφεπένοντο δημόν ἐρεπτόμενοι ἐπινεφρίδιον κείροντες)
  - **II. 24:82** [*she*] *goeth down bearing death to the ravenous fishes* (ἔρχεται ὠμηστῆσιν ἐπ' ἰχθύσι κῆρα φέρουσα)
  - **Od. 14:134** *or in the sea fishes have eaten him* [...] (ἦ τὸν γ' ἐν πόντῳ φάγον ἰχθύες) — said of someone one verse after proclaiming that *his spirit has left him*.
  - **Od. 15:480** *Her they cast forth to be a prey to seals and fishes* (καὶ τὴν μὲν φώκησι καὶ ἰχθύσι κύρμα γενέσθαι)
  - **Od. 24:290** *my ill-starred son, whom far from his friends and his native land haply the fishes have devoured in the deep* (δύσμορον; ὃν που τῆλε φίλων καὶ πατρίδος αἴης ἠέ που ἐν πόντῳ φάγον ἰχθύες, ἢ ἐπὶ χέρσου)

For another possible link between Jonah and homeric vocabulary (μεγαῖ-κήτης), see p. 127.

Obviously, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are neither Jewish nor the Old Testament, but Greek. On the one hand, it could be argued that by the time (ca. 400 A.D.) the afore-mentioned Huqoq-mosaics illustrated the metaphor *to feed the fishes*, the works of Homer had long been well established in the Jewish world through the Hellenistic Period (300–100 B.C.).<sup>218</sup> On the other hand though, the cultural connections might go back much further: There is a theory that dissident Hebrews, in whose eyes Moses' theological reforms towards a stricter monotheism were treason, split off after the Exodus from Egypt and migrated to Greece, where they contributed to Mycenaean culture and partook in the Trojan War.<sup>219</sup> These would most probably have been Danites, from the tribe of Dan:

- They were decried as blasphemers and idolaters prone to pagan practices (so much so that later genealogies left them out 1Ch 1–9 and Rev 7:4–8).
- They were sung of as *having stayed with the ships* in the Song of Deborah (Judg 5:17),<sup>220</sup> suggesting that Danites or a subset of them became part (i.e. the Danaans) of the so called *Sea Peoples* or *People of the Sea*, together with the Philistines, with whom they probably would have shared a sea-route. The Philistines were the arch-enemies of the Israelites—but

218c.f. Lieberman S. (1950): "Hellenism in Jewish Palestine", in *Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, Vol. 18. (Second Improved Edition—1962) New York: The Stroock Publication Fund. pp. 108ff..

219c.f. Milner L.S. (2008): *Was Achilles a Jew? Hebraic Contributions to Greek Civilization*. pp. 447–474.

220One of the earliest extant Hebrew texts in one of the oldest books of the Bible.

they were NOT NECESSARILY enemies, not to Hebrews who themselves were deemed blasphemous pagan outcasts among their own people. *The enemy of my enemy is my friend.*

- Several OT-passages<sup>221</sup> identify the Philistines (whose pottery, script, and pork-consumption was typically Aegean, not Semitic)<sup>222</sup> as having come from *Caphtor* (Heb. כַּפְתֹּר), which ancient Near Eastern records identify with the Aegean Basin and Crete in particular.<sup>223</sup> Because of that, literary parallels<sup>224</sup> between the OT and the *Iliad* suggest that the Philistines may have fought in the Trojan War, and that both the OT and the *Iliad* may share some similar ideas, implying some sort cultural connection.
- The Deuterocanonical Books claim consanguinity between Israelites and Greeks (c.f. 1Macc 12:21 and 2Macc 5:9, according to which Spartans were descendants of Abraham). Josephus accepted this (c.f. *Antiquities* 1:15:1), calling attention to a Greek letter, the seal of which bore *an eagle with a dragon in its claws* (c.f. *Antiquities* 12:4:10–12), the emblem of Dan.
- According to Greek legend, one of the founders of the Greek culture and people was Danaus,<sup>225</sup> the founder of Argos, whose tribe had fled Egypt around the 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C.—this would perfectly match the idea of the Danites, together with Moses and the other tribes, fleeing Egypt during the Exodus (possibly in the 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C.), but then dissent and settle in Greece, where their more henotheistic culture would have found more acceptance.

So, there are good reasons<sup>226</sup> to think that culture from which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* emerged had a Hebrew substrate—even Achilles himself might have been of Hebrew blood—, which makes the connections between Homer’s epics and Hebrew thought and language much stronger than expected, and thus the Homeric piscine expressions listed above might very well be representative of Hebrew thought and language as well.

The Hebrews may have been well acquainted with the concept of *feeding the fish*, as a metaphor for death in the depth of the sea—akin to Jonah.

221c.f. Amos 9:7; Jer 47:4b; Gen 10:14; 1Ch 1:12.

222c.f. Romey K. (2016): “Discovery of Philistine Cemetery May Solve Biblical Mystery”, for *National Geographic*.

223i.e. *Keftiu* in a Theban topographical list from 1400 B.C.; *Keftiu/K-f-t-r* in Egyptian chronicles; *Kapturi/Kptr* in Ugaritic; *Kaptara* in Akkadian documents; *Kap-ta-ra* in an Old Babylonian geographical document.

c.f. Astour M. (1964): “Second Millennium BC Cypriot and Cretan Onomastica Reconsidered”, in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 84. p. 248 f., n. 103-109. Kitchen K.A. (1973): “The Philistines”, in *Peoples of Old Testament Times*. Oxford at the Clarendon Press. p. 54.

224c.f. Caesar S.W. (Semitic Museum at Harvard University) (2016): “Literary Parallels between Homer’s Epics and the Biblical Philistines”, for *Jewish Bible Quarterly*.

225It is important to keep in mind that when legends or the OT speak of individuals as founders, the lines between individual and tribe can become blurry, so the one Danaus who founded Argos may rather have been a whole tribe.

226Milner lists more arguments in his book, but this summary is already going beyond the scope of this chapter.

#### 4.2.: Jonah 1–2 & Homer’s Odyssey 5:270–429 (Parallels)

The connections to Homeric passages do not end there. One passage in the Odyssey bears a striking similarity in regards to the things that are *mentioned*, even though the things that *happen* tend to be quite different from the usual reading of Jonah:

- **Od. 5:270–271** *and he [Odysseus] sat and guided his raft skillfully with the steering-oar, nor did sleep fall upon his eyelids, [...]*
  - The protagonist embarks on a journey across the sea; compare Jonah 1:3.
  - Sleep plays a role, but while it is stressed that Odysseus did not fall asleep, Jonah’s depiction renders a distinctive contrast between the two—but the theme is there.
- **Od. 5:291–294** *So saying, he [Poseidon] gathered the clouds, and seizing his trident in his hands troubled the sea, and roused all blasts of all manner of winds, and hid with clouds land and sea alike; and night rushed down from heaven.*
  - God of the sea causes a storm to haunt the protagonist; compare Jonah 1:4,9.
- **Od. 5:303–307** *In such wise does Zeus overcast the broad heaven with clouds, and has stirred up the sea, and the blasts of all manner of winds sweep upon me; now is my utter destruction sure. Thrice blessed those Danaans, aye, four times blessed, who of old perished in the wide land of Troy, doing the pleasure of the sons of Atreus.*
  - Conflation of whether such a storm would be made by one god or another; identification with the highest of gods; compare Jonah 1:5,9.
  - Reference to the Danaans = Danites = Hebrews (see page 109); compare Jonah 1:9.
  - The initial expression *thrice blessed* could, maybe, compare to the Hebrew practice of calling God *Holy! Holy! Holy!* (Is 6:3; Rev 4:8), or Philo’s *blessed and thricehappy nature of God* (Spec IV 124), drawing yet another connection to Hebrew culture.
- **Od. 5:313–314** *Even as thus he spoke the great wave smote him from on high, rushing upon him with terrible might, and around it whirled his raft.*
  - Compare Jonah 1:4, *a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken*
- **Od. 5:315** *Far from the raft he fell (πέσεε threw [himself] down), [...]*
  - Compare Jonah 1:15, *Jonah is thrown into the waters of the raging sea.*
- **Od. 5:319–320** *As for him, long time did the wave hold him in the depths (ὕπόβρυχα under-water), nor could he rise at once from beneath the onrush of the mighty wave.*
  - Protagonist spends a while under-water, unable to rise at once; compare all of Jonah 2. (Odysseus, however, manages to get onto his raft again, and manages to stay afloat afterwards, even after the raft eventually does perish.)

- **Od. 5:343–344** *Strip off these garments, and leave thy raft to be driven by the winds, but do thou swim with thy hands [...]*
  - Odysseus must strip off his heavy garment that keeps pulling him down, and let go of his raft—this could be a metaphor for letting go of sin (compare Zechariah 3:4; also Isaiah 52:1, 61:10), even if it will not be easy; compare Jonah, who, over the course of Jonah 2, must learn to let go of his sin and accept the burden given to him.
- **Od. 5:358–359, 5:372–375** *Nay, but verily I will not yet obey, for afar off mine eyes beheld the land, where she said I was to escape. [...] [Odysseus] stripped off the garments which beautiful Calypso had given him. Then straightway he stretched the veil beneath his breast, and flung himself headlong into the sea with hands outstretched, ready to swim.*
  - The protagonist at first disobeys (compare all of Jonah 1), and laments about the means of his salvation being hidden from his sight (compare Jonah 2:5). After a while, however, the protagonist decides to let go of his sin and to follow the instruction which he had been given.
- **Od. 5:382–384** *But Athena, daughter of Zeus, took other counsel. She stayed the paths of the other winds, and bade them all cease and be lulled to rest;*
  - The goddess Athena, who later saves Odysseus, controls and calms the winds; compare Jonah 1:15, where God controls and calms the winds once Jonah is thrown overboard.
- **Od. 5:387** [...] *Zeus-born (διογενής) Odysseus [...]*
  - Jonah is neither Zeus-born nor born of any other deity, but Jesus, who is the antitype of Jonah, is the Son of God.
- **Od. 5:390** *But when fair-tressed Dawn brought to its birth the third day, [...]*
  - Akin to Odysseus, who spends three days adrift in and on the sea, Jonah spends three days in the belly of the fish—compare Jonah 2:1.
- **Od. 5:417–420** *But if I swim on yet further in hope to find shelving beaches and harbors of the sea, I fear me lest the storm-wind may catch me up again, and bear me, groaning heavily, over the teeming deep (ἰχθυόεντα);*
  - Jonah is being caught up in a storm on the sea (probably not too far from the shore).
  - The *teeming deep* is literally called ἰχθυόεντα—which means *full of fish, consisting of fish, fishy, fish-like*—, using *fish* as a metonymy for the *sea* itself (c.f. Jonah 2:1,2).
- **Od. 5:421–422** *or lest some god (δαίμων) may even send forth upon me some great monster (κῆτος ... μέγα) from out the sea—and many such (πολλὰ) does glorious Amphitrite breed.*

- The notion that some god—namely the goddess Amphitrite that reigns over the sea, as the Hebrews consider their one God YHWH to be the one that reigns over the seas (c.f. Jonah 1:9)—would *send forth* a κῆτος μέγα upon the protagonist (c.f. Jonah LXX 2:1).
- Also, the explicit mention of *many* (πολλὰ) sea-creatures being bred.
- No actual κῆτος appears (it is but a mere idea).
- **Od. 5:423** *For I know that the glorious **Earth-shaker** is filled with wrath against me.”*
  - The Earth-shaker (ἐννοσίγαιος)—another name for Poseidon, god of the seas (compare Od. 5:366, synonym ἐνοσίχθων)—being wroth against the protagonist; compare God in Jonah 1.
- **Od. 5:424–429** *While he pondered thus in mind and heart, a great wave bore him against the rugged shore. There would his skin have been stripped off and his bones broken, had not the goddess (θεά), flashing-eyed Athena, put a thought in his mind. On he rushed and seized the rock (πέτρης) with both hands, and clung to it, groaning, until the great wave went by.*
  - The protagonist nearly dies by the sea, but divine intervention saves him.
  - The responsible deity, Athena, is mentioned by the nobler word θεά, as opposed to the less noble δαίμων for Amphitrite before, and Poseidon (Earth-shaker) not being called either of the two words; compare Jonah’s initial negativity toward God.
  - The worshipped deity affects the protagonist’s mind who decides to *seize the rock* (πέτρα); Jonah neither mentions nor seizes any literal rocks, but his prayer, and especially his proclamation that *Salvation is from the Lord* can be seen as strong references to Psalms and other biblical texts which identify that God who saves as *the Rock*, i.e. πέτρα (see page 115, further explored on page 179).
- **Od. 5:445-450** (Odysseus says a prayer to a river god who then helps him get to safety.)
  - Jonah says a prayer to God in Jonah 2, and eventually gets saved, compare Jonah 2:11.
- **Od. 5:456-458** *So he lay breathless and speechless, with scarce strength to move; for terrible weariness had come upon him. But when he revived, and his spirit returned again into his breast, [...]*
  - Odysseus faints for a while, and it even sounds like a brief little near-death experience (NDE); Jonah, too, might be having an NDE, ending in Jonah 2:11 (see page 149).

Jonah 1–2 roughly follows the same outline, with almost all the shared themes occurring in the very same order, e.g. a storm brought by divine intervention, reference to the Hebrews, falling into the sea, a conversion from disobedience to obedience, seizing a rock (only subtly hinted at in Jonah 2

via intertextuality), and the end of an NDE (see page 149) following the end of a prayer. Some of the themes are not mentioned in the same order, but are nonetheless present and rather important similarities, such as the topic of sleep (inverted in Jonah) and divine intervention calming the storm, but most intriguingly that the protagonist spends three days adrift—adrift within what the text calls *ιχθυόεντα* (*full of fish, consisting of fish, fishy, fish-like*; from *ιχθυόεις*, lit. *fish-ful*), metonymically equating the deep sea with the fish with which it is teeming (which is almost exclusively how Homer uses *ιχθυόεντα*).<sup>227</sup> Od. 5:417–429, by referencing the past storm and danger of feeding the fish before continuing with the conclusion, seems like its own little Jonah-capsule, summarizing the themes shared with Jonah even more concisely.<sup>228</sup>

It is also noteworthy that at a later point in the *Odyssey*, namely Book 11 *Nekyia*, Odysseus is sent on a journey into the underworld, so Odysseus is also associated with a *descent into Hades*, which equates to Jonah *calling from out of the belly of Sheol* (c.f. Jonah 2:3) as well as the *Descensus Christi* prefigured by Jonah (see page 149). Of course, it has been observed by far greater names like C.G. Jung that both the *Odyssey* and Jonah share themes of similar descent, namely into one’s own unconscious.<sup>229</sup> Such themes will be explored in the following chapters,<sup>230</sup> but a descent into one’s own unconscious is NOT what this chapter is about—this chapter is specifically about the structural similarities of the two passages.

Because, if the parallels between this pericope of the *Odyssey* and the Book of Jonah imply that the author(s) of the story of Jonah were aware of Homer’s epics,<sup>231</sup> and that elements from those epics have seeped into the Book of Jonah, then that strengthens the possibility which has been proposed in the previous chapter, namely that the metaphor of *feeding the fishes* was also known to the author(s) from the Greek, and that it became part of the Jonah-story, too.

Thus, it seems rather clear that Jonah did indeed *feed the fish(es)*.

227c.f. Il. 9:4, 9:360, 16:746, 19:378; Od. 3:177, 4:381, 4:390, 4:424, 4:470, 4:516, 5:420, 9:83, 10:457, 10:540, 23:317. Only Homeric: Il. 20:392 with adjectival *ιχθυόεντι* to previously established *λίμνη lake* in Il. 20:390.

228This is NOT meant to fall into the mythicists’ trap of so-called *parallelomania*, which would denounce the biblical story as a made-up copycat due to these Homeric parallels (as e.g. Dennis Smith and Joseph Tyson claim in *Acts and Christian Beginnings*, about St. Paul’s shipwreck in Acts as a fictional copycat of the passages discussed here).

229c.f. Jung C.G. (1944): *Psychology of the Unconscious*. pp. 131, 156, 220.  
c.f. Jung C.G. (1976): *Analytical Psychology*. p. 41.

230It should be stressed that the goal of this or any of the following chapter is not to propose a “Hero’s journey”-style “monomyth”-interpretation for Jonah, but rather that cultural exchange has affected the elements found in the story. “Monomyth”-approaches primarily can only explain why certain symbols and metaphors appeal to the human psyche—as Jung would have embraced, and so does Peterson nowadays—, and should never be abused to neglect ancient stories as mere fairy-tales—which is the trap into which “Hero’s journey”-proponents like Campbell’s followers tend to tap (which insults people’s intelligence—be it people today or of antiquity).

231Also, Ecclesiastes 9:10 ([...] *for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in [Sheol], whither thou goest*) resembles Plato’s *Republica* 3:386:4 (*Ah me! so it is true that e’en in the dwellings of Hades Spirit there is and wraith, but within there is no understanding*). Ecclesiastes (450–200 B.C.) and the *Republic* (ca. 375 B.C.) were written within the same time-frame. So, biblical writers were probably acquainted with Greek literature.

#### 4.3.: Palestinian Proverbs & Armenian Prayers – Fish, Chaos, Sin

Idioms and proverbs about fish (and them being fed) are of course also known in Palestine:<sup>232</sup>

- (a) *Like the fish (pl.)—as soon as they step out of the water, they die.*<sup>233</sup>
  - About people who do not like to be in foreign outlands (“in der Fremde”).
- (b) *Fish (pl.) in the sea.*
  - Without exactitude and order (i.e. chaotic); also about unclear promises.
- (c) *Like the fish (pl.), they eat one another (up).*
  - (About societal strife and disorder, akin to *canis canem edit?*)
- (d) *One fish (sg.) eats the other, and the fisherman eats them all (pl.) together.*
  - (About the food chain and dominance hierarchies?)
- (e) *The big fish (sg.) eats the small one.*
  - (About dominance hierarchies?)

Although none of these particular proverbs directly translates to *feeding the fishes* or being eaten by fish as a *drowning*-metaphor, themes similar to the Jonah-story are definitely present:

- A (big) fish eating another creature (d)/(e).
- The many fish of the sea representing the chaos in which Jonah is drowning (b).
- Jonah’s dislike for having to go into a foreign land and saving behated foreigners (a).
- (a)/(b)/(c)/(d) (i.e. 4 out of 5) speak of fish in the plural or collective<sup>234</sup> (akin to this thesis).
- The theme of fish eating (i.e. swallowing) occurs in (c)/(d)/(e) (i.e. 3 out of 5), likely as a metaphor for societal disorder and animosity, as well as hierarchical structures and thoughts of superiority—themes present in Jonah, especially due to his own feeling of Jewish superiority over the supposedly dangerous pagan enemies.

What this shows is that the cultures in Palestinian regions have and have had idiomatic thought and language relating to a whole range of themes and topics which are present in the Book of Jonah. This in itself makes it quite likely that Jonah’s piscine incident is of some metaphorical nature, that

<sup>232</sup>Thilo M., Fr. ‘Abbūd S. (1937): *Fünftausend Sprichwörter aus Palästina*. §2360, 2361, 2361, 4198, 4199. (The first two idioms listed above (§4198 and 2361) are explained in the quoted source, but the last three (§4199, 2360, and 2362) are not explained in the source itself, so I will allow myself to give my best guesses instead.) German:

§4198 *Wie die Fische, sobald sie aus dem Wasser heraussteigen, sterben sie.*

§2361 *Fische im Meer.*

§4199 *Wie die Fische, sie fressen einander auf.*

§2360 *Ein Fisch frißt den anderen, und der Fischer ißt sie alle zusammen.*

§2362 *Der große Fisch frißt den kleinen.*

<sup>233</sup>A similar idiom, “like a fish out of water” (Italian: “sentirsi un pesce fuor d’acqua”), can be traced back to the ancient priest Abbâ Anthony whom St. Athanasius quotes a few times as using that metaphor before A.D. 373.

<sup>234</sup>Assuming the translation from Arabic into German given in the source (Thilo) is accurate.

the image of eating (i.e. swallowing) fish is possibly meant to evoke idiomatic themes of struggle, and even that there may have been multiple fish (since 4/5 idioms<sup>235</sup> are about pluralities of fish).

If the idioms are ancient enough,<sup>236</sup> then the Jonah-story could even be grounded in some of these idioms—unless the idioms, or at least some of them, had evolved from and thus after the Jonah-story itself.

This might very well be the case for a range of metaphors revolving around the theme of “[I am] sinking in the sea of sin”,<sup>237</sup> found in a later Armenian prayer (SMMJ 250)<sup>238</sup> dated to 1352 but attributed to St. Ephrem the Syrian (A.D. 306–373), which echoes poetic imagery from Jonah 2, but also from the NT and the Psalms (e.g. 18:4,16; 69:1–2[2–3],14–15[15–16]), the latter of which implying an intertextual poetic tradition predating<sup>239</sup> the Book of Jonah:

- **SMMJ 250 I.1: *I am floundering and tossed about in torrents of iniquity. / But I take refuge in You, / Reach out Your hand to me as You did to Peter.***
  - Jonah 2:3 and the floods compassed me about; Ps 18:5, 2Sa 22:5 the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me (lit. *the floods/torrents of ungodliness*); Ps 18:3, 2Sa 22:3 my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge; Ps 18:17, 2Sa 22:17 He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters; Mt 14:31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him [Peter].<sup>240</sup>
- **SMMJ 250 I.2: *O depths of majesty and of wisdom, / Deliver me for I am trapped, / and I have fallen into the depths of the sea of sin.***
  - Jonah 2:6 the earth with her bars was about me; Jonah 2:3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas.
- **SMMJ 250 I.7: *O Good Jesus, my Captain,<sup>241</sup> save me / from the abundant waves of my sins, / and settle me in a peaceful harbor.***

235Maybe even all five of them: Although (e) refers to each fish in the Singular, it speaks of two fish—more than one.

236Unfortunately, the source discussed here (Thilo) does not explicitly state how far back these proverbs may date.

237This phrase is also found in in SMMJ 170 (f. 218r): يا ايها القاري: كملت امثال الحكيم يوسفوس بعون الله وعلينا رحمته اجمعين امين. وذلك في سنة ١٩٠٧ ٢٣ يوم من تموز لا تنسا الكاتب الخاطي من صلاتك لاجل الله لاني غارق في بحر الخطية وخص نفسك بالف سلام امين. و ذلك في سنة ١٩٠٧ ٢٣ يوم من تموز  
McCollum A.C. (2014): ““Sinking in the sea of sin””, on *Hill Museum & Manuscript Library Orientalia*.

238McCollum A.C. (2015): ““Sinking in the sea of sin”, pt. II: Ephraem Armeniacus Adorator”, on *Hill Museum & Manuscript Library Orientalia*. Citing Mathews E.G. Jr. (editor & translator) (2014): “The Armenian Prayers attributed to Ephrem the Syrian”, in *Texts from Christian Late Antiquity* 36. Piscataway: Gorgias Press LLC.

239The dates of the Psalms are not clear, but many are considered to actually be dated to the time of David (whether he wrote them or not), while others were still written before 500 B.C., predating Jonah.

240That SMMJ 250 I.1 with its Jonah-imagery references Peter (Mt 14:31) may be surprisingly relevant, see page 180.

241That Jesus is called *Captain* connects him to maritime imagery, which is reminiscent of the Jonah-Echoes in the NT.

- Mt 14:30 beginning to sink, [he] cried out, “Lord, save me!”; Ps 18:4; 2Sa 22:5 The waves of death swirled about me (or *the cords of death entangled me*), the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.
- **SMMJ 250 I.20: *Stretch forth, O Lord, Your hand to me for I am shipwrecked / and I am drowning in the abyss of my evil deeds. / Deliver [me] from the stormy and violent force of the waves of my sins.***
  - Mt 14:31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him; Mt 14:32 (Mk 6:51; Jn 6:21) And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down; Jonah 1:15 and the raging sea grew calm.
- **SMMJ 250 III.106: *Remove me from the mire of my iniquity / lest I sink in forever.***
  - Ps 69:1,13[2,14] I sink in deep mire [...] Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink; Jonah 2:6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me forever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

SMMJ 250 I.64 (not listed above due to a lack of obvious OT-parallels) also speaks of *the billowy waves of my turbulent thoughts*, as well as expressing the idea that God shall *steer* one’s *mind* into the *safe harbor* of the Holy Spirit. These expressions blur the line as to whether one’s mind and thoughts are illustrated as just a vehicle within the external chaos symbolized by the sea and its elements, or whether the illustration means to depict one’s mind or thought itself to be that chaotic sea. In any case, however, the entire imagery of chaotic sea relates to one’s own sinful mind and thoughts in one way or another—or at least, this is how it was understood later on, between 306–1352 A.D., but it may none the less be representative of the tradition that led from the Psalms through Jonah to the NT and eventually to the Armenian prayers.

Both, the Palestinian proverbs as well as the Armenian prayers, have clear thematic overlap: Be the metaphor one of fish or of waters and waves, the common theme is disorder and chaos, primarily in regards to one’s own mind and thought.

In Christianity, the idea that not only sea-imagery but also fish itself would be deemed a symbol of human wickedness can be traced back to the *Epistle of Barnabas* written between A.D. 70–132, in which the author argues that OT-prohibitions on certain animal-foods were in fact *not a commandment of God that they should not bite with their teeth, but Moses spake it in spirit* (Barn 10:2) and that Moses *uttered them in a spiritual sense* (Barn 10:9), and in doing so doesn’t mince words about the spiritual connotation of *fish*:

**Barnabas 10:5** “*And thou shalt not eat,*” saith He, “*lamprey nor polypus nor cuttle fish.*” Thou shalt not, He meaneth, become like unto such men, who are desperately **wicked**, and are already **condemned to death**, just as these [little] **fishes** (ἰχθύδια) alone are **accursed** (ἐπικατάρατα) and **swim in the depths**, not swimming on the surface like the rest, but  **dwell on the ground** (ἐν τῇ γῆ in/at/on the earth) **beneath the deep sea**.

**Barnabas 10:10** And David also receiveth knowledge of the same three decrees, and saith; “*Blessed is the man who hath not gone in the council of the ungodly*”—even as the **fishes** (ἰχθύες) **go in darkness into the depths**; [...]

Interestingly enough, he even calls the fishes ἐπικατάρατα (*cursed/accursed*)—a word which is well attested in the Bible<sup>242</sup> for those who are ungodly or turn against God (the first occurrences being the curses (ἐπικαταρατος) over the serpent, Adam, and Cain—Eve is NOT explicitly *cursed*), which suits the symbolism of the God-fleeing Jonah sinking in a sea of ungodly sin perfectly well, especially if that symbolism can be associated with fish.

#### 4.4.: Anxious Fish & Fishy Anxiety

This thesis is, among other words, about fish, one vs. collective, דג (dāg) and דגה (dāgāh). Hebrew literature, however, has a tendency to use poetic word-play,<sup>243</sup> utilizing similar or even homophonic words to draw symbolic connections. In this sense, דג and דגה could both be said to have *evil twins* in the Hebrew vocabulary.

דג (dāg) and דגה (dāgā) for *fish* resemble דאג (dā’ag) or דאגה (dē’āgā) for *anxiety*—דאג being the verb *to be anxious*, דאגה being the feminine noun for *anxiety, worry, care, and apprehension because of approaching trouble*.<sup>244</sup> In written form, the similarity is especially noticeable if one considers the fact that an alternative spelling דאג for דג (*fish*) with an Aleph is attested in Nehemiah 13:16 (Nehemiah being one of the latest books in the OT, heavily dealing with the cultural climate after the Exiles),<sup>245</sup> and without diacritics, דאג for *fish* even looks exactly the same as דאג for *anxiety*.

242E.g. LXX: Gen 3:14,17, 4:11, 9:25, 27:29, 49:7; Deut 27:15–26, 28:16–19; 1Ki 14:24,28, 26:19; Tob 13:14; Ps 118:21 [119:21]; Wisdom 3:12, 14:8; Jer 11:3, 17:5, 20:14,15, 31:10; [...] NT: John 7:49; Gal 3:10,13.

243e.g. ba'al zebul *lord of the high place* > ba'al-z'bub *lord of the flies*; babel *Babylon* > babel *confused*.

244Baker W.; Carpenter E.: *OT Word Study Dictionary*, on Strong’s Hebrew 1672 and 1674.

245Other variations like דאגה and דאגה are also attested in the *Judean Desert MSS* (Mas552 1:1; Mas553 1:1), one of which having an Aleph, though not between ד and א but after the two consonants (אדג).

This, in fact, has led Iraqi Jews to abstain from eating fish altogether, because the phonological similarity between the Hebrew words for *fish* and for *anxiety/worry/trouble* had given fish such a bad reputation.<sup>246</sup> So, the observation of a phonological similarity, as well as the possibility of ancient Hebrew-speakers having connected these words in some symbolical manner are actually attested in the cultural habits of at least some Jews—NOT JUST some Jews, however, but Jews in Iraq.

Nineveh is in modern-day Iraq. Nineveh is what the story of Jonah revolves around—around people in Iraq who ended up converting towards belief in the God of the Jews. Even if that conversion may not have remained for very long, politically speaking (king Sennacherib of Nineveh would end up threatening to invade and destroy Jerusalem around 701 B.C., c.f. 2Ki 19:9–10,36), the faith in YHWH—no matter how superficial—had been spread among the people of the area. So, the descendants of these people might very well be among those who, up unto this day, abstain from eating fish.

This anti-pescetarian custom probably predates the Book of Jonah, considering that Hebrew started to be replaced by the more northern Aramaic and other languages as the tongue of the Jews during and after the Babylonian Exile, and Aramaic did not even have such a similarity between *fish* and *anxiety*.<sup>247</sup>

Other Jews (i.e. not native to Iraq), too, may have come into contact with this practice in the Babylonian Exile’s diaspora, at a time in which the story of Jonah was still developing—when it finally got written down after the Babylonian Exile, the Jewish authors may have incorporated the idea of connecting *fish* and *anxiety* into the Book of Jonah. (Especially if the story recalled in the Book of Jonah developed in the north, but even otherwise it could just be a cultural reference to the culture of Iraqi Jews.)

The comparison between *anxiety* and elements of the sea can also be observed in the OT, namely in Jer 49:23, which contains the expression בַּיָּם דָּאֲגָה (bay-yām d’āgâ), which may or may not have been a sort of idiom,<sup>248</sup> and which literally translates to *by/in the sea [there is] anxiety*, but some translations (e.g. ESV, NIV, CSB, ISV) interpret this as *they are troubled like the sea*, and the *Good News Translation* even considers: “Anxiety rolls over them like a sea [...]”

246Theroux A. (2017): *Einstein’s Beets*. p. 462.

247Aramaic Targum-verses never translate Hebrew דָּאֲגָה and דָּאֲגָה with words that share any similarity to Aramaic נוּנָא (nūnā *fish*): יִצִּיר worry / be concerned; יִרַח fall out / be terrified / agitated; יִצַּפ worry / concern; אֲשַׁתְּמוּמָא horror / desolation; יִרַע trembling / quaking; דְּהִילַת fearsome / terrible.

248The Hebrew sounds like *fish in the sea*, compare the Palestinian proverb *fish in the sea* as a symbol of chaos, p. 114.

The literal interpretation about *anxiety* in the *sea* would, in Hebrew, sound like *fish* in the *sea*, implicitly rendering the *anxiety* more as an external trouble. The *like*-interpretations, on the other hand, seem to imply that the *sea* itself is metaphorically being compared to *anxiety* (which, in Hebrew, sounds like *fish*)—implying that drowning in the *sea* would equate to drowning in one’s own *anxiety*. This is further strengthened by the Aramaic Targum translation כַּנְחָתִי יָמָא *like descent/sinking (in/of) the sea*, where *anxiety* has been substituted with the concept of *drowning*.<sup>249</sup>

How a play on *fish* and *anxiety* could fit into the story of Jonah is really easy to see:

Jonah is being swallowed by FISH. ↔ Jonah is being swallowed by his ANXIETY.

Jonah drowns in the FISH / SEA.<sup>250</sup> ↔ Jonah drowns in his ANXIETY.

Jonah prays from out of the FISH. ↔ Jonah prays from out of his ANXIETY.

Jonah gets out of the FISH. ↔ Jonah gets out of his ANXIETY.

Jonah is being swallowed up by and drowning in his own *anxiety, fear, and dread*—but, being in the womb of *anxious care*, Jonah is also being taken care of and being cared for by God. This interpretation seems especially plausible in light of the fact that the story of Jonah is indeed understood as a story about dealing with one’s own fears and anxiety in the context of Yom Kippur:

*Jonah enters the fish as in a large, well-lit synagogue—an allusion to the liturgy of Yom Kippur during which the book of Jonah is being read. Thus, on that day, every Jew is invited to identify with Jonah, his fears, his flight.*<sup>251</sup>

In light of Jonah’s anxiety, other parts of the story can be read in a light quite different from the norm, especially when Jonah 4:9 says: “*And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.*” (KJV) Picturing Jonah as annoyed and angry—which is the impression one might get from this traditional reading—would paint a somewhat confusing and bewildering picture; one would have every right to ask why Jonah should be so angry. However, the Hebrew word used for his *anger* can mean a variety of things:

2734. חָרָה *charah, khaw-raw’*; [...] *be angry, burn, be displeased, x earnestly, fret self, grieve, be (wax) hot, be incensed, kindle, x very, be wroth.*<sup>252</sup>

249The LXX does not contain an explicit reference to *anxiety* or the *sea*, but instead calls the inhabitants of Damascus *angry*, utilizing ἐθιμώθησαν, which can be used figuratively to state that the weather or the sea is *becoming stormy*.

250Because, as Jer 49:23 tells us, there is anxiety in the sea, or the sea is like anxiety.

251Original quote: «Jonas entre dans le poisson comme dans une grande synagogue bien éclairée. Allusion à la liturgie de Kippour au cours de laquelle on lit le livre de Jonas. Ainsi, en ce jour, tout juif est invité à s'identifier à Jonas, à ses peurs, à ses fuites.» (Anne-Catherine Avril (2000): *Jonas, un conte théologique*, p. 33)

252“2734. חָרָה *charah*” (i.e. ḥārâ), in *Hebrew Strong’s Dictionary* (Hebrew Entry).

Meanings like *be displeased*, *fret*, and *grieve*, paint a very different picture, namely that of a prophet who is not angry, but rather struggling with his anxiety. Considering the possible presence of the *anxiety*-theme via the fish, it makes a lot more sense to interpret חרה in the light of this anxiety as well. It was not necessarily anger which Jonah held after fulfilling his task, but *grieve*, even if anger played a role in it. (The word *fret*, as in *to fret for sth.*, might indeed be one of the better words to encapsulate the aspects of both *grief* and *anger* as *a more anxious kind of anger* when translating חרה into English.) This interpretation can be argued to make Jonah a much more sympathetic character, but more importantly, it also plays a role in arguing for the possibility that Jonah might have had a near-death experience, see page 154.

Thinking of English “anxiety” and “anxious”, the etymology of which lies in Latin “angere” *bind/press together* or *suffocate* (compare Lat. “angor”), or German “beklommen” which connotes similar things (feeling as if in a narrow space, though in spiritual/emotional sense), the idea that Jonah’s piscine incident is about his own anxiety fits the Midrash in which his urge to pray to God depends on him being crowded and thronged by 365.000 baby-fish after the big fish was too spacious for him to feel anything other than relaxed (see page 87), implying that in regards to the story of Jonah similar connotations of *narrowness* were passed down in Jewish tradition—be it as a literal fish’s physical inner narrowness, or *anxiety* as a sort of *spiritual narrowness*.

#### 4.5.: Born Again from the Watery Womb

The belly of the fish might not only stand for *spiritual entrapment*, for *spiritual imprisonment*, but also for imprisonment's rehabilitative result: *spiritual renewal*.

*“The swallowing of Jonah by the great fish continues this movement of entrapment in a physical sense. Yet this entrapment is also a spiritual one, [...] What appears to be an act of rescue through the fish may in effect become Jonah's final trap. It is not death which is the final trap of the prophet escaping from his mission. The final entrapment of the prophet is the renewed commission.”*<sup>253</sup>

*Renewal* might be one of the key-words—Jonah's stay in the belly of the fish is what leads to the renewal of Jonah's commission from God, but only after the renewal of Jonah's spirit towards God.

One rather unusual interpretation for the *waves and breakers* is that the expression could be a reference to the *birth canal*, since the word for *breakers* is מִשְׁבָּר (mīšbār), derived from the verb שָׁבַר (šābar), the Hiph'il of which can mean *to cause to break out* and thus *to bring to the birth* (c.f. Isaiah 66:9). Should this interpretation be correct, then the waves and breakers that are passing over Jonah could be understood as a sort of *born again* symbolism, which would suit Jonah's change of heart. What might make this interpretation unlikely, however, is that the noun מִשְׁבָּר (mīšbār) just is not ever used for the birth canal, and only as a Hiph'il-verb does this root allow for the metaphorical reading of *giving birth*.

Interestingly though, the Greek word κῶμα, too, can mean either *wave* and *billow* (be it literal or figuratively, referring to floods of people or waves of adversity), or *fetus* and *embryo*. So, maybe—since κόματα also appears in Jonah 2:4 LXX—the *born again* connotation goes beyond language barriers, being much more deeply ingrained in the psyche, and thus really part of this story as well.

Job 38:8 describes the oceans as having *broken forth* from the womb [of the earth], literally *born* from it—compare Ps 22:9 and Micah 4:10, where the same verb גִּיַּח (gīah) means *giving birth*. The word used here for *womb* (רֶחֶם reḥem) is the common word for referring to the womb in which a woman bears her child. Aside from Ps 110:3, Job 38:8 is the ONLY TIME in the entire OT<sup>254</sup> where this word is ever directly used as a metaphor.

<sup>253</sup>Pelli M. (1980): “The Literary Art of Jonah”, in *Hebrew Studies*, Vol. 20/21. p. 20.

<sup>254</sup>Only Job 24:20 and Prov 30:16 may be a little cryptic in how they utilize רֶחֶם, but most commentaries agree that even in these verses רֶחֶם refer to women with a (literal) womb—not a metaphor, but a metonymy (i.e. *pars pro toto*).

This means that in the OT there really is an active awareness of the sea being associated with child-birth symbolism, which might support the idea that Jonah had a *born again* moment. Clear is, however, that the depths to which Jonah sank down, the bars of the earth around him, are the very thing which Job 38:8 compares to a *motherly womb*.

Jonah is not in the *fish's stomach*—if anything, he is in the *fish's womb*.<sup>255</sup>

Against this it could be argued that Jonah 2:1,2 do not use רחם (reḥem) to refer to the belly of either the fish (which uses מעה me'â) or of Sheol (which uses בטן beṭen), BUT multiple verses in the OT suggest that רחם can be synonymous and interchangeable with בטן (c.f. Is 46:3; Jer 1:5; Ps 22:10, 58:3; Job 3:11, 31:15), which is synonymous with מעה (see page 75).

With 9.5 occurrences *reproductive system* and 4.5 occurrences *stomach* (see page 71) it is ca. twice as likely that מעה, rather than referring to the *stomach*, would refer to the *reproductive system*. Thus, the *belly of the fish* may refer to the *womb* of the fish; but symbolically, it may even equate to *where the fish come from*, i.e. the *sea*—symbolized by the *womb*,<sup>256</sup> from which Jonah could be *spiritually reborn*. But where there is a *spiritual rebirth*, there must first be *spiritual death*, i.e. *sin* and *ungodliness*.

This *ungodliness* is two-fold: It is about Jonah, but also about the Goyîm to whom he shall prophesy: In the Bible, the *waters of the sea* can be a symbol for the *gentile nations*<sup>257</sup> (including the Assyrian Empire, to which Nineveh belonged). Also, Nahum 2:8[9] (written around 697 B.C., after the events of the Jonah-story, but before the Book of Jonah was written) compares *Nineveh* to a draining *pool of water* or *fish-pool* ברכה (b<sup>e</sup>rākâ), suggesting that comparing Nineveh specifically to a body of water associated with fish may have been a well-established metaphorical concept in the Jewish mindset. Before Jonah can make a positive change in society, externally, so that the foreign *womb of the ungodly sea* may bear fruit, he must first prepare himself for that task by making a positive change within himself, bearing fruit in his own personal *womb of the ungodly sea*.<sup>258</sup>

Jonah fled God, turning his back on God and rebelling against him, because of his own personal pride. Jonah's behavior was directed against God, and so was his path, as he was trying to flee to Tarsus, the other end of the Mediterranean world. Jonah tried to distance himself as far from

255Which may explain the Midrash in which Jonah, albeit *swallowed* by a female fish, lands in her *womb*, see page 87.

256Compare *womb*-imagery regarding the primordial sea in Job 38:8; also see page 128.

257c.f. Dan 7, 9:26, 11:10,40; Ps 65:7, 144:7; Is 8:7–8, 17:12, 60:5; Jer 46:7–8, 47:1–2, 51:55–56; Ezek 26:3; Nah 1:8. Also, Psalm 124 [123] compares enemies rising up against Israel to proud waters overwhelming and swallowing up Israel, to streams going over the soul of Israel (vv. 1–5), before focusing once more on the enemies' figurative teeth (v. 6; possible *Hellmouth*-symbolism, see pp. 138ff.) and comparing Israel in its escape to a bird (v. 7; similar to Jonah, whose name means *dove*).

258For the sea as a biblical symbol not only of foreign evil but also of an individual's own personal evil, see Is 57:20 — *But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt.*

God as he could—and that was exactly what he got, though not as he would have hoped: Jonah drowned in the depths of the oceans, sinking to the roots of the mountains, to the lowest place there could possibly be on earth, diametrically opposed to God in Heaven. This vertical contrast, too, plays into the womb symbolism:

From the same root as רֶחֶם (reḥem) *womb* stems a similar noun, רַחֵם (raḥam),<sup>259</sup> which in the Singular tends to mean *womb* as well, but in the Plural רַחֲמִים (raḥ<sup>a</sup>mîm) means *compassion* and *mercy*, usually of God. So, God’s compassionate grace and his mercy is being compared to the *motherly womb* (one of the few attributes of God which are described as a feminine, motherly feature, adding to the typical image of God as a father).<sup>260</sup> The metaphorical connection/comparison between the fish’s *belly* or *womb* מֵעָה (me‘â) and God’s womb-like *mercy* רַחֲמִים (raḥ<sup>a</sup>mîm) is not too far-fetched from an OT-standpoint: “In an expanded parallelism, mē‘îm, the proper word for ‘viscera, entrails, body,’ can approximate raḥ<sup>a</sup>mîm (Isa 63:15; cf. Jer 31:20 alongside rḥm pi.).”<sup>261</sup>

Thus, the heavenly womb of God in the heights is here, in the story of Jonah, being contrasted with the womb of the fish, the womb of the sea, the womb of Sheol, so distant from God. From this *ungodly womb*, the pit of his own anxiousness, Jonah cries out and prays to the *godly womb*, i.e. to and for God’s grace and compassion—which he is eventually being granted.

The scenario is comparable to *Abraham’s bosom* (κόλπον Ἀβραάμ), as it is found in the NT.

- Though κόλπον (i.e. *bosom*) is a different word (i.e. not κοιλία in Jonah 2:1,2 LXX), interestingly enough κόλπον, too, has a connection to the sea, as it can refer to a sea-bay, i.e. the *seam* of the sea (c.f. Acts 27:39; compare “gulf” in modern English)—so, one (Greek) connotation of Abraham’s bosom could be *Abraham’s bay*, like a *safe and peaceful harbor* (compare SMMJ 250 I.7 and I.64, page 115).
- In Hebrew, the phrase is חֵיק אַבְרָהָם (ḥeq ab<sup>e</sup>rāhām), with חֵיק usually not referring to the abdominal regions (though there is a connotation of intimacy), but rather the upper part of the torso; however, Job 19:27 locates the kidneys כְּלֵיָהּ (kīl<sup>e</sup>yâ) inside the חֵיק (ḥeq), i.e. centered, as the center of (often stirred up) emotions.

When Jonah cries out for God’s mercy, far away from God’s bliss, the situation is akin to that of the Lazarus-character in Jesus’ story about Abraham’s bosom in Luke 16:19–31, as if the two stories were part of a similar tradition. The *womb of bliss* versus the *womb of the abyss*.

259The Niqud-marks are shown here to present the otherwise invisible distinction between the two words.

260c.f. Ratzinger J. (Pope Benedict XVI.) (2007): *Jesus von Nazareth* (Chapter 5: “Das Gebet des Herrn”). p. 173.

261Jenni E., Westermann C. (1997): *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Vol. 3. p. 1226. — Comparably, תְּהוֹם (t<sup>e</sup>hôm) as in Jonah 2:6 can include the heavenly ocean in Psa 33:7. (c.f. Jenni-Westermann, Vol. 3, p. 1412)

#### 4.6.: Jonah LXX & the Abysmal Κῆτος

The connotation of the abyss becomes even more obvious—both explicitly and implicitly—when looking at Jonah in its original Hebrew and its Septuagint version (LXX):

- 2:1** καὶ προσέταξεν κύριος **κῆτει μεγάλῳ καταπιεῖν** τὸν Ἰωναν  
καὶ ἦν Ἰωνας ἐν τῇ **κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κήτους** τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας
- 2:2** καὶ προσηύξατο Ἰωνας πρὸς κύριον τὸν θεὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς **κοιλίας τοῦ κήτους**  
[...]
- 2:6** περιεχύθη ὕδωρ μοι ἕως ψυχῆς, **ἄβυσσος** ἐκύκλωσέν με ἐσχάτη,  
ἔδω ἡ κεφαλὴ μου εἰς σχισμὰς ὀρέων,

What is explicit is ἄβυσσος in Jonah LXX 2:6—literally *abyss*—, where the Hebrew says תהום (t<sup>h</sup>ôm)<sup>262</sup>—possibly one of the objectively most intriguing words in the Hebrew language, as it hearkens back to the very beginnings of creation, when in Gen 1:2 there was darkness over the face of the *deep* (תהום)—ἀβύσσου in Gen LXX 1:2—, and the Ruach Elohim was present above the face of the waters... but not below, the realm below the face of the waters was not blessed with the Ruach Elohim filling it yet: the deep—the תהום—was godless.

It was during early Judaism (i.e. when the story of Jonah was conceptualized and written down) that the meaning of תהום (t<sup>h</sup>ôm) and ἄβυσσος were shifted to refer to the depths of the earth as the prison of spirits and as the world of the dead.<sup>263</sup> Jenni-Westermann argues that in the OT תהום / ἄβυσσος is not associated with ungodliness or a hostile force opposed to God, as תהום is part of God’s creation and can be a source of blessing in some passages.<sup>264</sup> Aside from the fact that, both in OT-theology and in NT-theology, all evil is part of God’s creation, the ambivalence of the watery deep being both good (blessing, saving) and bad (distressing, deadly)—an ambivalence which is directly present in Jonah 2—does not negate but rather affirm its bad aspects (which are also affirmed in Jenni-Westermann).

As is shown in Jeremiah’s vision in Jer 4:23–28, which utilizes explicit references to the vocabulary of Genesis 1:2 (*the earth being formless and void, and the heavens being without light*), a reference to Genesis 1:2 can be a poetic way to illustrate utter ruin in the face of God’s own

262Jonah’s fish, which symbolizes תהום (t<sup>h</sup>ôm), utilizes both masculine (2:1,11) and feminine words (2:2)—similarly, “t<sup>h</sup>ôm is construed as both a fem. (Gen 49:25; 33:13; Isa 51:10; Ezek 31:4; Amos 7:4; Psa 36:7; 78:15) and a masc. (Exod 15:5; Jonah 2:6; Hab 3:10; Psa 42:8; 77:17; Job 28:14; 41:42).” (Jenni-Westermann, Vol. 3, p. 1411.).

263c.f. Jenni E., Westermann C. (1997): *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Vol. 3. p. 1414.

264c.f. Jenni E., Westermann C. (1997): *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Vol. 3. pp. 1413–1414.

people turning to godlessness (c.f. Jer 4:22). Maybe it is in this sense, akin to Jer 4:22–28, that Jonah is thrown into *the deep* for fleeing God, into the abysmal תהום—into his own ruin, into his own primordial abyss of a godless mind.

There might, however, be a much more subtle sense in which the story renders Jonah as being in a much more monstrous kind of תהום, especially if one dares to call into question the meaning of the words that are used in the Septuagint version.

The Greek LXX of Jonah 2:1,2—which is also paraphrased in the NT (c.f. Matthew 12:40; Lk 11:29–32)—calls the *big fish* κήτη (μεγάλω), its *swallowing* καταπιεῖν, and its *belly* κοιλία. The semantic ranges of these words might be of interest:

- **κοιλία** *belly; bowels; interior, the midst of a thing; womb.* — The Greek word covers the same meanings as its Hebrew equivalent, which means that everything that has been said regarding the belly’s symbolism can also be said of κοιλία.
- **Καταπίνω** *swallow (up) (also metaphorically); drink down; devour; consume; absorb;*<sup>265</sup> *engulf; submerge; drown;*<sup>266</sup> *overwhelm; destroy, annihilate.*<sup>267</sup> — Here, too, the semantic range covers the same meanings as those of the Hebrew equivalent, including *engulf* and *destroy*; however, καταπίνω goes beyond that, including meanings like *submerge* and—obviously relevant here—*drown* (c.f. Heb 11:29).
- **κῆτος** *huge fish; whale/dolphin/shark; sea-monster; abyss.* — This one might be the most interesting: The word κῆτος can indeed mean *huge fish*, but it more likely refers to *whale/dolphin/shark* (e.g. Il. 20:147; Od. 4:446) or any kind of larger *sea-monster*. Gen LXX 1:21, too, refers to κήτη τὰ μεγάλα for הַתַּיִם הַגְּדֹלִים and thus makes Gen LXX 1:21 and Jonah LXX 2:1,2 use the same words, which is not the case in the Hebrew—so, Jonah LXX 2:1,2 is quite clearly a rather free interpretation of the Hebrew, taking artistic liberties (as the LXX is wont to do). The most peculiar meaning is, however, *abyss*.

The most probable root for κῆτος has been proposed to be χάσμα (*chasm, gulf, gap, wide space*) or its root χάσκω (*to gape, Ger. klaffen*).<sup>268</sup> For this reason, κῆτος has been compared to:

- Ger. *Schlund* (*gorge, abysm, maw*—conjuring up the image of abyss and depths)
- Ger. *Höhle* (*cave*—as if the interior was a cave, more akin to the typical reading of Jonah)

265c.f. Rev 12:16; 2Cor 5:4; Num LXX 16:30.

266c.f. Heb 11:29.

267c.f. 1Co 15:54; 2Co 2:7.

268c.f. entry on κῆτος in Strong, and Pape (referencing Buttman *Lexilogus* II p. 95).

... so much so that this range of meanings was claimed to be the *actual* (“eigentlich”) meaning of κῆτος.<sup>269</sup> Another approach explains the semantic connection to be of such a kind that the κῆτος “as gaping for prey”<sup>270</sup> opens its mouth wide agape to prey for smaller fish, turning its mouth into the χάσμα. The verb-form χανεῖν, however, has been associated with *Hades* in Classical Greek.<sup>271</sup> So, even this image of the creature opening its mouth wide agape still fits the χάσμα-symbolism of the deep sea itself as a *Hellmouth* (or Ger. *Höllenschlund*, compare Pape/Bultmann *Schlund* for χάσμα) devouring its victims—Jonah, praying from Sheol, being one of these victims (see page 138).

Fittingly, in the NT the word χάσμα—the probable root for κῆτος (c.f. Jonah 2:1,2)—appears only once, in Luke 16:26, the context being the parable of *Lazarus and the rich man*, where χάσμα describes the chasm between the damned and blissful in Abraham’s Bosom. So, there is a further connection between χάσμα and imagery of death and the afterlife—akin to Jonah crying out from the *belly of Sheol/Hades* in Jonah 2:3, as did the Rich Man in Luke 16 (see page 123).

The entry for κῆτος in a monotonous Greek dictionary based on Liddell-Scott<sup>272</sup> also lists κενό (*void, gap*) in its secondary range of meanings, next to ἄβυσσος (*abyss*) and χάσμα (*chasm, gulf, etc.*), and (akin to Middle Liddell) refers to the adjective κητώεις *cavernous*, perhaps<sup>273</sup> *full of hollows/ravines*,<sup>274</sup> which appears in Il. 2:581 and Od. 4:1 κοίλην Λακεδαίμονα κητώεσσαν (considered to mean *the hollow land of Lacedaemon with its many ravines*). However, even to the people of antiquity, Homer’s use of the word κητώεις/κητώεσσαν in this instance seems to have been somewhat unclear.<sup>275</sup>

Strabo (*Geography* 8:5:7), in regards to these Homeric passages, mused: ... *how should we understand κητώεσσα, whether it is derived from “[the] Ketos” [τῶν κητῶν] or from “large” [μεγάλην], which seems [is thought to be] more persuasive.* In turn, it is not clear among modern commentators what Strabo even meant by τῶν κητῶν: While “[s]ome are of opinion that the epithet was applied to Lacedæmon, because fish of the cetaceous tribe frequented the coast of Laconia”,<sup>276</sup> Horace Leonard Jones, in his Notes on his 1924 translation, declared with much more certainty that

269c.f. entry on κῆτος in Middle Liddell, Pape (referencing Buttman *Lexilogus* II p. 95).

270c.f. entry on κῆτος in Strong’s dictionary (G2785).

271Pausanias’ (ca. 110–180 A.D.) *Description of Greece* 6:21:1 — [...] *At the foot of the hill has been built a sanctuary to Demeter surnamed Chamyne. Some are of opinion that the name is old, signifying that here the earth gaped (χανεῖν) for the chariot of Hades and then closed up (μύσαι) once more.* [...]

272c.f. *Λεξικό της Αρχαίας Ελληνικής Γλώσσας. Επιτομή του Μεγάλου Λεξικού* (Liddell & Scott), εκδ. Πελεκάνος 2007.

273Which is to say, Autenrieth says that it “perhaps” means *full of hollows/ravines*.

274c.f. entry on κητώεις in LSJ, Autenrieth, and Pape.

275c.f. entry on κητώεις in Pape.

276Hamilton H.C., Falconer W. (1903): *The Geography of Strabo. Literally Translated, with Notes.*

although “[t]he usual meaning of Kete is ‘deep-sea monsters,’ [...] Strabo obviously speaks of the word in the sense of ‘ravines’ or ‘clefts’ (see Buttman, Lexilogus, and Goebel, Lexilougus).”<sup>277</sup>

Last but not least, Homer occasionally makes use of the closely connected adjective μεγά-κήτης, which can refer to the *huge cavity* of the deep sea’s abyss (Od. 3:158), of a dolphin’s mouth as it preys on fish (Il. 21:22), or of a ship’s hold (Il. 8:222, 11:5,600); the word μεγά-κήτης resembles *great sea-monster*, compare LXX of Job 3:8 μέγα κήτης (see page 131), also Gen 1:21 and Jonah 2:1.

Furthermore, all three homeric uses of μεγά-κήτης mentioned above are also themes which appear in the story of Jonah, especially as the ship’s hold in which Jonah falls asleep foreshadows the belly of the fish which is here presumed to symbolize the sea itself—all three of them relate to the homeric uses of μεγά-κήτης.

So, although it might not be a simple and clear-cut matter, it can hardly be denied that, if this etymology is correct, and there really is a semantic connection between κήτης and the *chasms* and *gulfs* of the *deep sea*, then it only makes sense to consider the κήτης as a symbol of the sea itself.

Thus, when it is read in Jonah 2:1–2 that Jonah—drowning to the bottom of the sea—prayed from κοιλίας τοῦ κήτους, this could be understood as Jonah having been in the *interior* or *womb* (see page 121) not of a sea-creature but of the *chasm/gulf* of the *sea* itself—the womb of the *abyss*.

<sup>277</sup>Jones H.L. (1924): *The Geography of Strabo*.

#### 4.7.: Abyss Personified – Satanic Leviathan

Jonah did not just sink into a watery abyss מצולה (m<sup>e</sup>sūlâ, *into the depth (of the sea)*, Jonah 2:4), he was inside the Abyss (תהום t<sup>e</sup>hôm, *the deep/abyss*; LXX ἄβυσσος), the realm opposed to God, the realm of Satan and the demons<sup>278</sup> (at least figuratively speaking)—an interpretation which not only relies on the common NT understanding of ἄβυσσος (Lk 8:31; Rev 20:1–3; also Rev 9:1–3,11, 11:3,7), but also inter-testamental apocrypha such as the *Book of Jubilees*<sup>279</sup> using ἄβυσσος in such a manner, not as a novel change but rather a renaissance of ancient Jewish tradition:

In his 1895 book *Schöpfung und Chaos*, about the similarities between the Old Testament and the Babylonian creation myth, theologian Hermann Gunkel has demonstrated a multitude of OT texts about God *taming the oceans* (Ps 104:5–9; Job 38:8–11; Prov 8:22–31; Jer 5:22, 21:35; Ps 33:6, 65:7,8; Jes Sir 43:23[25]; Or Manasse 2–4) and reasonably concluded that *these parallels prove that in these passages concerning the creation of the seas [with God subduing and calming the primeval waters before splitting them into the sky and the ocean] we have our myth [of God fighting the primeval sea-monsters akin to the Babylonian creation account of Marduk fighting, killing and splitting Tiamat (i.e. the watery abyss, from Akkad. ti'amtum/tâmtum, compare Hebrew tehom) before forming the sky and the earth out of her halves], from which merely the specifically mythological, the overpowering of the monsters, has been stripped.*<sup>280</sup>

This historic development of ancient mythology explains the semantic gray area between *the watery abyss* (תהום t<sup>e</sup>hôm; LXX ἄβυσσος) and *the sea-monsters* (תנינים tannînim; LXX κήτος/δράκον) which reside in that abyss; thus the conflation presented in previous chapters, synonyms for ἄβυσσος being both ἰχθυόεντα (see page 111) and κήτος (see page 125).<sup>281</sup>

This interchangeability may still have been well understood by the time the Book of Jonah finished development: Most notably, Psalm 148:7—probably written around 515 B.C.—gives the instruction

278Compare a footnote on Rev 21:1 in the *Ignatius Study Bible* (p. 519): “[The sea is] the abode of death and evil [...] In apocalyptic and poetic texts, the sea often represents chaos and the habitation of all things dreadful and demonic (Job 7:12; Ps 74:13; Is 27:1; Dan 7:3).”

279“*And against the angels whom He had sent upon the earth, He was exceedingly wroth, and He gave commandment to root them out of all their dominion, and He bade us to bind them in the depths (ἄβυσσος) of the earth, and behold they are bound in the midst of them, and are (kept) separate.*” (Jubilees 5:6, translated by R.H. Charles, 1914)

280Gunkel H. (1895): *Schöpfung und Chaos*, pp. 62, 91–97: “[...] *Diese Parallelen beweisen, dass wir in den obigen Aussagen über die Schöpfung des Meeres unsern Mythos vor uns haben, von dem nur das spezifisch Mythologische, die Überwindung der Ungetüme, abgestreift ist.*”

281Although תהום (t<sup>e</sup>hôm) is not directly used for a monstrous sea-creature in the OT (c.f. Jenni-Westermann, Vol. 3, pp. 14133–1414), that symbolism was not been lost in Hebrew poetry, albeit more as a subtle symbolic connotation.

that God be praised from the earth, but curiously gives this instruction to the *sea-monsters* (תנינים tannînim, LXX δράκοντες) and *all the depths* (תהומות t'homôt, LXX ἄβυσσος), which not only implies the sea-creatures to be of a certain intelligence and sentience—less like common animals and more like persons (humans or angels)—, but also seems to address the depths or abysses (plural) as if they were such persons as well. The *sea-monsters* are not just monstrous animals, and the *abysses* are not just watery depths, but instead, both are being personified together as creatures of intellect. Even if such an interpretation of the intelligent, personified abyss should go too far (opinions may vary), the verse still proves the thematic overlap and semantic gray area between the abyss and the creatures inhabiting it, even if it is in a purely poetic sense.

At the same time, though, it also works the other way around: Is 27:1 and 51:9 recount God piercing and splitting *sea-dragons* (תנין tannîn; LXX δράκοντα) or *sea-serpents* (נחש nāhāš; LXX ὄφιν), namely Rahab and Leviathan—the roots of the mythology were still alive in the Israelites' poetic understanding. So, just as the text-passages discussed by Gunkel superficially seem to just speak of the ocean, but silently reference an ungodly sea-monster, it is just as possible that the Book of Jonah would seem to just reference an ungodly sea-monster, but actually speaks of the ocean.

The just mentioned Leviathan may, however, be one of the strongest hints, subtly hidden in the story of Jonah. Leviathan appears in some of the later Midrashîm on Jonah, but in different ways, implying a tradition of *some* sort of awareness that Leviathan had *something* to do with the story of Jonah, but that the exact nature of that leviathanic connection may have been shrouded in mystery.

On page 87, the Midrash about the male and the female fish has been shown, but for the sake of focus on the piscine plenitude, a section about the two fish paying a visit to Leviathan had been excluded from the quotation—here is that (somewhat hilarious) section:

*In that hour the Holy One, blessed be He, ordered a female fish, and she went and approached the male fish. She said to him, “A prophet-man is in your belly, and the Holy One, blessed be He, sent me to swallow him. If you spit him out, fine, and if not, I shall swallow you together with him.” The male fish said to the female fish, “Who knows whether what you say is true?” She said, “Leviathan knows.” They both went to Leviathan. The female fish said to Leviathan, “King of all the fishes of the sea, don't you know that the Holy One, blessed be He, sent me to this fish to swallow the prophet who is in his belly?” He said to her, “Yes.” The fish asked Leviathan, “When?” He said to him, “In the last three hours [of the day], when the Holy One, blessed be He, came down to play with me,<sup>282</sup> that is*

<sup>282</sup>Compare Ps 104:25–26, which sates that God plays with Leviathan.

when I heard it.” And he said to the female fish, “Go and swallow the prophet who is in the belly of the fish!” The male fish spewed him out, and the female fish swallowed him.<sup>283</sup>

Another Midrash speaks only of one fish, but also includes a section where the fish visits Leviathan and a conversation ensues, but this Midrash renders Jonah as the active force in the events, and makes reference to *the mouth of Leviathan* twice (evoking *Hellmouth* imagery, see page 138):

*The fish said to Jonah, Don't you know that my day has arrived to be devoured by the **Leviathan's** mouth? Jonah replied, Take me beside it, and I will deliver you and myself from its mouth. It brought him next to the **Leviathan**. (Jonah) said to the **Leviathan**, On your account have I descended to see your home in the sea, for in the future will I descend and put a rope in your tongue (Job 41:1 / 40:25), and I will bring you up and prepare you for the great feast of the righteous (Job 41:6 / 40:30). [Jonah] showed the **Leviathan** the seal of our father Abraham [saying], Look at the Covenant, and **Leviathan** saw it and fled before Jonah a distance of two days' journey.*<sup>284</sup>

The question arises how and why it came to be that later Midrashîm would incorporate Leviathan into the story of Jonah at all, how the story of Jonah would offer a basis for this leviathanic inclusion, and there are several possible explanations. The easiest explanation would be that Leviathan just got put into the story in order to enrich its entertainment-value, but this would be a shallow view and shall be outright dismissed—there are better explanations.

A more reasonable (and maybe at least partially true) explanation would be the fact that sea-monsters, and Leviathan in particular, have been used as a symbol of hostile Goyîm-governments:

- Psalm 74:13–14 — *It was you who split open the sea by your power; you broke the heads of the monsters in [on] the waters* (ים המים תנינים על המים tannînîm 'al ham-māyîm; LXX δρακόντων ἐπὶ τοῦ ὕδατος). *It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan* (לויטן liwyātān; LXX δράκοντος; Targum גיברי פרעה Pharaoh's warriors) and gave it as food to the people of the desert (LXX λαοῖς τοῖς Αἰθίοψιν Ethiopian people; Targum בית ישראל the people of the house of Israel). — Embedding the escape from Egypt in a hymn about God's role in the creation of the world, thereby poetically comparing Egypt and Pharaoh's warriors to

283Otzar Ha-Midrashim (A.D. 400–1200), *Jonah*, Eizenstein, p. 217. Quoted in Helm P. (2013): *Referring to God: Jewish and Christian Perspectives*. Abingdon: Routledge. p. 133. (EMPHASIS MINE.) c.f. Midrash Yonah Version 1 (Beit Midrash ha-1; Small Midrashim File 16).

284Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer (ca. 8th c. A.D.) – Chapter 10. (EMPHASIS MINE.)

Leviathan—very similar to Ezekiel 29:3 and 32:2 (which call him תנין tannîn or LXX δράκοντα, but not Leviathan).

- Also compare Jeremiah 51:34 — *Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured us [me], he has thrown us [me] into confusion, he has made us [me] an empty jar. Like a dragon (תנין tannîn; LXX δράκων) he has swallowed us [me] and filled his stomach with our [my] delicacies, and then has spewed us [me] out.* — Not explicitly referring to Leviathan, but using similar terminology, and metaphors similar to those used in Jonah: a sea-monster swallowing and spewing out Israelites, in the context of a hostile foreign empire.

Since Jonah’s own conversion inside the sea, which itself can be a symbol for the *gentile nations*, was meant to prepare him for the conversion of others in an actual Goyîm-governed gentile nation, the symbol of the Leviathan works somewhat well as a mythological representation of Nineveh.

There is, however, another explanation: The Leviathan might not be an entity different from the *great fish*, as the Midrashîm like to claim, but rather the *great fish* (LXX κῆτει μεγάλῳ) itself, a hint at which can be found when comparing Job 3:8 in its several different translations:

<b>Job 3:8 (MT)</b>	<b>Job 3:8 (LXX)</b>	<b>Job 3:8 (Targum, KJV)</b>
<p>יקבהו אררייִום העתידים ערר לוֹיִתָן</p> <p>(ASV: Let them curse it [the night] that curse the day, who are ready to rouse up <b>leviathan</b>.)</p> <p>(Douay-Rheims: Let them curse it [the night] who curse the day, who are ready to raise up <b>a leviathan</b>)</p>	<p>ἀλλὰ καταράσαιτο αὐτὴν ὁ καταρώμενος τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην ὁ μέλλον τὸ <b>μέγα κῆτος</b> χειρώσασθαι.</p> <p>(Brenton LXX: But let him that curses that day curse it [the night], even he that is ready to attack the <b>great whale</b>.)</p>	<p>ילטטון יתיה נבייא דלטטין יומא דפורענותא דאטמוסן למדכר <b>באתערותהון אליותהון</b></p> <p>Let them curse it [the night] that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their <b>mourning</b>.</p>
Leviathan (לוֹיִתָן)	μέγα κῆτος	mourning

Where Job 3:8 speaks of Leviathan in the original Hebrew, the Septuagint substitutes μέγα κῆτος—utilizing the same words<sup>285</sup> that are used to describe the fish in Jonah LXX 2:1—, implying that Leviathan and the sea-creature from the story of Jonah, could be understood as one and the same: Jonah was swallowed by Leviathan.

<sup>285</sup>The word-order is reminiscent of Homer’s adjective μεγᾶ-κῆτης, which can refer to the *huge cavity* of the deep sea (Od. 3:158), of a dolphin’s mouth preying on fish (Il. 21:22), or of a ship’s hold (Il. 8:222, 11:5,600), see p. 127.

It becomes even more intriguing when taking into account that the King James Version translates *Leviathan* in Job 3:8 as *mourning*. This may, at first, seem like nothing more than artistic liberty, easy to dismiss, but even “many Jewish writers render it ‘mourning,’”<sup>286</sup> and even Job’s Aramaic Targum translation goes for אֲלִיּוֹתָהוֹן (’lywṯhwn) *his lamentations/mournings* (possibly a play on words, since Aramaic ’lywṯhwn and Hebrew liwyātān share quite a bit of similarity). The idea is actually not even too far-fetched in light of the previously established possibility that Jonah’s piscine incident could be considered a metaphor for him drowning in his own *anxiety* (see page 117), and it is only a small step from *anxiety* to *mourning*.

Overall, both Leviathan and Jonah’s fish can be seen as a *symbol of negativity* in general—a symbol of everything bad, and in that sense *satanic*. Leviathan may not be *the* Satan, but there are definitely some strong similarities, especially if Job LXX is taken into account:

Job 41:32 (41:24)<sup>287</sup> describes Leviathan as *leaving behind a shiny path behind*, as if *the watery deep had a white beard*; compare LXX, *Leviathan regards the abyss his passageway and regards the Tartarus of the abyss as a captive* ([ἤγηται] τὸν δὲ τάρταρον τῆς ἀβύσσου ὥσπερ αἰχμάλωτον· ἐλογίσατο ἄβυσσον εἰς περίπατον)—a cryptic line, but it sounds like Leviathan reigns over Tartarus, the prison of demons (c.f. 2 Peter 2:4; apocr. 1 Enoch 20:2; Homer’s *Iliad* 8:480).

Job 41:33 (41:25) says about Leviathan that there is *nothing like him on earth* because he *is without fear*; compare LXX, which reasons that he is *formed so my angels can sport with it or mock it* (πεποιημένον ἐγκαταπαίξεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων μου)<sup>288</sup>—emphasizing his lowly position in his abysmal opposition to the heavenly realm (compare p. 123).

Job 41:34 (41:26) *king over all the sons of pride* (compare the *prideful king*<sup>289</sup> in Ezekiel 28:17); compare LXX, which calls Leviathan *king of all that are in the waters* (βασιλεὺς πάντων

286Gill J. (1746–1763): *Exposition of the Entire Bible*, on Job 3:8, with footnote: “Vid. Aben Ezram & Gersom in loc. R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 1. 1. Aruch in voce. So the word is used, T. Hieros. Moed Katon, fol. 80. 4.”

287The description of Leviathan is described in Job 40:25–41:26 in the Hebrew version and in the LXX (after the description of Behemoth in Job 40:15–24), but this passage is counted as 41:1–34 in multiple Western Bibles (then the numbering becomes synchronized again with Job 42:1).

288Compare Ps 104:25–26, where God plays with Leviathan; but also compare a Jewish tradition about the servants of God hunting Leviathan for food and personal enjoyment (described in more detail on page 138), which, by emphasizing Leviathan’s lowly position in the eyes of saints and the angels, may have played into the wording of Job LXX 41:33 (41:25).

289While the Book of Ezekiel 28:17 is directed at the ruler of Tyre, it can be argued that this ruler is (also) a symbol for all tyrannical rulers unto present day, but also for the fallen ruling powers of times before Ezekiel, down to the prototype of all fallen kings or angels turned tyrannical ruler: Satan. (Consider the similarity between the Hebrew words מֶלֶךְ (melek) *king* and מַלְאָךְ (malak) *angel*.)

τῶν ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι)—probably taking *the waters* as a symbol of all spiritual evil, making Leviathan the *ruler over demons* (fittingly, if he regards all of Tartarus as his captive).<sup>290</sup>

Even without relying on the LXX, though, Job’s description of the Leviathan is neither dinosaur nor crocodile (as tends to be the common view nowadays): *By his neesings a light doth shine, [...] Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth* (Job 41:18-21, KJV). Crocodiles are not exactly known for breathing fire—but mythical dragons are. Leviathan is a *dragon*, an *ancient serpent*, in *the Abyss*, just like the one from Revelation 20:2–3, *who is the devil, Satan*.

Of course, one can argue that the description above is but a mere metaphor for anger, as it closely resembles the description of *the Lord’s Anger* in Psalm 18:8[9] (*smoke rose by his nose, and devouring fire from his mouth, coals were kindled by it*), even using some of the exact same vocabulary. However, this similarity to the Lord’s Anger might even strengthen the connection: In a poetic and spiritual sense, it can be argued that *the Lord’s Anger* and *Satan* may be synonymous.<sup>291</sup>

In this sense, it would be reasonable to equate Jonah’s fish to *Leviathan* (c.f. Job MT 3:8 ↔ Job LXX 3:8 ↔ Jonah LXX 2:1) and *Leviathan* to *Satan*, and *Satan* to *the Lord’s Anger*: By fleeing God, by distancing himself and turning away from God, Jonah was NOT in the Lord’s Love but *in the Lord’s Anger*, which is to be *in Satan*. Poetically speaking.

That does not have to mean that Leviathan is *the* devil, but possibly *a* devil—for they are many (c.f. Mark 5:9; Luke 8:30), and Psalm 74:14 reveals that Leviathan has many heads—to be crushed like

<sup>290</sup>Water representing sin and death, which is why the demon-possessed pigs in Mt 8:32 drown ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι *in the water(s)*, right after the calming of the storm (Mt 8:23–27) in the context of the First Jonah-Echo (see page 162).

<sup>291</sup>e.g. 2Sa 24:1 ↔ 1Ch 21:1 (the Lord’s Anger / the devil makes people sin; but according to 1John 3:8 *he who commits sin is of the devil*, and Eph 2:3 calls sinful human beings *children of wrath*, using ὀργή, a word often used for the Lord’s Anger (e.g. John 3:36; Rom 1:18, 2:5, 5:9, 9:22; Rev 14:10, 16:19, 19:15), also in the LXX); Jer 4:4,7–8 & 25:37–38 ↔ 1Pt 5:8 (the Lord’s Anger / the devil is like a destructive lion); Num 12:9–10 ↔ Mat 10:8 (leprosy is of the devil (also c.f. Job 2:6–7 (also note that Satan comes out of the Lord’s presence/face, which, according to the Targums’ Ps 21:9[10] can also mean the Lord’s Anger)) / leprosy is of the Lord’s Anger (also c.f. Lev 14:34)); Jer 49:37 & Jer 52:2–3 / 2Ki 24:19–20 (Lord’s Anger brings evil); Ps 21:9[10] (esp. Targum) & Deut 32:22 connect the Lord’s Anger to *Hellmouth*-imagery.

This should NOT (or not necessarily) make anyone think that Satan works FOR God in his anger: As is made clear in 1Ch 21:6,7,8,17 and 2Sa 24:11, the command given by *Satan* or the *Anger of God* goes *was against God’s will and so he punished Israel* (1Ch 21:7). So, being in God’s Anger, being in Satan, means to be in a state that goes against God’s will. This is also implied in Jer 52:2–3 / 2Ki 24:19–20, where it is said that Zedekiah *did evil in the eyes of the LORD*, and yet *it was because of the LORD’s anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah*.

the head of the satanic<sup>292</sup> serpent in Genesis 3:15, yet another satanic connotation for Leviathan—, just as the kinds and agents of evil in the world are manifold like Pharaoh’s Egyptian soldiers.

Leviathan’s close association with Egypt also matches the underworld-themes presented on these pages: The Egyptian Papyrus of *Amon-hotep*,<sup>293</sup> about the Netherworld, contains several snakes, including “a huge fire-spitting serpent” (twice, actually) and multiple snakes with human legs, one of them being “a winged serpent with human legs called: Lord of Fear in the Netherworld, Many-faced One in the Place of Silence.”<sup>294</sup> Not only is the Egyptian netherworld associated with many snakes, but snakes that spew fire (compare Leviathan), and one that is winged and legged like a dragon while being described as “many-faced” (compare Leviathan’s many heads).

This could also be taken as an indicator that the one Leviathan himself might be not one but many, which would fit the core-hypothesis of this thesis: To be swallowed up by one singular Leviathan equates to being engulfed by the Leviathan’s implicit multitude.<sup>295</sup>

292Aside from Revelation 12:9, 20:2 explicitly stating that *the serpent of old is Satan, the devil*, the clue that the serpent in the Garden of Eden is Satan (i.e. a fallen angel depicted as a serpentine being banished to the realm of death) can be gleaned from comparing Genesis 3 with Isaiah 6, Isaiah 14:12–20, and Ezekiel 28:12–19 (which does reference the devil, albeit for the sake of comparison).

293(*Amon is in peace*); Cairo museum, Nos. 31 & 43.

294Piankoff A., Rambova N. (1957): *Mythological Papyri*. p. 189.

295Also note that in Homer’s epics, Hades (which equates to Sheol, and is connected to the themes of Jonah 2) is often referred to as the *house* or *household of Hades*, which may imply a family-structure (or similar) consisting of several heads (i.e. individuals): δόμον Ἄϊδος (Il. 7:131, 11:260, 14:457, 20:336, 24:246; Od. 9:520, 11:150,627, 23:252); δῶμ’ Ἄϊδαο [shortened δῶμᾶ *house(hold)/family*] (Il. 15:250; Od. 12:21); Ἄϊδαο δόμους [Acc. Pl. *house(hold)s*] (Il. 22:482; Od. 10:175,491,564, 14:28); Ἄϊδαο δόμοισι(ν) [Dat. Pl. *house(hold)s*] (Il. 23:19,103,179; Od. 4:834, 15:350, 20:205, 24:264); Ἄϊδος δῶ [indeclinable synonym for δῶμᾶ *house(hold)/family*] (Il. 23:74; Od. 11:571); δόμου ἐξ Ἄϊδαο (Od. 11:69); εἰς Ἄϊδεω δόμον (Od. 23:322); Ἄϊδαο δόμοις (Od. 24:204).

#### 4.8.: Höllenhund

Leviathan also bears a noteworthy similarity to the *Hound of Hades* (Ger. *Höllenhund*) in Greek mythology.<sup>296</sup> This comparison may seem odd at first, since Leviathan is hardly a canine—but neither is the *Hound of Hades*. Aside from Pape explaining that *the poets also call other animals κῶων, especially mythical monsters, if they are servants of the gods or guards/keepers*<sup>297</sup> (compare Il. 8:367 Αἶδαο πύλαρταο),<sup>298</sup> also see Pausanias:

(5) [...] *But Hecataeus of Miletus gave a plausible explanation, stating that a terrible serpent lived on Taenarum, and was called the hound of Hades, because any one bitten was bound to die of the poison at once, and it was this snake, he said, that was brought by Heracles to Eurystheus.* (6) *But Homer, who was the first to call the creature brought by Heracles the hound of Hades* (Il. 8:368 [κῶνα στυγεροῦ Αἶδαο]; Od. 11:623 [κῶν' ἄξοντ']), *did not give it a name or describe it as of manifold form, as he did in the case of the Chimaera* (Il. 6:181). *Later poets gave the name Cerberus, and though in other respects they made him resemble a dog, they say that he had three heads. Homer, however, does not imply that he was a dog, the friend of man, any more than if he had called a real serpent the hound of Hades.*<sup>299</sup>

And Crusius:

[...] *Hesiod. (theog. 311.) is the first to give it the name Cerberus; he calls it a son of Typhaon and Echidna, fifty-headed and brazen-voiced. In later legend it has three heads, a serpent-tail and serpent-manes, Apollod. II, 5. 12.*<sup>300</sup>

The Hound of Hades was seen as serpentine—possibly in its origin, and even later on it still retained serpentine features—, and initially may or may not have been single-headed, but was thought of as having multiple heads<sup>301</sup> from some point onward—akin to the δράκον Leviathan,

296This chapter has little to do with metaphor, but it fits the linear progression from the previous to the next chapter.

297c.f. entry on κῶων in Pape. (Original: “[...] *die Dichter nennen auch andere Thiere, bes. fabelhafte Ungeheuer, insofern sie Diener der Götter od. Wächter sind, κῶων* [...]”)

298Implying that the creature is located where *Hades [is] well-guarded* or *well-fortified* (compare Latin translations of the word πύλαρταο: *validas-portas-habent; prope-munitas-habent*), i.e. where Hades' keeper would be found.

299Pausanias (ca. 110–180 A.D.): *Description of Greece*, 3:25:5–6. (EMPHASIS MINE.)

300Crusius G.C. (1849): *Homeri Odyssea*, Vol. 1, p. 113, footnote on κῶν' ἄξοντ' in Od. 11:623. (EMPHASIS MINE.) (Original: “[...] *Hesiod. (theog. 311.) giebt ihm zuerst den Namen Kerberos; er nennt ihn einen S. des Typhaon u. der Echidna, fünfzigköpfig u. erzstimmig. In der spätern Sage hat er drei Köpfe, Schlangenschweif und Schlangenmähen, Apollod. II, 5. 12.*”)

301If this evokes the image of another creature fought by Hercules, namely the Hydra, then that is for good reason, because in the lineage of monsters in Greek mythology, the Hound of Hades and the Hydra are brothers, from the same semi-serpentine pair or parents, the grand-parents on one side or another including Tartarus and likely Ceto.

having only one single head in Job’s earlier (possibly even pre-Mosaic) description, but as having many heads in Psalm 74:14 (likely written around 588 B.C.). In art, the afore-mentioned *serpentine manes* have been pictured as a mane consisting of *multiple snakes*. This development matches Homer’s *Hound of Hades* changing over time in cultural reception.

A more important similarity, however, is the fact that Hercules is tasked with bringing this serpentine guard of the underworld up from Hades (c.f. Il. 8:367–368)—that guard’s primary purpose being that no dead person shall be able to leave the realm of the dead (i.e. *preventing resurrection*)—, and that this herculean task is not only the final but also the hardest, mightiest, greatest task (c.f. Od. 11:623–624) before Hercules would rise up to Mount Olympus as a god. What is interesting about this is that the Midrash-segment presented in the previous chapter is not only about Leviathan’s presence, but also about messianic tradition:

[...] *for in the future will I descend and put a rope in your tongue* (Job 41:1[40:25]), *and I will bring you up and prepare you for the great feast of the righteous* (Job 41:6[40:30]).<sup>302</sup>

This part of the Midrash has Jonah threatening Leviathan with the prospect that Jonah will one day return and bind (or maybe pierce) Leviathan’s tongue to catch and serve that creature at the banquet of the righteous—which references a Jewish tradition based on Job 41:6[40:30], according to which, in the messianic era after the resurrection, the pious and righteous ones (i.e. saints), together with the archangel Gabriel, will go hunt for the Leviathan to kill him, not only as a source of enjoyment but also as a source of meat to be served at the heavenly banquet and in the markets of (the heavenly) Jerusalem<sup>303</sup> (also c.f. 2Esdras 6:52). So, there is a messianic overtone to the Midrash, in regards to the act of conquering Leviathan, who is a quasi-satanic symbol of death both spiritual (i.e. sin) and actual (i.e. death)—itself standing at and for Sheol/Hades—, as well as the implied keeper of Tartarus (according to Job LXX 41:32 (41:24)).

In both stories the protagonist has the ultimate and most glorious task of bringing a serpentine creature that is guarding (and representing) the underworld up from the dank, dark deep—Hercules’ thereby achieved result of becoming *a god* in companionship with *the gods of Olymp*, correlates to Jonah and other pious people coming to new and glorified life as *saints*<sup>304</sup> and enjoying

302Pirkei D’Rebbi Eliezer (ca. 8th c. A.D.) – Chapter 10. (EMPHASIS MINE.)

303c.f. Hirsch E.G., Kohler K., Schechter S., Broydé I. (1906): “Leviathan and Behemoth”, in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (Volume 8). pp. 37–39.

304*Saints*, which ancient religions and even some today would equate to lower gods, compare the spirit of Samuel in 1Samuel 28:13 being called an אֱלֹהִים *’ēlōhîm god* (similar in e.g. Sumerian or Egyptian theology), or spirits of the dead being considered 神 *kami god* in Japan, even today.

the company of *God and the angels*. In both scenarios, the implicit metaphor is that the hero has, in more than one sense, defied death—by going down to Hades, i.e. by death.

This idea—conquering death by death—may ring a bell, as it appears in the Byzantine *Paschal Troparion* where it says: *Christ is risen from the dead, trampling death by death* (Χριστὸς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν, θανάτῳ θάνατον πατήσας). This theme can also be found in verse 102 of the *Peri Pascha*<sup>305</sup>, written by St. Melito of Sardis in A.D. 160–170:

<i>Who is my opponent?</i>	
<i>I, he says, am the Christ.</i>	(i.e. I AM)
<i>I am the one who destroyed death,</i>	(i.e. I AM; c.f. 2Ti 1:10)
<i>and triumphed over the enemy,</i>	(i.e. triumphed over death & Satan)
<i>and trampled Hades under foot,</i>	(i.e. defying death)
<i>and bound the strong one,</i>	(i.e. bound Satan, c.f. Mk 3:26–27) <sup>306</sup>
<i>and carried off man to the heights of heaven,</i>	(i.e. salvation to spirits in prison)
<i>I, he says, am the Christ.”</i>	(i.e. I AM)

The focal-point of the chiasmus is about Christ having *trampled Hades under foot*, surrounded by themes of him destroying death (c.f. 2Ti 1:10) and binding the strong one (i.e. binding Satan, c.f. Mk 3:26,27). These themes resemble the idea that Jonah would bind the tongue of Leviathan (who represents Sheol/Hades), in order to catch and serve him.

Since the Midrashîm about Jonah have been composed long after Christianity had already been well-established, it must be admitted that any such Christian themes, i.e. messianic themes, may have had some impact on these Jewish retellings of the Jonah-story. After all, Jonah is one of the most famous OT-types of Christ, the Messiah, ever since Jesus of Nazareth himself referenced Jonah as a type of his own ministry (Matthew 12:39-40, 16:4; Luke 11:29-30).

It seems that Jonah has, over time, been associated with these themes present in Homer’s story about Hercules’ Hellhound as well as Christ’s salvatory work—implying that some of the themes may have been hidden in the Book of Jonah already, only waiting to be discovered. (The difference between exegesis and eisegesis is, of course, always difficult to discern.)

One final similarity between the Leviathan and the Hound of Hades is, of course, that both of these hellish creatures at the entrance to the underworld are ferocious beasts with dangerous mouths of deadly bite. As mundane and as obvious as this may seem, it may, in fact, be one of the most profound connections so far...

<sup>305</sup>Melito of Sardis (ca. A.D. 160–170): *Peri Pascha (Homily On the Passover)*, v. 102.

<sup>306</sup>c.f. parable comparing Satan to a *strong one* (Mk 3:26–27; Lk 11:21–22) and a similar OT passage (Is 49:24–25).

#### 4.9.: Höllenschlund

Jonah was swallowed (c.f. Jonah 2:1) into the belly of what is revealed to be Sheol (c.f. Jonah 2:3; LXX *Hades*), as if Sheol or Hades itself had a mouth and was metaphorically swallowing its victims—matching the traditional image of the *Hellmouth* (or German *Höllenschlund*).

The Midrash-segment presented in the past two chapters also puts a focus on Leviathan’s devouring mouth—both explicitly and, by reference to the Leviathan’s tongue,<sup>307</sup> implicitly:

*The fish said to Jonah, Don’t you know that my day has arrived **to be devoured by the Leviathan’s mouth**? Jonah replied, Take me beside it, and I will deliver you and myself from **its mouth**. [...] will I descend and put a rope in your **tongue** (Job 41:1 [40:25]), [...]*<sup>308</sup>

The danger of the quasi-satanic Leviathan’s mouth swallowing Jonah (and the fish), together with all the connotations of Sheol/Hades and sin-symbolism which is present both in Jonah 2 and Job’s description of the Leviathan (LXX especially, but also in Hebrew), offers a subtle yet strong *Hellmouth*-symbolism—implying that there may have been a clear awareness of *Hellmouth*-symbolism being present in the story of Jonah.

Jonah 2 takes place in the *belly* or *womb* of the *fish* (which may or may not mean the *deep sea* itself) or of *Sheol* into which Jonah has been *swallowed*—which gives Sheol, Hades, Hell (in the traditional sense of the word) themes of *mouth* and things related to mouths (*belly*, *swallowing*). With this alone in mind, the *Hellmouth*-imagery implied in Jonah is quite clear already. It does, however, become even clearer when Jonah’s rendering of Sheol’s fish-like (ἰχθυόεντα, see pp. 111, 113) nature as an aquatic reptile (akin to Leviathan, the personified Abyss, see p. 128) is being considered:

Unto the Middle Ages (in which the Midrash quoted above was written) there was a tradition of illustrating Sheol or Hades as if it was some kind of reptilian monster, opening its mouth to swallow the dead and imprison them within—or, on occasion, to spit them out. Throughout the High and Late Middle Ages (ca. A.D. 1000–1500), this particular idea of the *Hellmouth* was a very popular and often repeated motif in art—very often in connection to Christ’s descent into Hades.

<sup>307</sup>Another implicit reference might possibly even be present via thematic inversion, as the Leviathan shall fall victim to the devouring mouths of those who will one day have defied death and thereby himself.

<sup>308</sup>Pirkei D’Rebbi Eliezer (ca. 8th c. A.D.) – Chapter 10. (EMPHASIS MINE.)

Of course, the High Middle Ages and their art were produced several centuries after the genesis of Christianity, and indeed roughly one and a half millennium or more after the story of Jonah (and so was the Jewish Midrash quoted above). However, these *Hellmouth* depictions include several other elements directly from the Bible (Christ binding the Devil;<sup>309</sup> fire coming out of the reptile’s mouth, and the reptile sometimes being in water)<sup>310</sup> and ancient tradition (Christ trampling the gates of Hades<sup>311</sup> or the creature’s lip,<sup>312</sup> using his Cross as a weapon<sup>313</sup> and being accompanied by angels<sup>314</sup> during his descent), generally implying ancient and biblical roots for the *Hellmouth*-motif within the Judeo-Christian tradition.

The rest of this chapter will present several examples of the *Hellmouth*-motif as it can be traced back through the history of Judeo-Christian tradition and as it appears throughout the Old Testament as well, which increases the likelihood that Jonah’s piscine incident—embedded in the context of this tradition—is one of many renditions of that *Hellmouth*-motif.

**Ca. A.D. 500:** The apocryphal book *Acta Pilati* from the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.—or rather the *Descensus Christi ad Inferos* section added in the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.—depicts the personified Hades in verse 20:3 as referring to himself as having *swallowed* (κατεπιον, compare Jonah LXX 2:1 καταπιεῖν) all the dead, as well as referring to pains in his *stomach* (κοιλία, compare Jonah LXX 2:1, 2:2): *All whom I’ve swallowed since [the] age, look, I notice they are being agitated, and [I notice] pains [to] my stomach.*<sup>315</sup> Furthermore, thrice in a row the *Acta Pilati* (20:1,2, 21:2) call Hades *the Omnivore and the Insatiable* (παμφαγε και ακορεστε)—the act of eating is the very thing which Hades does.

309c.f. parable comparing Satan to a “strong one” (Mk 3:26,27; Lk 11:21,22) and a similar OT-passage (Is 49:24,25).

310Compare the description of Leviathan (associated with death, the abyss and Sheol) in the Book of Job; see pp. 128ff.

311“[...] I am the one who [...] trampled Hades under foot, and bound the strong one, [...]” (Melito of Sardis (ca. A.D. 160–170): *Peri Pascha (Homily On the Passover)*, v. 102); also possibly cf. Mt 16:18 (*the gates of Hades shall not prevail against [the Church]*).

312The lip equates to the Gate of Hades (with Hades being the mouth) being forced open; maybe echoing Gen 3:15.

313“[...] The Lord goes in to [those in the shadow of death] holding his victorious weapon, his cross. [...]” (Melito of Sardis (ca. A.D. 160–170): *Homily on the Holy Saturday*.)

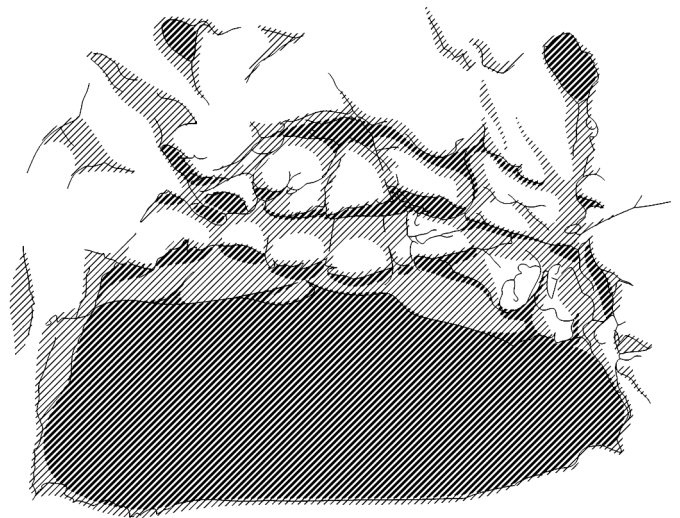
314“So the King of Glory grabbed the arch-satrap Satan by his head and handed him over to the angels, saying: *Bind with iron-[chains] his hands and feet, his neck and mouth!*” (*Acta Pilati* (ca. A.D. 315), 22:2, also 21:3.)

315*Acta Pilati* (ca. A.D. 315), 20:3. (As is clear from the story’s context, the stomach pains are a metaphor to the agitation among the prisoners of Hades after they realize that Christ has come to free them.)

**Ca. A.D. 160–170:** St. Melito of Sardis writes in his homily *Peri Pascha* about *Hades* which devoured [its] firstborn,<sup>316</sup> painting an image of Hades as devouring or swallowing the dead through its implicit mouth into its implicit belly.

**Ca. A.D. 95 (or prior to A.D. 70):** *Hellmouth*-imagery may be utilized in Revelation 12:15–16, albeit with a twist which may directly relate to *the Sign of Jonah*: The serpent (Satan, possibly the Lord’s Anger) spews a flood of water (symbol of sin and evil) out of its *mouth* in which the representative of Israel (*the woman* in the Book of Revelation, *Jonah* in the Book of Jonah) is threatened to drown, but then *the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood*. The *earth* opening its *mouth* echoes the *Hellmouth*-motif, though what is swallowed up by this symbol of death is not the representative of Israel, but the flood, i.e. the sin and the evil and thus saving Israel’s representative from sin and from Satan, which is also the result of Jonah’s *Hellmouth*-experience in Jonah 2, as Christ’s own *Hellmouth*-experience on the Cross swallowed up the floods of Satan’s sin to save the representatives of the spiritual Israel.

**Ca. A.D. 33:** At the time of Christ, there was a water-filled cave “which the Romans believed to be the entrance into Hades”<sup>317</sup> at Caesarea Philippi (also known as *Pan’s Grotto*<sup>318</sup> in modern-day Banias), thus thought to be where Christ spoke to St. Peter about the *Gates of Hades* (c.f. Mt 16:13,18). In proper sunlight, this *entrance to Hades* looks like the face of a giant monster, opening its broad, wide mouth, with multiple rows of teeth.



**Ca. 180–175 / 175–150 B.C.:**<sup>319</sup> Sirach 51:5[6/7]<sup>320</sup> speaks of the *belly of Hades*: The Greek expression *κοιλίας ᾗδου* implies *Hellmouth*-imagery and is the same expression as in Jonah LXX

316Melito of Sardis (ca. A.D. 160–170): *Peri Pascha* (*Homily On the Passover*), v. 22.

317c.f. Halley H.H., Ruark J.E., Frees D., Rasmussen C.G., van der Maas R.F., van der Maas E.M. (2007): *Halley’s Bible Handbook*, on Matthew 16:13–20. p. 550.

318The god Pan, to whom the cave was devoted, was considered a shepherd; fittingly, 1Clement 51:4 (ca. A.D. 95) says of those who go down to Hades that *Death shall be their shepherd* (θάνατος ποιμανεῖ αὐτούς).

319Sirach was penned in Hebrew around 180–175 B.C., but the Greek translation was written a few decades later.

320The numbering-systems vary—sometimes this verse is found as Sirach 51:5, as 51:6, or as 51:7.

2:3; the (less common, but generally accepted to be the original) Hebrew expression רהם תהום (reḥem t̄hôm) is different from Jonah LXX 2:3 and has no explicit Hellmouth-*imagery*, but it is closer to the implied meaning suggested on page 121ff., i.e. Jonah being in the *womb of [the] deep*. The surrounding context in Sirach 51 has other similarities<sup>321</sup> to Jonah 2 as well, such as (only one verse later) a prayer towards God to be saved from the destruction of death as one's *life draws near to Hades below*.<sup>322</sup>

**Ca. 500–330 B.C. (and leading up to that time):** The Book of Jonah—Jonah gets *swallowed* (v. 2:1) into *the belly of Sheol/Hades* (v. 2:3), implying a *Hellmouth* (before and after the other *Hellmouth*-occurrences listed here).

**Ca. 625 B.C.:** Habakkuk 2:5 speaks of Sheol/Hades having a strong appetite, and of death being insatiable (comparable to the later *Acta Pilati* mentioned above). Habakkuk was written roughly two centuries before the Book of Jonah—so by the time Jonah was penned, the concept of Hades as a swallowing entity clearly must have been well established, and it was known during the time the story of Jonah developed before it got written down.

**Before 500 B.C.:**<sup>323</sup> Numerous times, the Old Testament speaks of the earth or ground opening its mouth and swallowing people for them to go down to Sheol (Ex 15:12; Num 16:30,32–34, 26:10; Deut 11:6; Ps 106:17, 124:3; Proverbs 1:12).

**Also before 500 B.C.:** In Genesis 4:11, after the incident involving Cain's fratricide, the text speaks of *the ground which opened its mouth to receive/welcome [Abel's] blood from your hand*, utilizing the imagery of the earth's depths opening their *mouth* in the face of death—to welcome one's blood,

321Comparable to Psalm 86:13, this passage only speaks of being NEAR the *belly of Hades*, i.e. in great danger of one's life, as opposed to Jonah, who speaks of being RIGHT INSIDE the *belly of the sea-creature* i.e. *Hades*.

322Speaking of Deuterocanonical books which mention the *belly of Hades*: Chapter 6 [5] of the *Book of Odes* (a 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century collection of biblical prayers from the Old and New Testament, used in the Eastern Orthodox Church) also recounts Jonah's prayer (i.e. Jonah 2:3–10) word for word in Greek, including *κοιλίας ἄδου* in verse 3. The two versions (both by Rahlfs) are essentially the same, except for some punctuation and insignificant minor variants:

Jonah LXX 2:5 καὶ ἐγὼ ↔ Odes 6:5 κάγω; τὸν ναὸν ↔ ναὸν  
 Jonah LXX 2:6 ὕδωρ μοι ἕως ψυχῆς ↔ Odes 6:6 μοι ὕδωρ ἕως ψυχῆς μου  
 Jonah LXX 2:7 φθορὰ ζωῆς ↔ Odes 6:7 ἐκ φθορᾶς ἡ ζωῆ  
 Jonah LXX 2:8 ἄπ' ἐμοῦ τὴν ψυχὴν μου ↔ Odes 6:8 τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἄπ' ἐμοῦ  
 Jonah LXX 2:10 σωτηρίου ↔ Odes 6:10 εἰς σωτηρίαν μου

323The datings for the Pentateuch are simply debated, but can range from 1450–1410 B.C. to ca. 250 B.C., which is as wide a range as it is wild, and the point of this thesis shall not be to give any conclusion on the matter. Psalms 106 and 124 are counted among those that some may consider authentically Davidic and thus old, but such a notion may be taken with a grain of salt. Regarding Proverbs, the collections may range from ca. 950 B.C. to ca. 400 B.C.

rather than the soul or the spirit, but in the Jewish mindset these things were seen as metaphysically connected as *life-blood* (Gen 9:4), *for the blood is the life* (Deut 12:23) and *the life of a creature is in the blood* (Lev 17:11). All three of these verses connect נפש (nepeš) *soul/life* to דם (dām) *blood*. So, when Genesis 4:11 says that the earth opened its mouth to welcome Abel's *blood*, the mouth of the earth is welcoming his *soul* (his *Nephesh*) as well. In the entire biblical tradition, Genesis 4:11 is the canonically first explicit reference to the *Hellmouth*.

In a very subtle manner, *Hellmouth*-imagery is even implied a few verses earlier in Genesis 3:14:

*And the LORD God said unto the serpent* (שׁוֹחַז נָחָשׁ), *Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly* (גִּחֹן) *shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.*

The word used for the serpent's belly is גִּחֹן (gāḥôn), which is rare and otherwise appears only in Leviticus 11:42 all throughout the OT. The Targum-translation uses גַּע (me'), akin to Jonah 2:1–2, and the LXX uses κοιλία, akin to Jonah LXX 2:1–3. More interestingly though, Strong suggested that the etymological root of גִּחֹן (gāḥôn) might be the verb גִּיחַ (giaḥ) *to burst forth*, used for *giving birth* (c.f. Ps 22:9; Micah 4:10) and thus reptile-bellies, but also for *waters rushing from their fountains* (c.f. Judg 20:33; Job 38:8, 40:23; Ezek 32:2), in which sense גִּיחַ is also the root of גִּיחֹן (gîḥôn, Gichon), one of the rivers of Eden (c.f. Gen 2:13) as well as a spring near Jerusalem (c.f. 1Ki 1:33,38,45; 2Ch 32:30, 33:14). Therefore, the *belly of the serpent* has a clear connotation of the *watery deep* and, in turn, the symbolism of *sin and evil* associated with both, reptiles and the deep.

As for the *serpent* (שׁוֹחַז נָחָשׁ) itself: While the etymology of שׁוֹחַז (nāḥāš) may not be clear, there is always the possibility for poetic wordplay, and from that angle there might be an interesting possibility: There is a Hebrew word נָחַת (nāḥat) which means *to go down/descend* as a verb (נָחַת nāḥat *he/it descended*), and *descent* (also into Sheol) or *rest of death* as a noun naḥat (c.f. Isaiah 30:30; Job 21:13, 17:16; Ecclesiastes 6:5 (*death-motif contextually implied*)). Compare Targum's Jonah 2:7 נַחֲתִית (neḥatit) *I descended*, as Jonah is ambiguously in the *belly of a fish* or *sea-serpent* and at the same time in the *belly of Sheol*. Job 17:16 is of particular interest here, as it not only explicitly mentions Sheol but also עַל-עֲפָר נָחַת ('al-'āfār nāḥat) *upon dust [they shall] descend*. The jump between the two concepts is small, and mostly just a rearrangement of words:

- The serpent with its deadly mouth and its belly which shall descend upon the dust, a reptile which is associated with having brought death to mankind.
- The dead of mankind which shall descend upon the dust as it opens its mouth to swallow them up into the belly of the realm of the dead which happens to be associated with serpents.

The connection between *eating dust*<sup>324</sup> and *death* does not just coincide with the modern English idiom *to bite the dust*, but can even be found in the Babylonian myth of *Ishtar's Descent into the Underworld* (in Neo-Assyrian, thus written in 911–612 B.C.), which poetically states that the Underworld is *where dust is their food [and] clay their bread*<sup>325</sup>—and as is well established, the Hebrew mythology surrounding death and sin is heavily influenced by Babylonian mythology (see page 128). That the serpent shall *eat dust* can thus be seen as an idiom for banishment to Sheol—though there might be some ambiguity as to whether this simply means that the serpent shall die (which can hardly be what is meant here, because the serpent is told to *eat dust (die?) all the days of his life*—an oxymoron),<sup>326</sup> or whether the serpent's connection to death, also as an agent of death, is more complex, and directly connected to the simultaneously assigned (and simultaneously occurring)<sup>327</sup> fate of Adam: Only a few verses after the serpent is told to *eat dust* (c.f. Gen 3:14), Adam is told that *from dust* (עפר 'āfār) *he came and to dust* (עפר 'āfār) *he shall return* (c.f. Gen 3:19), which implies that that the dust the serpent shall eat is the dust to which Adam returns—the *serpent upon the dust* (nāḥāš 'al-'āfār) devours the dead as they complete their return to and their *descent upon the dust* (naḥat 'al-'āfār).<sup>328</sup>

The serpent in Genesis 3 is the original *Hellmouth*. Thus, the piscine *Hellmouth*-symbolism in the Book of Jonah goes back to and reverberates the serpent in the Garden of Eden, together with its satanic connotations of sin and death.

324That the serpent shall *eat dust* must not be taken literally: Literal dust has never been the literal food of literal snakes—the very fact that serpents prey for living beings is what made them so dangerous in everybody's eyes, so it would be ludicrous to think that any Hebrew thought of God's command to the snake to eat dust as literal.

325c.f. CDLI (2015ff.): *CDLI Literary Descent of Ishtar (composite)*. (CDLI no.: P497322)

326This interpretation makes more sense for Isaiah 65:25 which echoes Genesis 3:14 as *and [as for the] serpent dust [be] his food* (וְהָיָה עֹפֶר לְחֶמְדוֹ), namely that in the messianic age, the Messiah shall bring an end to the agent of death.

327The passage in Genesis 3:14 refers to the serpent's fate from that point on—it cannot be (or can hardly be understood as) a mere threat that would only be fulfilled at the future time spoken of in Isaiah 65:25, because the curses spoken over Adam & Eve in the same Chapter are not future prophecies either, but statements about what will happen to mankind from that point onward, so it makes more sense to think of what the serpent is being told in the same sense. Both, the serpent (Gen 3:14) and Adam's ground (Gen 3:17) are *cursed* with a Qal Passive Participle; all the curses are related to the serpent, Eve, and Adam in the Imperfect. There is no difference in verbal tense. Thus the text implies that the assigned fate of the serpent begins NOT at some later point in the future, but in Genesis 3 already, together with the fates assigned to Adam & Eve.

328The idea of the serpent devouring the dead is somewhat reminiscent of the Egyptian death-goddess Ammit, who is the *Devourer of the Dead* and has the head of a crocodile, i.e. a large reptile (also, once again, offering a possible connection to the Leviathan—even if the latter may be more than a mere crocodile, as mentioned before).

#### 4.10.: Conclusions of the Metaphor Studies

Since this bigger chapter on metaphors has shown many different facets in a multitude of smaller sub-chapters, oversight can be lost quite easily, and thus it might be helpful to summarize the main points to turn the many scattered elements into one coherent and easily visible mosaic.

The Huqoq-mosaics (see p. 106) from ca. A.D. 400 suggest that being swallowed by fish was a metaphor for (death by) drowning, akin to the idiom *to feed the fishes* which is well attested in Homer's epics and thus may have been well-known among the Hebrews, since there was a growing cultural exchange between Greeks and Israelites (see p. 109), and Jonah 1–2 contain strong parallels to Homer's *Odyssey* 5:270–429 (see p. 110).

These Homeric parallels which may have influenced the Book of Jonah, as well as other Homeric passages, also show that it was possible to call the ocean ἰχθυόεντα (*fish-like, full/consisting of fish*), using *fish* as a metonymy for the sea itself (see pp. 111, 113)—so, Jonah being swallowed up by *the fish(-like)* could be understood as him being swallowed up by the sea.

Regarding idioms and proverbs directly from the Palestinian regions, idioms utilizing fish as a symbol of chaos and sin are well attested, and they share multiple similarities to the story of Jonah (see p. 114).

Considering that fish can be seen as a symbol for one's inner chaos, and considering that the Hebrew words for *fish* (דָּג dāg, דָּגָה dāgâ) and for *anxiety* (דָּאג dā'ag, דָּאגָה d'āgâ) look and sound very similar—a similarity which has been noticed by Iraqi Hebrews (i.e. in and around Nineveh) and which has even affected their eating-habits—, Jonah's fish-swallowing can also be read as a play on words (not uncommon in biblical Hebrew), with Jonah not being swallowed up by one literal fish but by his own anxiety instead (see p. 117).

However, the negative symbolism of fish goes far beyond mere anxiety: The Epistle of Barnabas (10:5,10) from A.D. 70–132 (interpreting OT-prohibitions on certain foods) speaks of people who have *gone in the council of the ungodly* and who are *condemned to death*, who are being compared to the *(little) fishes swimming in the depths*, and thus the epistle calls them *cursed* (ἐπικατάρατα), a word used for the ungodly and those who turn against God, which, especially if it can be so strongly associated with fish, perfectly fits the themes of Jonah (see p. 116).

Since fish can be seen as a symbol of outright ungodliness, and of turning away from God, fish can be considered *satanic*, and there is indeed a gray area between Jonah's fish, Satan, and Leviathan (see p. 128)—the latter of which appears in later Midrashîm on Jonah (see pp. 129, 130, 138) and thus seems to be strongly connected to the traditions surrounding Jonah's fish. The fish,

however, should not be seen as Satan or Leviathan directly, but rather, akin to those, as a personification and a symbol of the *abyss* (see p. 128)—which is, in fact, one of the connotations of the fish’s LXX-translation κῆτος (see p. 124).

This personified abyss could be understood as the literal *watery deep* (as the waters have been established as very literal in Jonah 1; again, see also Homer’s ἰχθυόεντα on pp. 111, 113, *swallowed by the fish-like = swallowed by the sea*)—a literal reading of the abyss as *watery deep* would support the idea that Jonah is drowning. This, in turn, can be seen as a symbol of a *womb* (from which Jonah prays), a symbol for an ungodly womb of the deep below which is opposed to the godly womb of mercy above, with Jonah being *born again* from that ungodly womb (see p. 121)—fittingly there are very subtle linguistic connotations of *birth-giving* present in Jonah 2 (see p. 121), a theme which is also present in the later Midrash-tradition about the pregnant fish (see p. 87).

On the other hand, this abyss could be understood as *Sheol/Hades* (from which Jonah prays), implying that Jonah might be near-dead. Fittingly, ancient literature is rife with imagery which presents Hades as being guarded by a *Hellhound* which originally was understood as a sort of (sea-)serpent (see p. 135); and the entrance to Hades is, throughout the entire OT and afterwards, presented as a *Hellmouth* which *swallows* people up as the fish does swallow up Jonah (see p. 138).

To summarize the summary: Jonah was in a bad place. Be it his own sin, ungodliness, inner chaos, or anxiousness, Jonah was in a bad place, and he had to get out of that place—he had to be born again and align himself back towards God. Creating this positive change within prepared him for being able to create such positive change in others. “*How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye, ’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?’*” (Matthew 7:4, NIV) This is the core of Jonah’s symbolism—but at the same time it is merely scratching the surface.

What is of primary importance for this thesis shall be pointed out first: Even though there is a layer of metaphor to the story (or rather multiple layers), the water is indeed presented as literal water, and while part of the message is that Jonah is being swallowed by his own inner chaos which he has to get out of, he does indeed “feed the fish” (i.e. *drown*), find himself in the womb of the sea, swallowed up by the literal watery *abyss*—which LXX κῆτος can indeed mean—, swallowed up by the fish-like ἰχθυόεντα: Jonah is drowning in the fish-ful sea, engulfed and surrounded by its piscine inhabitants which, by their collective multitude as if to build one larger volume, constitute that sea—i.e. exactly the point which the primary claim of this thesis is making. So, these elements of the metaphorical layers present in Jonah 1–2 very likely support this thesis, while giving it more depth.

There are, of course, more things to be said about the metaphors and thus the meaning of Jonah, which shall briefly be mentioned here—not for their immediate importance for the core-argument of this thesis (which is not the case), but because they are important for the Book of Jonah itself:

Psalm 81:10 reflects on the Exodus in the following way: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.” (NIV) This verse closely follows the idiom *in your distress you called and [...] I answered you* in Ps 81:7, which occurs in Jonah 2:3 as *in my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me*, utilizing the same Hebrew key-words. As Jonah goes through his own inversion of the Exodus (the Hebrew fleeing his home, journeying to other nations, and having to spread the word of God to the heathens), the motif *Open wide your mouth and I will fill it* from Ps 81:10 is inverted as well: The sea-monster as a symbol for adversarial nations opens its mouth so that the carrier of the word of God can fill it, and then, once he realizes that not only the mouth of Israel shall be filled, the carrier of the word of God fills the mouth of the actual adversarial nation.

The first half of the story deals with how Jonah, the individual, needs to get himself together (interior, self, Jewish) before he can make a positive change in the broader society (exterior, others, Goyîm) in the second half. That second half focuses on society—although Jonah is still the protagonist, the textual discourse is about the society of Nineveh, and, paralleling how the individual finds mercy by changing his ways in the first half, so does society find mercy by reenacting that change on a larger scale in the second half.

All the while, unto the end, Jonah’s conversion was reluctant: Rather should that society of non-Jewish heathens perish than that he would risk his own reputation as a prophet if the Ninevites would not receive the prophesied destruction. It is a great irony that, just like the sailors in the first half, the heathen society gave a better example than Jonah himself, whose in-group preference blinded him toward the fact that mercy should extend beyond boundaries of nationality, ethnicity, or culture, and whose personal pride blinded him from having to make a sacrifice of possibly risking his reputation in this world.

The book was written sometime between 500–330 B.C., whilst many Jews were still living as immigrants abroad, scattered in the Jewish diaspora which had resulted from the Assyrian and Babylonian Exile, and among many of the Jewish elite, xenophobia was rampant out of fear that the Jewish heritage would be lost due to not just ethnic but also cultural intermingling (c.f. Nehemiah). So, the Book of Jonah served as a reminder that the people of Israel, despite their reservations, should not forget to be a “light to the nations” (Is 42:6, 49:6, 52:10, 60:3).

Wide as a puddle, but deep as an ocean, this universal and timeless message contains the core of the entire Bible within just a few pages or paragraphs: Overcome your own inner chaos, your Jungian *shadow*, by stepping through it to come out on the other side, because you can only get things in order if you have gotten yourself in order first, by aligning yourself with and orienting yourself towards eternal order (*and this*, as Thomas Aquinas would say, *we call God—quod deus dicitur*).

There is, however, one more aspect to this conclusion, and it might even explain why the author of the Book of Jonah decided to express the fish's numerus (and/or gender) in such an obscure ambiguous manner: Blurring the line between self and other (the essential theme of Jonah's struggle to overcome his antipathy against the Ninevites) is grammatically and semantically illustrated by blurring the line between singular and collective—after all, the grammatical collective is about individuation and the dissolution thereof, in regards to living things as well as to environments (see pages 7ff.). Accordingly—and according to Gregory Bateson<sup>329</sup> and Félix Guattari<sup>330</sup>—the dissolution of the erroneously perceived border between self and other applies to both societal and environmental domains (i.e. space and borders), as they are inherently connected. This thematic overlap (i.e. space & borders = collectivity) is also present in the Book of Jonah.<sup>331</sup>

Jonah crosses the border of the ocean surface to enter the depths of the vast and boundless sea (a symbol for non-Israelite nations), pictured as bounded space (the belly of the fish), then he leaves that space; this prepares him for later crossing the border of Nineveh when he enters and then leaves that city's bounded space. The fish and the city of Nineveh are mirror-images of one another, each of them stands for the other. As has been pointed out before (see pages 61f.), the bounded

329c.f. Bateson G. (1972): *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. pp. 486ff. — Bateson argues that the conceptualization of space and borders stems from a somewhat errant human tendency to arbitrarily select perceivable differences between objects (from an infinite amount of potential differences) in an attempt to divide the world into understandable but fictional categories. Not only is this process mirrored in the way God is described as creating the world in Genesis 1 (the world is created by making distinctions to separate the chaotic world into orderly but seemingly arbitrary categories), but even Bateson himself connects this process to mankind's historic conceptualizations of gods, which makes it an inherently "biblical" process. Bateson's philosophy of the dissolution of the self seems to have been inspired by Zen-Buddhism, which is about as old as the story of Jonah—it is thus possible that Buddhist thoughts (like Bateson's) could have affected the zeitgeist when Jonah was written.

330c.f. Guattari F. (1989): *Die drei Ökologien*. pp. 26f., 72. — Building on Bateson, Félix Guattari puts an even stronger focus on societal collectivity when he speaks of *individual and collective subjectivity* which need to open up to society to transcend the *mosaically individuated areas* closed towards identification. This notion is pretty similar to how Jonah must overcome his strict holding-fast to the *mosaically individuated area* to which he thinks God's grace should be restricted.

331The themes of movement through space is introduced early on throughout the first chapter of Jonah: There is movement across a horizontal plane (human/worldly axes; humanly accessible and hospitable habitat) and along a vertical axis (divine/spiritual axis; humanly inaccessible and inhospitable habitat). That vertical axis is used to great effect, stylistically and poetically: First, Jonah *went down* (יָרַד *yārad*) to Joppa (c.f. Jonah 1:3), *went down* (יָרַד *yārad*) into the ship (c.f. Jonah 1:3), and *went down* (יָרַד *yārad*) into the ship's belly (c.f. Jonah 1:5). Then, the chief tells Jonah to *rise up* (קוּם *qûm*) and call out to God (c.f. Jonah 1:6), Jonah tells the sailors to *lift him up* (נָשָׂא *nāšā'*) and throw him overboard (c.f. Jonah 1:12), then the sailors *lift him up* (נָשָׂא *nāšā'*) and throw him overboard (c.f. Jonah 1:15). Eventually, in Jonah 2:4, Jonah is *cast down* (שָׁלַךְ *šālāk*) into *the deep* (מַצְוֵלָה *māṣūlā*), ere he rises up.

space of Nineveh obtains its גדול-greatness from its multiplicity of cities contained within those bounds, making the one city *great* by virtue of it being a *collective*—just like Jonah’s *great fish*. Another peculiar thing about Nineveh is how in Jonah 3:7–8 not only the people of Nineveh are ordered to do penance (i.e. fasting and wearing sackcloth), but also the animals—what seems amusing and humorous might really hint at a dissolution of the border between man and animal, as they, in their symbiosis, are really one. This *oneness of the collective* in regards to Nineveh is once more stressed as a key element of the story when God himself ends his conversation with Jonah on invoking the people and children of Nineveh in the same breath as the *many animals* in the concluding verse of the entire book, Jonah 4:11—a pair of words which in itself contains the ambiguity of hypothetically allowing to be read as *a great beast* (as has been mentioned on page 27), which is an ambiguity quite similar to that of Jonah’s *great fish*. This is (it shall here be postulated) the reason why the fish’s collectivity is written in such an obscure, ambiguous, and traditionally confusing manner: Because the fish, as a stand-in for Nineveh, is meant to mirror how the theme of Nineveh is the dissolution of the borders perceived between the parties (man and animal, self and other, “us vs. them”, Israel and the Goyîm).

So, the fish’s obscurely expressed collectivity probably serves the purpose of underlining the story’s theme of dissolving the borders and accepting the perceived differences as a fictional and erroneous distinction which needs to be overcome—the confusion created by making the fish seem singular in one verse, but collective in the next, is instrumental in purposefully blurring that line.

#### 4.11.: Conclusions II – “Three Days” & Time-Perception in NDEs

The womb of the depth in which Jonah finds himself is not a cozy womb, but a *spiritual prison of utter anxiety*. Jonah needs to suffer before he is born again—one might feel inclined to think of it as purgative suffering... as Purgatory.

*Purgatory* or *purgative suffering* is a transformative experience in which someone is confronted with one’s own sin and inner darkness—one’s own abyss—, in order to learn how to overcome it, becoming a better person in the process and getting closer to God. This is exactly what Jonah is going through.

The Catholic notion of Purgatory (as it is a Catholic word) pertains to temporal, purgative sufferings, some of which already take place in one’s still ongoing life, and Jonah’s story may very well be read in this light. But Purgatory primarily refers to purgative suffering in the afterlife or on the verge of death—i.e. during what would nowadays be called a near-death experience (NDE).<sup>332</sup>

There is, of Course, a fine line between Purgatory and Hell (namely the temporality and rehabilitative aspect of Purgatory vs. the eternality and punitive aspect of Hell), but Jonah 2:3 explicitly mentions Jonah being in Sheol or Hades, which can be considered precursors to the notions of both Hell and Purgatory. (Theologically speaking, Purgatory in the strict Catholic sense as a state in the afterlife probably could not have existed before the Descensus of Christ.) So, it is a perfectly possible interpretation that Jonah did indeed have an NDE.

The Jewish Encyclopedia, while discussing the Kabbalistic Zohar-tradition, says the following:

*When Jonah was thrown into the sea his soul immediately left his body and soared up to God's throne, where it was judged and sent back. As soon as it touched the mouth of the fish on its way back to the body, the fish died, but was later restored to life.*<sup>333</sup>

So, the interpretation that Jonah had an NDE has been part of the Jewish tradition for a long time, and this makes perfect sense not only because of Jonah explicitly mentioning Sheol as his dwelling-place, but also in light of the symbolic connotations of death in the Jewish Midrash tradition (p. 91) and in the metaphorical layers like the *Hellhound* (see p. 135) and especially the *Hellmouth* (see p. 138), and the possibility of the fish being a personified *abyss* in the more metaphysical and underworldly sense of the word *abyss* (p. 128).

<sup>332</sup>This chapter about Jonah possibly having had an NDE, a near-death experience, concludes the larger chapter on metaphors, though this is not to imply that Jonah’s NDE itself was but a mere metaphor; the reason for placing this NDE-chapter right here is that it builds upon elements from the previous chapters (language, traditions, metaphors).

<sup>333</sup>Hirsch E.G., Budde K. Schechter S. (1906): “Jonah”, in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. [EMPHASIS MINE]

Another hint is the fact that semantic fields of the Hebrew (pp. 64, 66) and Greek (p. 125) verbs used for *swallowed up* include *deadly destruction*:

As shown in the chapter on בלע (bāla', *swallow*) on page 64 (and discussed on page 66), 39 of the 50 counted בלע-occurrences, that is 78.00%, have connotations of or occur in scenes which describe *death* or *near-death*. The verb is used multiple times in an OT-phrase about *the earth opening its mouth and swallowing people up* (Ex 15:12, Num 26:10, Deut 11:6, Ps 106:17), and Num 16:30 as well as Num 16:32–34 appends that the people that had been swallowed up in that passage *all went down into Sheol alive*.<sup>334</sup>

Furthermore, Proverbs 1:12 utilizes a similar phrase (*Let's swallow them up* (בלע בāla') *alive like Sheol, and whole, like those who go down into the pit* (באר bōr)), and Psalm 69:15 combines the same imagery with watery depths (*Don't let the flood waters overwhelm me, neither let the deep swallow me up* (בלע בāla'). *Don't let the pit* (באר bōr) *shut its mouth on me*).

This comes to show that to be *swallowed up by the deep* is the same as being *swallowed up by the pit* (באר bōr, a common term to refer to Sheol), which equals *going down into Sheol*. So, the theme of drowning in the *deep of the sea*, accompanied by the word *swallow* (בלע בāla'), is a metaphor for going down into *Sheol* which appears in other places throughout the OT as well as in Jonah 2: In Jonah 2:3, Jonah claims to be praying *from the belly of Sheol*, and the imagery of a watery abyss also matches Psalm 69:15. With all that in mind, it makes sense to interpret the swallowing up of Jonah and his drowning through the depths as a string of metaphors which are well attested throughout the OT as a reference to actual *death*.

There are, however, many more reasons to read Jonah's piscine incident specifically as an NDE. The following list includes a range of elements associated with NDEs in general (either elements which describe the NDE itself, its aftermath, or what may lead up to it) and how these elements compare to the story of Jonah. Aside from Raymond Moody as a secondary source, the majority of elements listed below is taken from literature by Pim Van Lommel, where an NDE-study from the Netherlands from 2001 with 344 clinically dead patients was being analyzed to see to what

334The very same word with which בלע is translated in the Greek Septuagint/LXX version of all the afore-mentioned verses, καταπίνω (lit. *to drink down*), is also used in the NT for figurative speech about *death* and the *realm of the dead*: Heb 11:29 the Egyptians *were swallowed up by the Red Sea*; 1Pt 5:8 *the Devil devours his victims* (compare Hades being depicted as devouring the dead, and both Satan and Hades being depicted in the Acta Pilati); and of course there are St. Paul's reversed death-phrases, 1Co 15:54 *Death is swallowed up in victory*, and 2Co 5:4 *that mortality may be swallowed up by life*.

percentage certain elements occur (18% of all patients reported having had an NDE during which they saw something)<sup>335</sup> and what conclusions could be drawn.

- The NDEs in this list have have been studied on patients who were clinically dead, which included patients who got into that state due to a lack of oxygen<sup>336</sup> (which, however, cannot be concluded to be what is directly causing the things seen during the NDE).<sup>337</sup>
  - Jonah drowned in the water—given these circumstances, a lack of oxygen is rather obvious and self-explanatory.
- Patients had a realization that they were dead (50%).<sup>338</sup>
  - “[...] *From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help [...]*” (Jonah 2:3, NIV)  
“[...] *my life was ebbing away [...]*” (Jonah 2:8, NIV)  
“[...] *my soul fainted within me [...]*” (Jonah 2:8, KJV – closer to the original)
- Patients with a higher level of anxiety as well as patients whose reanimation took place not in a hospital but elsewhere—i.e. at a higher risk of death—experienced deeper, longer, and more vivid NDEs.<sup>339</sup>
  - Jonah “rose up to flee” (Jonah 1:3, KJV) out of reluctance to fulfill a task he was given, seemingly scared of the potential outcome—so much so that Jonah being swallowed up by the fish is likely a play on words about him being swallowed up by his own anxiety (see p. 117). It is obvious that Jonah would not have had modern hospitals and their tools to reanimate patients available, but even for someone living in antiquity, the circumstances under which his supposed NDE occurred were not exactly optimal, with him having been tossed into the sea and being all on his own—Jonah was at a higher risk of death. So, both the severe anxiety as well as the higher risk of death allowed Jonah to experience a deeper, longer, and more vivid NDE.
- Communication with the light (23%).<sup>340</sup>
  - Jonah’s prayer in Jonah 2 is directed at God, and the text affirms more than once that God did indeed respond (which means that some sort of communication took place):  
“[...] *In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. [...] I called for help, and you listened to my cry.*” (Jonah 2:3) “*When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you [...]*” (Jonah 2:8)

335c.f. Van Lommel P. (2013): *Endloses Bewusstsein*. p. 172.

336c.f. Van Lommel P. (2013): *Endloses Bewusstsein*. p. 171.

337c.f. Van Lommel P. (2013): *Endloses Bewusstsein*. pp. 177–178.

338c.f. Van Lommel P. (2013): *Endloses Bewusstsein*. p. 174.

339c.f. Van Lommel P. (2013): *Endloses Bewusstsein*. pp. 172–173.

340c.f. Van Lommel P. (2013): *Endloses Bewusstsein*. p. 174; c.f. Moody R.A. (2001): *Leben nach dem Tod*. p. 72.

- Out-of-body experience (24%);<sup>341</sup> perceiving a heavenly landscape (29%).<sup>342</sup>
  - These elements do not explicitly come up in the biblical account, but the aforementioned Jewish tradition where “*his soul immediately left his body and soared up to God's throne, where it was judged and sent back*”<sup>343</sup> shows that some people thought of Jonah as having what would nowadays be called an out-of-body experience, and that he saw a heavenly environment, i.e. God’s throne.
- Moving through a dark tunnel (31%).<sup>344</sup>
  - For an Israelite in antiquity, “tunnels” might have been less of a concept than it is for people today, and not just because that specific word did not really exist until the early fifteenth century as a Middle French diminutive form of the Old French “tonne” (*tun, cask for liquids*), and which could mean *burrow of an animal* in ca. 1873 and *underground passage* in ca. 1660.<sup>345</sup> These keywords are fitting, because what is nowadays often called a *tunnel* might have seemed more like a *long cave* or maybe a *deep chasm* in ancient times—e.g. when the Tibetan Book of the Dead mentions the soul of the dead finding itself in a chasm as narrow as that person’s own mind.<sup>346</sup> With that in mind, the possible connotation of LXX κῆτος as not just an *abyss* but also a *cave* or *chasm* (see p. 125), which also fits the traditional reading of the fish’s belly as a cavernous space (see pp. 89, 91), fits the modern *tunnel*-motif or the more ancient *chasm*-motif of an NDE quite well: Jonah moving through the abyss and/or the mouth and the belly of the fish is Jonah moving through a dark tunnel.
- Perception of a border / barrier / threshold (8%).<sup>347</sup>
  - In this thesis, the line “[...] *the earth with her bars was about me for ever* [...]” (Jonah 2:7, KJV) is primarily thought of as conveying that Jonah sank to the ground; but a different reading which might be uncommon but possible would be that the “bars” (בריה בִּרְיָה) refer to *gates* of either *the earth* or *the land* (הָאָרֶץ hā-’āreṣ, i.e. either *Israel* or *the dry landmasses as opposed to the watery deep*) which Jonah perceives as closing *above* or rather *behind* him; as *Brown-Driver-Briggs* explains:

“בעד *ba‘ad*: A particle meaning for, through, behind. This particle has many nuanced

341c.f. Van Lommel P. (2013): *Endloses Bewusstsein*. p. 174; c.f. Moody R.A. (2001): *Leben nach dem Tod*. p. 49.

342c.f. Van Lommel P. (2013): *Endloses Bewusstsein*. p. 174.

343Hirsch E.G., Budde K. Schechter S. (1906): “Jonah”, in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*.

344c.f. Van Lommel P. (2013): *Endloses Bewusstsein*. p. 174; c.f. Moody R.A. (2001): *Leben nach dem Tod*. p. 46.

345c.f. “tunnel (n.)” on *Online Etymology Dictionary*. (<https://www.etymonline.com/word/tunnel>, retrieved: 13.6.2020)

346c.f. Moody R.A. (2001): *Leben nach dem Tod*. p. 125.

347c.f. Van Lommel P. (2013): *Endloses Bewusstsein*. p. 174; c.f. Moody R.A. (2001): *Leben nach dem Tod*. p. 85.

meanings. The basic renderings are: *behind*, as in **shutting a door behind oneself** (Gen. 7:16); **surrounding one, shutting a person in** (Ps. 3:3[4]; 139:11; **Jon. 2:6[7]**). Figuratively, it is used after a verb of shutting to indicate (*ba'ad*) **the womb** (Gen. 20:18). [...]”<sup>348</sup>

So, while *the earth surrounding and shutting Jonah in* is not just one likely but also the usual reading, connotations of figurative *womb*-imagery as well as *shutting a gate behind oneself* are perfectly possible readings as well.

Compare Numbers 16:33c ותכס עליהם הארץ (wat-tēkas ‘ālêhem hā-’āreš) *and closed over/after them the earth*—not the same wording, but the sense of the expression is similar to what is given in in Jonah 2:7, especially if the Numbers 16:33d is taken into account, *and they perished [and were lost] from the assembly*, which resembles the figurative sense in which Brown-Driver-Briggs interprets Jonah 2:7—“figurative ב of earth (pictured as house out of which Jonah is shut)”.<sup>349</sup> This image matches Job 38:10–11, where God *fixed limits for [the sea] and set doors and bars* (בריח בריח, using the same word for *bars* as Jonah 2:7)<sup>350</sup> to tell the sea *where [its] proud waves shall halt*, i.e. the shoreline. Also noteworthy is Job 17:16 *They shall go down to the bars* (i.e. gates) *of Sheol, when together in/by [the] dust we rest/descent*. (בדי baddê, *bars*: different word, but similar meaning, i.e. of a *gate* or *door* to be shut.) Last but not least, there are the *gates of Hades* which are mentioned in Matthew 16:18.

These examples show shared themes, including *death*, resting in the *earth*, and *bars* or *gates* being used as a metaphor, and the expression *bars of the earth* in Jonah 2:7 seems to fit right in (even though it could just as well be referring to the *seashore* or the *ground of the sea*). While the Targum<sup>351</sup> rather suggests the reading of Jonah being surrounded by the earth at the ground of the sea,<sup>352</sup> the LXX<sup>353</sup> perfectly allows for that

348“בעד” in *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, Unabridged*. [EMPHASIS MINE]

349“בריה” in *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, Unabridged*.

350As an interesting side-note, this word for the *bars of a gate* is derived from ברה (bārah) *flee*, which (even if it may just be a coincidence) thematically fits Jonah’s flight from God up to that point quite well (and which would make German “(Tor-)Flügel” a good translation (lit. *gate-wing(s)*; compare English “flight”/“fly” for the act of *fleeing*)).

351Targum: *the earth extended/flowed/stretched out* (נגדת nēgadat) *above/over* (עיל ‘el) *me with all its strength*. (ארעא נגדת בתוקפהא עיל מן עלמין)

352It is indeed more reasonable to interpret the earth’s bars as relating to the roots of the mountains to which Jonah is sinking, since these are mentioned in such close proximity right before mentioning the earth’s bars. Of course, it is rather difficult to determine where the line between literal reading and figure of speech should be drawn here, considering that whatever happened to Jonah in regards to these earthly bars, it obviously did not last forever (even though the text claims it to be so)—at least not right then and there. The verse is clearly employing hyperbole.

353LXX: *I went down to/into [the] earth, the bars/bolts/levers of which [are/were/being] barrier-like forever*. (κατέβην εἰς γῆν, ἧς οἱ μοχλοὶ αὐτῆς κάτοχοι αἰώνιοι)

reading but also includes the word κάτοχοι for *barrier*, akin to the “bars” (בַּרְיָהּ b̄rīah) in the Hebrew text. So, Jonah 2:7 might indeed be hinting some sort of barrier or threshold, namely the shutting gates.

- Higher openness towards others after the NDE.<sup>354</sup>
  - In the story of Jonah, the prophet is presented as reluctant unto the end, and yet the result of his encounter with the fish is him opening up to go to the Ninevites and preach to them, so that they might be saved. So, Jonah was higher in openness after his NDE.
- Reduced fear of death;<sup>355</sup> wishing to go back to the realm of the dead.
  - The expression “reduced fear of death” might conjure up the idea of being at peace with one’s mortal fate—however, this is not necessarily what is meant, at least not in the initial stages. Peace may settle in as time goes on, but when a person has just returned from an NDE, there tend to be massive feelings of displeasure, which mostly consist of grief and depression, but initially a lot of anger can be involved (not unlike the *Stages of Grief* by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, except after the death-event and not before it).

As has been shown on pp. 119f., Jonah may have felt anger in the aftermath of both his NDE and his prophesying, but it probably was predominantly a feeling of grief. Considering, then, that he proclaimed that he would “*do well to be angry* (i.e. grieving), *even unto death* (i.e. only death could end his grief)” (Jonah 4:9, KJV), and that Jonah “*wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live*” (Jonah 4:8, KJV), his behavior truly matches the common pattern of people who have just returned from an NDE.

Overall, there seems to be a tendency for people who have experienced an NDE that they would much rather prefer to be back where they were, rather than having to keep living in the physical body,<sup>356</sup> and that this can result in quite a struggle involving strong emotions like crying and displeasure<sup>357</sup>—from this angle, it would make sense that Jonah seems more than annoyed about his ongoing existence after the NDE.

Altogether, there is a whole range of similarities between NDEs in general and what happened to Jonah, which strongly suggests that Jonah may indeed have had an NDE.

354c.f. Van Lommel P. (2013): *Endloses Bewusstsein*. p. 183.

355c.f. Van Lommel P. (2013): *Endloses Bewusstsein*. p. 183.

356c.f. Moody R.A. (2001): *Leben nach dem Tod*. pp. 89–95.

357c.f. Moody R.A. (2001): *Leben nach dem Tod*. p. 95.

Of course, this brings up the question of how to interpret the three days and three nights which Jonah is said to have spent in the belly of the fish. If Jonah did not actually spend his time in the actual belly of a fish (which for some reason would be a safe place rather than digesting Jonah with its stomach acid), but instead was drowning and sinking in the water, possibly unconscious or even having an NDE, then how would he have been able to survive such a state of near-death from drowning for three days?

One possible explanation could be that Jonah did not drown immediately, but that he, not unlike Odysseus (see pp. 110ff.), spent several days struggling to keep himself above water, in which case it could still be argued that he was surrounded by the waters, *in the midst of the fish*, albeit not yet drowning, not yet sinking, which would match the fact that the biblical account only brings up passages which imply him sinking to the ground more clearly after Jonah 2:6a, which reads *surrounded me [the] waters unto [the] soul/throat* (אֶפְפוּנֵי מַיִם עַד נַפְשִׁי, 'ăpāpūnî mayim 'ad-nepeš) and could possibly be understood as “Water engulfed me up to my neck” (NET Bible).

This, however, does not seem to be a very common reading of the typically rather vaguely translated Jonah 2:6a, which could just as well (and possibly more likely)<sup>358</sup> be understood as the water being a risk to his life (i.e. his living soul), possibly filling Jonah’s throat and even his lungs with water (which would make sense if Jonah was drowning).<sup>359</sup>

The following explanation will primarily attempt to explain the latter scenario (i.e. that Jonah simply drowned), but can work for both scenarios (i.e. also for Jonah having struggled above water for a while): Jonah spend three days not in the water of the physical realm, but three days in his NDE, with a different perception of time.

It is very common for NDE-reports to mention a different perception of time, where the person experiencing the NDE perceives time differently and cannot really tell whether the experience lasted one second or ten-thousand years.<sup>360</sup> 2.Peter 3:8, which is about the Day of Judgement (2.Peter 3:7) and thus about the afterlife, comes to mind: “*With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.*” (NIV) Also, Psalm 90:4 “A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by”, which stands in direct explicit context of people entering the *sleep of death* (Psalm 90:5) and *man returning to dust* (Psalm 90:3). In Scholastic philosophy, a comparable (if not even exactly the same) concept is *aeviternitas* or *aevum*,<sup>361</sup> which

358Jonah 2:6a and Jonah 2:6b–c (*the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head* (NIV)) are not any conjunction which would imply chronological succession—however, this could be thought of as implicit.

359The Hebrew concept of *Nephesh* (נֶפֶשׁ) is used to refer to the *living soul*, that which makes the living being able to live, but the original meaning is a living being’s *throat* as the seat of the life-force that is the God-breathed breath.

360c.f. Moody R.A. (2004): *Das Licht von drüben*. p. 29;

361c.f. Albertus Magnus, *De IV coaequaevis*, tract. 2, qu. 3; c.f. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, First Part, Question 10, Article 5.

is the angels' and the saints' state between the perception of time in the world and the eternal timelessness of God. The nature of this *aeviternitas* is suggested to depend both on the individual's consciousness and the highness or lowliness of the otherworldly plane,<sup>362</sup> where an individual with a narrower consciousness and on a more lowly plane would be surrounded by darkness and time would seem to pass more slowly—both of which would fit Jonah's experience of several days in a dark place.<sup>363</sup>

So, the drowning Jonah may have fainted for e.g. only three seconds, but perceived to be in the belly of the fish or of Sheol (i.e. his NDE) for what seemed to him like three whole days—judged rightly so, due to how different time may be perceived whilst experiencing an NDE.

362c.f. Imhof B. (2012): *Wie auf Erden so im Himmel*. pp. 254ff.

363The referenced source mentions that in the darkest and lowest planes, time would seem to come to a halt and seem to stand still, while in the brighter and highest planes (i.e. closer to God) all of time would increasingly become one.

## 5.: The Two Jonah-Echoes in the New Testament

That Jonah has descended into the realm of the dead—i.e. that he had a near-death experience, as has been presented in the previous chapter, see pp. 149ff.—also prefigured the *descensus Christi ad inferos*,<sup>364</sup> Christ's descent into the realm of the dead in spirit as his body hung on the cross and lay in the tomb.<sup>365</sup> As Jonah spend three days in the belly of the fish which is the belly of Hades, so did Christ spend three days (in the realm of the) dead—this is the general consensus about the primary meaning of Christ's reference to *the sign of Jonah* (Mat 12:39, 16:4; Luke 11:29), because that is what Christ himself explains in Mat 12:40. The fact that the Gospel of Matthew is the only gospel which mentions this *sign of Jonah* twice<sup>366</sup> already indicates a special emphasis on Jonah-themes being present in the Gospel of Matthew.

Because there are indeed further similarities between the ministries of Jonah and of Jesus: As Jonah was sent to spread the word of God from the Hebrews to one of the foreign nations in spite of knowing that he himself might have to suffer for the sake of their salvation (i.e. Jonah losing his reputation), so was Jesus sent to spread the actual word of God to the Hebrews first and to the people of the nations second—a task to be fulfilled by his disciples—in spite of knowing that he himself will have to suffer for the sake of their salvation (i.e. Jesus being crucified).

364The debate between proponents and opponents of the idea that Christ descended into the realm of the dead to free the imprisoned souls from Limbo, and whether this concept is biblical, will not be discussed in depth, but at least for one of the available scriptural passages a brief and short defense shall be offered (though more to show the degree to which even a shortened version of only one of the verses' defense goes beyond the scope of this thesis):

(1 Pt 3:18–19) *Albeit killed [in] flesh, [Christ was] nonetheless quickened [in] spirit (πνεύματι), in which he also preached to the spirits (πνεύμασιν) in [the] prison (φυλακῆ) he went to*

- *Spirit* here cannot refer to Christ's resurrected body, as his resurrected body was of flesh and bones (Lk 24:39).
- ζωοποιηθεῖς (*quickened, made alive*) cannot mean *resurrected* here, since it is applied to his spirit, not his body.
- The wording/grammar (minimalist wording, {μὲν...δέ}-construction) implies that the *dying in/for flesh* and the *quickening in/for spirit* are two parts of one and the same act (no temporal interval between death and quickening).
- The order of the described events (3:18 crucifixion, 3:19 preaching to spirits in prison, 3:21 resurrection, 3:22 ascension) suggests that the preaching to the spirits in prison took place while Christ was dead.
- πνεύματι is not the Holy Spirit but Christ's spirit—compare the grammatical correspondence between πνεύματι and σαρκί, so both must be equally his, each dative-object refers to the thing unto which each action has been done, so neither can be a *dative instrumentalis* (as Calvin thought) since σαρκί is not the instrument of Christ's death.
- The NT never uses πνεῦμα for a living person of flesh and bones.
- When the NT uses πνεῦμα to refer to a person, it is always disembodied spirits, including the ghosts of those who have died (Heb 12:23; 1 Co 5:5; 2 Co 12:2–4,1; Lk 8:55,2, 24:37).
- The prison (φυλακῆ) refers to the realm of the dead, compare Mt 5:25, Lk 12:58 (also 6:23), a view shared by St. Melito in A.D. 160, St. Irenaeus in A.D. 180, and Tertullian in A.D. 209/220 (all of these authors affirmed that Christ descended to the realm of the dead).

365That being said, Christ's period of being dead before coming back to life should not be confused or conflated with a common near-death experience—he was most certainly more than just on the verge of being dead. Nobody ever survived a full Roman crucifixion; the flogging-process itself exposed muscles, veins and blood, increasing blood-loss and decreasing regenerative abilities; the staking of a spear through the heart (see John 19:34), was one of the technique to ensure that the victim would indeed be dead. Christ was most certainly truly dead.

366The Gospel of Luke mentions the *sign of Jonah* only once in Luke 11:29; Mark 8:12 cuts off before mentioning the *sign of Jonah*; the Gospel of John does not mention the *sign of Jonah* at all.

The story of Jonah is therefore woven into the fabric of the entire Gospel (quite literally, considering that the etymological root of *text* stems from a comparison with *fabric*), and the Gospel-texts reveal many subtle parallels to Jonah. This is nice to know, but it would not really be of any relevance for this thesis, if it weren't for the following conclusion:

One of the strongest parallels between Jonah and the Gospel-texts are the two stories about Jesus calming the storm,<sup>367</sup> each of which closely corresponds to the entirety of Jonah 1 (almost verse for verse). Both of these Storm-Calmings are followed by a scene for each where Jesus is feeding the multitudes with bread and (more importantly for this thesis) with fish, which is miraculously multiplied/multilocated by God for the people to eat—or in other words: *God produced much fish to swallow*, echoing this thesis's alternative reading of Jonah 2:1.<sup>368</sup> This reveals a subtle but strong textual parallel between Jonah 2:1 (i.e. *Jonah being swallowed by one great fish* vs. *Jonah being engulfed by much fish*) and the Feedings of the Multitudes (which involve not one fish but *much fish*), which can be argued to favor the reading of Jonah as being about *much fish*.

This is not to say that a parallel in the NT necessarily must reflect the original intent behind an OT-passage, but such an NT-passage can be placed in the string of ancient traditions interpreting and reflecting upon the Book of Jonah. This means that if the authors of the NT-Jonah-parallels intended those parallels, because they saw similarities there, then this implies that the NT-parallel with Jonah 2:1 representing *much fish* would imply that the NT-authors may have understood the story of Jonah in some way being about *much fish* as well.<sup>369</sup>

The following chapters will present NT-Jonah-parallels in full detail (tables as well as explanations of further thematic connections), in order to show how close these parallels actually are and thereby strengthen the argument concerning the parallel with Jonah 2:1 in particular.

367The first Storm-Calmings appear in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, then the first Feeding of the Multitude takes place, occurring in all four Gospels; then the second Storm-Calmings happen in Matthew, Mark, and John, followed by the second Feeding of the Multitude in Matthew and Mark. The accounts are scattered and not all parts of the story appear in all Gospels—if one were to read only Luke or John, it would entirely evade the reader's knowledge that the Storm-Calmings followed by the Multitude-Feedings build a pair (though the Gospel of Matthew is the most complete account of the story, and it has the strongest hints at Jonah as well).

368From here on out, these events will be coined "Jonah-Echoes": first Storm-Calmings plus the Feeding of the Five Thousand = first Jonah-Echo; second Storm-Calmings plus the Feeding of the Four Thousand = second Jonah-Echo.

369A possible counter-argument: In Matthew 12:40 Christ paraphrases the Greek Jonah 2:1 LXX, which would seem to imply that Jesus himself did not quote the Hebrew but the Greek text and thus affirming the authority of a text which cannot directly be read as *much fish* (even if the Greek text still has other alternative connotations).

However, this can simply be explained by the fact that whatever text was being quoted would necessarily utilize a reference to whatever version was in practical usage at the time—this can be argued for Christ (who might as well have been quoting the Targum in Aramaic) as well as for the inspired author who wrote in Greek. Even if translations around the time of Christ did not necessarily support a reading for *much fish*, this would not have led to a loss of knowledge about the tradition of the piscine plentitude, otherwise it could not have survived antiquity.

5.1.: Jonah-Echoes — Parallels (Short Version)

GOSPELS	JONAH
<b>FIRST JONAH-ECHO</b>	
(Mt 8:23–27, Mk 4:35–41, Lk 8:22–25) Jesus sleeps in the boat, disciples wake him up, he calms the storm. (Jesus in the role of Jonah.)	(Jonah 1:1–16) Storm on the sea, Jonah sleeps, the others wake him up, God eventually calms the storm.
(Mt 12:39–42) No sign shall be given except the sign of Jonah.	
(Mt 14:13–21, Mk 6:30–44, Lk 9:10–17, Jn 6:1–14) Feeding of the Five Thousand (with much fish).	(Jonah 2:1) <i>And God gathered/numbered/provided fish big/plenty to “swallow” [...]</i>
<b>SECOND JONAH-ECHO</b>	
(Mt 14:22–34, Mk 6:45–53, Jn 6:15–21) Disciples, distant from Jesus, get caught up in a storm on the lake—Jesus appears and calms the storm. The disciples worship Jesus. (Jesus is now in the role of God, his disciples are in the role of Jonah (Peter in particular)—the roles have been shifted.)  • Mt 14:28–31 adds Peter walking on water (sharing the role of God with Jesus), but stumbling, sinking in the water, crying out for his Lord to save him (sharing the role of Jonah with Jesus). This is a short Jonah 2-Echo within this 2. Jonah 1-Echo.  • Mk 6:52 adds <i>they didn't understand about the loaves</i> —connecting this event referencing Jonah to the Feeding of the Five Thousand.	(Jonah 1:1–16) Storm on the sea, the crew throw Jonah out of the ship, God calms the storm, the pagans worship God.
(Mt 15:29–39, Mk 8:1–10) Feeding of the Four Thousand (with much fish).	(Jonah 2:1) <i>And God gathered/numbered/provided fish big/plenty to “swallow” [...]</i>
(Mt 16:1–4, Mk 8:11–13, Lk 11:29–32) No sign shall be given except the sign of Jonah. (Lk 11:32, <i>sth./so. greater than Jonah is here</i> )	
(Mt 16:17) The earliest reference to Peter as <i>Son of Jonah</i> (the only time this is uttered by Jesus) during the institution of the office of the Pope, connecting this event to the earlier Peter-centered scene in Mt 14:28–31 during the 2. Jonah-Echo.	

## 5.2.: Jonah-Echoes — Parallels (Full & Explained)

This sub-chapter will present the main tables showing the exact parallel-verses (the NT-verses to the left, the corresponding Jonah-passage to the right), with explanations of the parallels spliced in-between, all in chronological order as it appears in the Scriptures.

As the tables in this sub-chapter will show, the two Jonah-Echoes—the Storm-Calmings in particular—share almost the exact same structure across the various Gospels, even verse for verse (though not all gospels contain all verses). The almost entirely uniform structure heavily implies that all Gospels used one common source for this pair of Jonah-Echoes. However, each Gospel’s version tends to use different vocabulary for its account of the story.

This makes it very likely that this common source was not a written source, but an oral source. This would be the easiest explanation for the very similar structure but the different vocabulary. This, in turn, may imply that both of these Storm-Calmings have a very early (and thus trustworthy) and very important source held in high regard and predating all the written gospels. It may very well have its source in the apostles’ own sermons as eye-witnesses (which would be expected, if the events are indeed historical).

The following table shows the rather obvious parallels in *the first Storm-Calmning* (Mt 8:23–27; Mk 4:35–41; Lk 8:22–25):

<b>MATTHEW</b>	<b>MARK</b>	<b>LUKE</b>	<b>JONAH</b>
	Mk 4:35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.”	Lk 8:22 One day Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” [...]	
Mt 8:23 Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him.	Mk 4:36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.	Lk 8:22 [...] So they got into a boat and set out.	Jonah 1:3 But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.
Mt 8:24 Suddenly a furious	Mk 4:37 A furious squall came	Lk 8:23 As they sailed, [...] A	Jonah 1:4 Then the Lord sent a

<b>MATTHEW</b>	<b>MARK</b>	<b>LUKE</b>	<b>JONAH</b>
storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. [...]	up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.	squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.	great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up.
Mt 8:24 [...] But Jesus was sleeping.	Mk 4:38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. [...]	Lk 8:23 [...] he fell asleep. [...]	Jonah 1:5 [...] But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep.
Mt 8:25 The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”	Mk 4:38 [...] The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”	Lk 8:24 The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!”	Jonah 1:6 The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”
Mt 8:26 He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” [...]			Jonah 1:11–14 (The sailors express terror and a lack of faith in Jonah's self-sacrificial suggestion)
Mt 8:26 [...] Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.	Mk 4:39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.	Lk 8:24 He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm.	Jonah 1:15 Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm.
	Mk 4:40 He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”	Lk 8:25 “Where is your faith?” he asked his disciples. [...]	(see Mt 8:26 parallel)
Mt 8:27 The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”	Mk 4:41 They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”	Lk 8:25 [...] In fear and amazement they asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.”	Jonah 1:16 At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.

The story puts Jesus into the shoes of Jonah, and the disciples take the place of Jonah’s sailors: As Jonah took a ship to sail the sea, so did Jesus take a boat to sail the Sea of Galilee. As Jonah slept inside the ship, so did Jesus sleep inside the boat. In both stories, the nautical vehicle and the people using it are haunted by a storm. As the sailors wake up Jonah, the disciples wake up Jesus, which (albeit in different ways) leads to the storm being calmed down by God. The sailors are in awe and worship God; the disciples are amazed and in awe, wondering: *Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!*, knowing full well that God is the one who calms the storms and the sea (compare Job 38:8; Ps 65:7, 89:9, 107:29).

The next passage in this progression of NT-Jonah-parallels is a very subtle and rather indirect parallel—*the demon-possessed pigs*:

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
Mt 8:32 [...] So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water.	Mk 5:13 [...] the unclean spirits came out and went into the pigs, and the herd of about two thousand rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the water.	Lk 8:33 Then the demons came out of the man and went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

Right after the first Storm-Calming, Jesus encounters one (in Mark and Luke) or two (in Matthew) demon-possessed gentile men, drives out their demons, and lets the demons possess a herd of pigs (χοίρους) instead, and the herd immediately runs off to drown in the waters. (Mt 8:28–34; Mk 5:1–20; Lk 8:26–39) There is a layer of symbolism which can be seen as subtly referencing Jonah:

In Matthew 7:6 Jesus famously says *do not throw your pearls before swine* (χοίρων), *lest they trample them under their feet*. While this saying makes enough sense on a purely literal level (pigs have no use for pearls), the *swine* here stand for impure people, just like pigs were considered impure animals by the Israelites. The fleeing Jonah, who had turned his back on God and trampled God’s grace under his feet, was just like these swine from Mt 7:6—and just like the swine in Mt 8:28–34, Jonah with his at that time ungodly spirit was cast into the sea to drown in the waters.

The last station of NT-Jonah-parallels right before this scene about the demon-possessed pigs was about Jonah just having been thrown overboard—so, at this point in the NT, the notion of Jonah just having been cast into the sea and being about to drown, like the demon-possessed pigs, makes for a strong but subtle parallel.

Furthermore, the wording used in Matthew, when he writes that the pigs died *in the waters* (ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι) can be compared to the description of Leviathan in LXX Job 41:26[34], ending

with him being called *king of all that are in the waters* (βασιλεὺς πάντων τῶν ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι). So, the leviathanic connotations of the Jonah-story, which have been kept alive in later Midrashîm, might have found their way into this scene about the demon-possessed pigs as well.

This scene is later mirrored in {Mt 15:21–28; Mk 7:24–30}, see p. 173.

Next, Mt 10:26–33 has Jesus tell his disciples thrice *not to fear*, which, although it has no explicit parallel to Jonah, fits the theme of Jonah’s ongoing *anxiety* between Jonah 1 and 2. Furthermore, Jesus repeats this call to not be afraid in {Mt 14:27; Mk 6:50; Jn 6:20} during the second Jonah-themed Storm-Calming when he says: “Take courage! I am (he). Don’t be afraid!” (see p. 168)

The next station is not really a parallel, but more of a reminder, coming from Jesus Christ himself:

*“A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except **the sign of the prophet Jonah**. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here.”* (Mt 12:39–41, NIV)

This first mention of *the sign of Jonah*, occurring once more at a later point in parallel with other NT-passages, appears here only in the Gospel of Matthew.

By explicitly mentioning *the sign of Jonah* much earlier than any other Gospel, Matthew turns the minds of the ancient audience, who knew the OT and the story of Jonah, towards comparing the ministry of Christ to Jonah. When listeners in antiquity heard the story of the first Storm-Calming, the story might have tickled something in the back of their minds, making them think *that sounds familiar*; and then they would hear about Jesus comparing his ministry to Jonah, and the audience would go: *Ah, of course, I knew it!* From that point onward, the ancient audience would expect that the story of Christ would draw comparisons to Jonah and might follow a similar structure.

This particular early mention of the *sign of Jonah*, exclusive to Matthew (another mention will appear later), suggests that the author of this gospel put more emphasis on the already existing Jonah-themes (especially since Matthew interrupts the last two Jonah-parallel in the first Jonah-Echo with the highest amount of text that seems to be unrelated to Jonah, so giving audiences a reminder here makes sense), and that he tried to make sure that the audience would be aware of these themes, placing this reminder right between the Jonah-themed Storm-Calming and the next station, namely the Jonah-themed *Feeding of the Five Thousand*:

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN	JONAH
Mt 14:13–21 (Feeding of the Five Thousand, including fish)	Mk 6:30–44 (Feeding of the Five Thousand, including fish)	Lk 9:10–17 (Feeding of the Five Thousand, including fish)	Jn 6:1–14 (Feeding of the Five Thousand, including fish)	Jonah 2:1 And YHWH numbered / provided much fish to swallow (or engulf Jonah) [...]

In order to avoid yet another huge table of textual parallels, the essential core of this event shall be presented as a harmonization. After learning the news of John the Baptist’s beheading and wishing to be alone, a large crowd follows and outright thronging Jesus and his disciples, and after teaching the crowd and healing their sick, Jesus suggests giving the crowd some food:

*One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, “Here is a boy with five barley loaves and **two small fish**. But what difference will these make among so many?”*

*“Bring them here to Me,” Jesus said. And He directed the crowd of five-thousand men to sit down on the grass in groups of hundreds and fifties.*

*Taking the five loaves and the **two fish** and looking up to heaven, He spoke a blessing. Then He broke the loaves and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. And He **divided the two fish among them all**. They **distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted**. They all ate and were satisfied.*

*Jesus said to His disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over, so that nothing will be wasted.” So the disciples picked up **twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish**. About **five thousand men were fed**, in addition to women and children.*

There are several very subtle thematic Jonah-parallels leading up to the main point about the multiplication or multi-location of the fish (which is the main argument being made in this chapter):

- Jesus is trying to retreat, seemingly to mourn the death of his friend the prophet John the Baptist, which could be thematically compared to Jonah trying to run away out of fear that his reputation as a prophet might be killed off—i.e. the figurative death of a prophet, here parallel to the death of the prophet John the Baptist.
- The crowd throngs Jesus when he just wants to retreat and have his peace, which is similar to Jonah running away to have his peace but then being thronged by the many little fish in the Midrashîm (see pp. 87 and 91), or in the biblical text itself (i.e. the point of this thesis).

- Fittingly, in Mk 6:34 the crowd is being compared to a stray herd of sheep in need of a shepherd, which is one of the subtle connotations of מָנָה (mānâ), see p. 67.
- The event starts out with two fishes—the theme of two fishes being associated with Jonah occurs in one of the Midrashîm (see p. 87) and on the Khakhuli-relief (see p. 102).
- The two fishes eventually get either multiplied or multi-located: The fish initially seem to be few but they turn out to be more, more than enough. The classical notion is that these two fish are being multiplied and become many (there is, for example, the *Church of the Multiplication* in Tabgha, set up in memory of this very event)—however, the text does not explicitly say that a multiplication took place, which has allowed for different interpretations of this event, but considering the fact that at the end of the scene *twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish* could be collected, the text explicitly states that eventually there was indeed some sort of *more-ness*. This has been formulated not as a multiplication but rather as a multi-location of the loaves and of the fish:

*“We remember that the feeding was with those five loaves. We speak of the multiplication of loaves. But the Gospels make clear that the loaves themselves were not really multiplied at all: there were five of them at the end as at the beginning, the same five, but now in five thousand stomachs and twelve baskets. It was their presence that was multiplied, the number of parts of space they occupied at the same time. [...] And after all these thousands had been fed, the quantity left over was fantastically greater than when the meal began.”<sup>370</sup>*

To summarize this last and probably most important point: Jesus (i.e. God) feeds a huge crowd by multiplying / multi-locating fish for the crowd to eat (i.e. swallow) it. Together with all the other thematic parallels to Jonah, this event can be compared to Jonah 2:1, where God numbers/provides a multitude of fish (to “swallow” Jonah).

The preceding Storm-Calming paralleled Jonah 1:3–16 (i.e. pretty much all of Jonah 1), followed by this Feeding of the Five Thousand which parallels the first verse of Jonah 2. (Of course, this culinary event is just preparing the audience for the true fulfillment of all of Jonah 2 via the three days long descent into Sheol, paralleled by the *Descent of Christ*.)

In the progression of NT-Jonah-parallels presented in this chapter, all the verses paralleling Jonah in the Storm-Calming and the pig-incident occur in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The Feeding of the

<sup>370</sup>Sheed F.J. (1962): *To Know Christ Jesus*. p. 210. (*Nihil Obstat* J. R. Ready, Censor. *Imprimatur* ✠R. F. Joyce, Bishop of Burlington, 9 July 1962.) Whether it was multiplication or multi-location is not particularly relevant for this thesis, but Sheed’s work is worth quoting for a point he is making which will be useful on page 172.

Five Thousand occurs in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—that is, in all four Gospels. From here on out, the second Storm-Calming is told in Matthew, Mark, and John.

In fact, the *second Storm-Calming* starts right after the Feeding of the Five-Thousand—almost as if miraculously feeding the crowd inspired Jesus to initiate the second Storm-Calming on the spot, to initiate yet another Jonah-Echo, so that this time around he would really drive home the point.

Because the second Storm-Calming is a lot more complex than the first one. This next table will not present the second Storm-Calming as one unbroken table, because it will be necessary to break it up into pieces and explain each segment’s subtleties one step after another.

MATTHEW	MARK	JOHN	JONAH
<p>Mt 14:22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd.</p> <p>Mt 14:23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone,</p> <p>Mt 14:24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, [...]</p>	<p>Mk 6:45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him toward Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.</p> <p>Mk 6:46 After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.</p> <p>Mk 6:47 Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land.</p>	<p>Jn 6:15 Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.</p> <p>Jn 6:16 When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake,</p> <p>Jn 6:17 where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them.</p>	<p>Jonah 1:3 But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.</p>

Jesus sends his disciples off to use the boat and get back on the lake, but this time they shall go without him. Jesus creates a huge distance between him and his disciples—a *distance* which Mt 14:24 even points out explicitly. Comparing this to Jonah 1:3, it is noteworthy that Jonah tries to flee to Tarshish in Southern Spain, on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea and thereby the Mediterranean area which is the farthest away, the most distant from the Holy Land. The Lord and his disciples go different ways, just like the Lord and Jonah went different ways in Jonah 1:3.

This already shows a huge difference between the two Storm-Calming: In the first Storm-Calming, the disciples represented Jonah’s sailors, Jesus represented Jonah (made clear by the fact that he slept), and God remained an invisible instance of authority high and above them all.

This time, however, Jesus retreats onto a mountain to pray, all by himself. In a biblical context, as well as in religious contexts around the world, mountains represent God, gods, and Heaven, due to them being closer to the physical heaven, i.e. the sky. In addition to that, his praying to God highlights the fact that he is connecting to God, which highlights his oneness with God.

Comparing the parallel-passages, Mt 14:23 contrasts the praying Christ’s *going up* the mountain via the verb ἀναβαίνω (ἀνέβη), which consists of {ἀνά+βάσις}, with the praying Jonah’s *going down* to the root of the mountains in LXX Jonah 2:7 via the verb καταβαίνω (κατέβην), which is composed of {κατά+βάσις}. It is clear that the two verses resemble one another in their choice of words, though mirroring or rather inverting the movement from *down* (κατά) to *up* (ἀνά). By praying *on top of a mountain*—on the other end of the *extremities* to which the praying Jonah had sunk—, Jesus takes the exact opposite position to Jonah, and on the other end of Jonah’s communicative efforts in Jonah 2 was God.

So, in this second Storm-Calming, Jesus no longer represents Jonah, but instead he now represents God. As his role in the Jonah-Echo has shifted from *Jonah* to *God*, so is the role of the disciples now shifting from *the sailors* to *Jonah* (this counts for St. Peter in particular, as will become increasingly clear as these parallels continue—but first, there is another segment).

MATTHEW	MARK	JOHN	JONAH
Mt 14:24 [...] buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.	Mk 6:48 He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. [...]	Jn 6:18 A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough.	Jonah 1:4 Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up.
Mt 14:25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake.	Mk 6:48 [...] Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them,	Jn 6:19 When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water;	
Mt 14:26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.	Mk 6:49 but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, Mk 6:50 because they all saw him and were terrified. [...]	Jn 6:19 [...] and they were frightened.	Jonah 1:5 All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. [...]

MATTHEW	MARK	JOHN	JONAH
Mt 14:27 But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! I am (he). Don’t be afraid!”	Mk 6:50 [...] Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! I am (he). Don’t be afraid!”	Jn 6:20 But he said to them, “I am (he). Don’t be afraid!”	Jonah 1:6–9 Sailor: “[...] Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.” Jonah: “[...] I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”

Most of the parallels in this segment are self-explanatory and obvious. There are, however, two elements which require an explanation, even if they are only marginally connected to Jonah:

In {Mt 14:27; Mk 6:50; Jn 6:20} Jesus proclaims “I am (he)”, which in the Greek is the famous line ἐγὼ εἰμί, which Jesus uses multiple times across the Gospels as a code-phrase to refer to himself as God by referencing LXX Ex 3:14. Because of that, the corresponding parallel-passage to {Mt 14:27; Mk 6:50; Jn 6:20} is Jonah 1:6–9 due to the shared topic of addressing God.

The other element in need of an explanation is {Mt 14:25; Mk 6:48; Jn 6:19} about Jesus walking on the lake, as it stands out as having no direct parallel to Jonah. This is Jesus driving home the point to his disciples that he is God, because in the Old Testament it is God who walks on the waters. Job 9:8 says that *[God] alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea*, and the NT-passages in question utilize the same vocabulary as LXX Job 9:8.

LXX Job 9:8	περιπατῶν	ὡς ἐπ’ ἐδάφους ἐπὶ	θαλάσσης
Mt 14:25	περιπατῶν	ἐπὶ	{τῆς θαλάσσης / τὴν θάλασσαν}
Mk 6:48	περιπατῶν	ἐπὶ	τῆς θαλάσσης
Jn 6:19	περιπατοῦντα	ἐπὶ	τῆς θαλάσσης

It is thus quite obvious that a connection to the Book of Job is being drawn. Job is not Jonah, but Job and the mention of *water* can easily bring *Leviathan* to mind, which has been associated with the story of Jonah in Jewish tradition and which could easily come to a reader’s mind when reading LXX Jonah (see pp. 128ff.). So, a subtle connection to Jonah is possible, but more strongly to Job.

In any case though, this segment, in which Jesus walks on water, is necessary to set up the upcoming segment where this exact element is strongly being connected to the greater Jonah-themes of Matthew in particular.

MATTHEW	JONAH-A	JONAH-B
Mt 14:28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” Mt 14:29 “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.		Jonah 1:15 Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, [...]
Mt 14:30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”	Jonah 1:10 This terrified them and they asked [...]	Jonah 2:1–10 (Jonah sinks in the water, cries out for God to save him.)
Mt 14:31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”	Jonah 1:11–14 “What should we do [...]?” – “Pick me up and throw me into the sea [...] I know that it is my fault [...]” – Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. [...] – “Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man’s life. [...]”	Jonah 2:11 And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

This segment, which appears only in Matthew’s account of the scene, is where the parallels between Jonah and the second Storm-Calming become somewhat complex. This is where St. Peter starts to stand out by being singled out (or rather it is he himself who is singling himself out), so even though all of the disciples are little Jonahs during this particular scene, St. Peter is the main representative of Jonah from here on out.

It is, however, only Matthew who draws this particular attention to St. Peter for the duration of these few verses. In order to do so, Matthew puts more depth and complexity into this brief segment than any of the previous Jonah-parallels have had so far.

For one, the order of parallels and thereby the red thread of the narrative starts to become a little more complex: From Mt 14:28 to Mt 14:31 (i.e. the segment above) the story forks into a twofold parallel-narrative, here and in the table above called *Jonah-A* and *Jonah-B*.<sup>371</sup>

- In one stream of the story, *Jonah-A*, Peter leaving the boat and treading the waters in Mt 14:28–29 has no direct parallel to Jonah, similar to how {Mt 14:25; Mk 6:48; Jn 6:19} about

<sup>371</sup>This might be a little confusing and overwhelming: What is already a narrative *parallelism* (i.e. a story structured like A-B-C–A-B-C) rendering OT-NT-*parallels* now splits into two *parallel*-streams. A lot of parallels.

Christ treading the waters had no direct parallel either. Then, in Mt 14:30, St. Peter's moment of fear echoes the sailors' fear in Jonah 1:10, and Christ's brief speech about Peter being of little faith in Mt 14:31 echoes the discourse about the sailors' doubt and initially attempted defiance of God in Jonah 1:11–14.

- In the other stream though, *Jonah-B*, Peter leaving the boat in Mt 14:28–29 jumps just beyond the boundaries of this segment (which in *Jonah-A* ends on a parallel to Jonah 1:14) and surprisingly parallels Jonah 1:15 about Jonah being thrown overboard (after having asked for it—so, although Jonah was thrown out by others, he sort of did it to himself).

In this stream *Jonah-B*, Mt 14:30 has an extremely high density of Jonah-parallels: *But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”* Peter confronts the storm—Jonah confronted the storm when he was thrown overboard. Peter was afraid—Jonah was afraid, swallowed up by his own anxiety. Peter begins to sink—Jonah sank, as his prayer's content suggests. Peter cried out—Jonah cried out as he prayed to God. Peter cries “*Lord, save me!*”—Jonah cried “*Salvation is from the Lord!*” or more literally translated: “*Yah saves!*” When Jonah cries out to the Lord in Jonah 2:10, this prefigures Peter crying out to Jesus, because Jesus' name Yeshua means *Yah saves*—the original Hebrew text even sounds like crying out to Yeshua (ישועתה ליהוה יַשׁוּעָאֵת(â) (la-)YHWH). So, Mt 14:30 encapsulates almost all of Jonah 2 within only a few words.

And then follows Mt 14:31, in which Jesus reaches out to pull Peter out of the water and into the dry, akin to Jonah 2:11 where God, implicitly reaching out by commanding the fish, brings Jonah out of the water and onto dry land. And with that, the parallel-parallel *Jonah-B* ends.

It would be fair to ask: Why would the author write in such an odd way, splitting the narrative into two parallel-streams of OT-parallels in the second instance of a narrative parallelism? And even if only *Jonah-B* were to be affirmed, not taking any parallel-streams into account, then why would the narrative OT-parallels suddenly jump from Jonah 1:6–9 to a progression of Jonah 1:15, Jonah 2:1–10, and Jonah 2:11, before briefly returning to Jonah 1:15 as a parallel (which is where the next segment will start)?

Aside from the simple effect of throwing the audience out of their false sense of security of thinking that they knew where the story will be going, by offering a twist in the narrative structure, Mt 14:28–31 offers a little window into the future on the timeline of Jonah-parallels. The window into Jonah 2 strengthens the parallel between Peter and Jonah—not the God-fleeing Jonah of Jonah 1 though, but the Jonah from Jonah 2 who descends and ascends as Christ would later descend and ascend. Both the window into the future of the timeline of Jonah-parallels and the parallel-stream

nature of Mt 14:28–31 (the parallelness of which is a sort of vicariousness) highlight St. Peter’s vicariate.

Because when Peter walks on water in Mt 14:28–29, he partakes in the role of Christ not just as an antitype of Jonah, but also as a vicar of God, which is water-treading role of Christ in this second Storm-Calming. This exclusively Matthean passage is preparing the audience for the later Matthean passage about the institution of the office of the Pope in Matthew 16.

But Peter is not God—he is only his vicar on earth. Peter is not perfect: He stumbles, he falters, he sinks, and he is still dependent on God, on Christ, to pull him out of the waters of chaos:

MATTHEW	MARK	JOHN	JONAH
Mt 14:32 And when they [Jesus and Peter together] climbed into the boat, the wind died down.	Mk 6:51 Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down.	Jn 6:21 Then they were willing to take him into the boat, [...]	Jonah 1:15 Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm.
Mt 14:33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”	Mk 6:51 They were completely amazed, Mk 6:52 for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.		Jonah 1:16 At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.
Mt 14:34 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret.	Mk 6:53 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there.	Jn 6:21 [...] and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.	

What is interesting about this station in the progression of parallels (continuing where, in the previous segment, the parallel-stream *Jonah-A* ended, namely right after Jonah 1:14) is that, even though the thematic similarity is quite obvious, it is also an obvious inversion.

- The clear similarity is that in both passages, the storm dies down after a certain action.
- The clear inversion concerns the action which calms the storm. In Jonah 1:15, it is the action of Jonah *leaving the ship* and *entering the water*; in Matthew 14:32, it is the action of Peter and Christ (as antitypes of Jonah) *leaving the water* and *entering the boat*.<sup>372</sup>

<sup>372</sup>That being said, in Mark and John, it seems to be the action of Christ alone entering the boat, since Peter having left the boat is not mentioned in their accounts. Of these two only Mark explicitly states that this made the storm die down. If Matthew’s account were to be ignored, and the story was to be read as only Christ entering the boat, then the thematic inversion would still be present: A Jonah-antitype entering the boat makes the storm die down, not Jonah leaving the ship. However, although Christ is indeed an antitype of Jonah, this applies more to the first Storm-

Both Matthew and Mark use the word ἀναβαίνω (Mt 14:32 ἀναβάντων, Mk 6:51 ἀνέβη) for the act of Peter and Christ climbing onto (or rather *going up* into) the boat, finishing this second Storm-Calming on the same inversion of Jonah’s *descending*-theme via καταβαίνω with which the scene had begun in Mt 14:23 and Mk 6:46.

Mark alone adds a brief little notion in Mk 6:52a, explaining the disciples’ amazement as follows: *for they had not understood about the loaves*. This statement seems somewhat confusing and out of place in this scene—as the theologian Frank J. Sheed wrote, “*the explanation [Mark/Peter] gives for their bewilderment may bewilder us [...] And what bearing had their failure to understand upon their astonishment at their Master’s walking on the surface of the water?*”<sup>373</sup> Recognizing Mk 6:52a as a reference to the Feeding of the Five Thousand, Sheed concludes that what was so special about that miracle was the fact that it “*seemed to contain in itself, as earlier miracles did not, sheer contradiction*”<sup>374</sup> because the foods’ multi-location seemed to break the laws of physics.

This, however still does not explain why this bewildering statement about the disciples’ bewilderment should be so oddly placed near the end of the second Storm-Calming, in the midst of the second Jonah-Echo... except if that is the point: Placing the *loaves*-reference in the context of this Jonah-themed event points to the Feeding of the Five Thousand as something that should be understood in a Jonah-context as well. In fact, this *loaves*-reference might even refer to both the Feeding of the Five Thousand which preceded this scene, as well as the Feeding of the Four Thousand which follows right after this scene—one must not forget that the Gospels were written years later, so both Feedings had already taken place, and this *loaves*-reference might very well be the apostles’ reflection upon something that Jesus would say later in Mt 16:11a (see p. 175), after both feedings had already taken place, and right before the institution of the office of the Pope (which has been foreshadowed in the Matthean Peter-passage of this second Storm-Calming).

In any case, this *loaves*-reference in Mk 6:52a is a strong piece of evidence that the Multitude-Feedings are part of the NT’s Jonah-parallels and should be interpreted that way.

Calming—as has been established, the roles have shifted, and his role in the second Storm-Calming is rather that of God. From this point of view, this segment could be argued to parallel how God metaphorically “entered” the ship in Jonah 1:15–16, when Jonah’s sailors accepted God into their hearts. This especially fits John 6:21, which literally means *they were willing to receive him* (ἤθελον οὖν λαβεῖν αὐτόν).

373Sheed F.J. (1962): *To Know Christ Jesus*. p. 210. (*Nihil Obstat* J. R. Ready, Censor. *Imprimatur* ✠R. F. Joyce, Bishop of Burlington, 9 July 1962.)

374Ibid.

The next station in the parallels is {Mt 14:35–36; Mk 6:54–56}, which echoes the interlude to the Feeding of the Five Thousand, as, once again, a crowd of people recognizes Jesus and gathers so that he can heal their sick, effectively starting the interlude to the Feeding of the Four Thousand.<sup>375</sup>

This interlude is interrupted by the Pharisees, prompting Jesus to offer a discourse in which he says: “*What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.*” (Mt 15:11) Talking about what goes into a mouth as part of the interlude to another feeding is fitting, and just like the feeding parallels Jonah 2:1, so can this saying by Christ be seen as part of the interlude to that parallel.

Among the people who need Christ’s help is a Syrophenician woman who begs Christ to drive a demon out of her daughter in {Mt 15:21–28; Mk 7:24–30}, which prompts him to test her, saying “*I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel*” (Mt 15:24) or “*First let the children eat all they want*” (Mk 7:27) and “*It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs*” (Mt 15:26)—note that this passage also has a theme of eating, still preparing the audience for the upcoming Feeding of the Four Thousand, and still lingering on setting up a parallel to Jonah 2:1. But the woman does not give up and makes an argument which convinces Christ of the woman’s great faith, and her daughter is healed, the demon is gone. Just like the previous Multitude-Feeding was preceded by a scene about Christ driving demons out of two men and into a herd of two-thousand pigs, that event is mirrored by this woman’s daughter having a demon driven out of her, with the woman and her daughter being considered dogs, yet again comparable to Matthew 7:6 where the saying about pearls before swine (previously associated with the demon-possessed pigs) is directly preceded by the saying *give not that which is holy unto the dogs* (where the *dogs* stand for unholy people). The scene is also a mirror-image because in the scene about the pigs, the demons went *into* what was *correctly* (because literally) considered *pigs*, while in the scene about the non-Jewish woman, the demon went *out of* what was *incorrectly* (because of the proven faith) considered a *dog*. The scene is also a mirror-image because although both scenes precede the respective Multitude-Feeding, the *pig*-scene took place before the crowd gathered to be healed by Christ, while this *dog*-scene takes place after this new crowd has gathered to be healed by Christ.<sup>376</sup>

This leads to the actual ***Feeding of the Four Thousand***, which occurs only in Matthew and Mark:

375At the actual start of the Feeding of the Four Thousand, both Matthew and Mark mention crowds gathering again in Mt 15:30 and Mk 8:1, but taking the context into account, these crowds seem to be the accumulation of people having gathered around Jesus from {Mt 14:35–36; Mk 6:54–56} onward, especially since {Mt 15:32; Mk 8:2} has Jesus explicitly stating that *they have already been with me three days*.

376Maybe implying an undercurrent of a chiasmus woven into the parallelism of the two Jonah-Echoes? An interesting thought, but it shall not be explored, since this chapter is already quite long and complex.

MATTHEW	MARK	JONAH
Mt 15:29–39 (Feeding of the Four Thousand, including fish)	Mk 8:1–10 (Feeding of the Four Thousand, including fish)	Jonah 2:1 And YHWH numbered / provided much fish to swallow (or engulf Jonah) [...]

Unlike the first Multitude-Feeding, of which all four Gospels report, this second Multitude-Feeding occurs only in Matthew and Mark. The event is overall very similar to the first Multitude-Feeding, though there are a few differences:

- In {Mt 15:32; Mk 8:2} Jesus says: “*I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat.*” (NIV) The emphasis on the multitude surrounding Jesus (an antitype of Jonah) for *three days* parallels Jonah 2:1 when it says that *Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights*.
- The Feeding of the Five Thousand took place nearby the Jewish region of Bethsaida (Luke 9:10), while this Feeding of the Four Thousand takes place in the Graeco-Roman Decapolis (Mark 7:31)—so, the first Multitude-Feeding likely involved a Jewish crowd being fed, while the second Multitude-Feeding likely involves a crowd of gentiles. This echoes Jonah’s change of mind to extend his prophetic services to the gentiles which happens in Jonah 2.<sup>377</sup>
- This Multitude-Feeding has Jesus and his disciples distribute seven loaves (instead of five) and a few fish (ὀλίγα in {Mt 15:34; Mk 8:7}, instead of two) among four thousand people (instead of five thousand), resulting in seven basketfuls of leftovers (instead of twelve). Mathematically, this miracle may seem a bit less impressive—feeding fewer people with more food available—, but the theological relevance of how these numbers differ from the previous Multitude-Feeding *COULD* be that the nations receive more and waste less, echoing how in the Book of Jonah the gentiles seem to worship God with greater reverence than even the story’s representative of Israel could muster. So, this might be a subtle reference to the story of Jonah in general.

The Jonah-themes in this second Multitude-Feeding are even stronger than in the first one, but the core of the miracle, and the part of it which is most relevant for this thesis, stays the same: The Lord multi-locates bread and a few fish for the multitude to eat—a parallel to Jonah 2:1, involving fish, and not just one, but a miraculously multiplied number of presences of fish.

<sup>377</sup>To be fair, Jesus feeding a crowd of people in the same area in which he previously let a herd of two-thousand pigs drown, thereby effectively hurting these people’s economy and food-supply, could be seen as an act of reparations.

To underline that these things should be read in the light of Jonah-parallels, the very next thing which happens, immediately after the Feeding of the Four Thousand, is Matthew’s second mention of the *sign of Jonah*—a passage which now occurs in Mark and Luke as well, though Mark does not explicitly mention Jonah and Luke utilizes what was the more elaborate first mention in Matthew, while Matthew uses this occasion to only briefly mention the sign of Jonah without elaborating on it a second time:

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
Mt 16:1–4 “A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but none will be given it except <b>the sign of Jonah.</b> ”	Mk 8:11–13 “Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it.”	Lk 11:29–32 “This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but <b>the sign of Jonah.</b> [...] The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of <b>Jonah</b> ; and now something <b>greater than Jonah</b> is here.”

This is the last time that the story contains explicit references to Jonah for the same passage across multiple Gospels. This, however, does not mean that the Jonah-references end here. The Gospel of Matthew has a few more, and they occur in the very same chapter: Matthew 16.<sup>378</sup>

Right after the last segment regarding the sign of Jonah, a dialogue between Jesus and his disciples ensues (Mt 16:5–12), discussing the yeast (ζύμη, fig. *spreading evil influence*) of the Jewish authorities. When the disciples get confused and start to talk about actual bread, Jesus tells them:

*“Do you still not understand? Don’t you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? How is it you don’t understand that **I was not talking to you about bread?** But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”* (Mt 16:9–11, NIV)

Jesus makes direct reference to the two Multitude-Feedings, with bread and with fish, before explicitly stating that he is not talking about bread. This does not have to mean that he was talking

<sup>378</sup>From here on out, this sub-chapter will show a few passages following the Jonah-Echoes which contain subtle connections to these Jonah-Echoes, and it is for these subtle connections that these elements will be presented, because these upcoming passages have already been foreshadowed during the second Jonah-Echo and are therefore parts of them. Although describing these further details is a necessary part of the thesis to present the fullness of the Jonah-Echoes, the essential core of the matter, and most relevant to the thesis, is the two Jonah-Echoes themselves, not so much their direct aftermath in Matthew 16. (This is not to say that the aftermath is not important though.)

about fish instead—the message of the passage might be that the Jewish crowd left more leftovers (i.e. was more wasteful) than the gentile crowd, and that this should be interpreted spiritually, because the Jewish authorities of the time had such a bad effect spreading to the Jewish crowd, making them more wasteful spiritually—, but at least it can be argued that the importance of the fish is not being downplayed, unlike that of the bread.

Furthermore, Mt 16:11a (“*How is it you don’t understand that I was not talking to you about bread?*”) appears AFTER the Jonah-Echoes in Matthew and has no direct parallel in the corresponding conversation in Mk 8:14–21 (which cuts off before any loaves are mentioned), but Mt 16:11a corresponds to Mk 6:52 (“*they did not understand about the loaves*”) WITHIN the second Jonah-Echo in the possibly earlier gospel of Mark—possibly the original context, the context of echoing Jonah during the Storm-Calming, while Matthew tried to tie the passage to the mentions of the Multitude-Feedings in Mt 16:9–10, further implying that Matthew saw some connection between these events which were echoing Jonah.<sup>379</sup>

This conversation about the yeast of the Pharisees, and Jesus not talking about bread, leads right into the final passage relevant to the analysis of the Jonah-Echoes which have been presented in this chapter: ***The institution of the office of the Pope*** (Mt 16:17–19, NIV):

*Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, **Simon son of Jonah!** For this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by My Father in heaven. And I tell you that **you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. [...]**”*

There is a lot to unpack here: The ***son of Jonah***, the ***Rock***, and the ***Gates of Hades***; each of which will be briefly explored and explained on the following pages.

Jesus’ reference to the ***Gates of Hades*** is in line with the theme of *Hades* or *Sheol* as it appears in Jonah 2:3 with Jonah drowning in the water, which is what happened to Peter when he found himself in the roles of both Jonah and the vicar of Christ in Mt 14:30. The themes of that earlier scene in the Second Jonah-Echo subtly presenting Peter as Pope are thematically repeated here in the actual institution of the papal office. Jonah 2 is being prayed *from out of the belly* (i.e. where the mouth leads) *of Sheol* (i.e. Hades). Jonah’s Hellmouth-symbolism has been discussed already (see pp. 138ff.), and this scene in Matthew 16 might very well be taking place right in front of the *Gate*

<sup>379</sup>Furthermore, Mt 16:11b about being *on guard against the yeast of the Pharisees* appears in a different context in Lk 12:1, with no connections to the Multitude-Feedings or any misunderstandings concerning Jesus’ choice of words. So, maybe Mt 16:5–12 consists of two different speeches combined into one slightly modified speech (i.e. Mk 8:14–21 + {Lk 12:1 + Mk 6:52}), in which case Mt 16:11a (i.e. that Jesus *did not speak about bread*) might not originally have been meant to directly connect to Mt 16:11b (*the yeast of the Pharisees*).

of Hades mentioned and shown on p. 140. The reason for why the reference to the *Gates of Hades* can be seen as connecting to that earlier Jonah-context lies in Jesus establishing this connection by calling Peter *son of Jonah*.

The reference *son of Jonah* (Mt 16:17) explicitly connects this passage to the second Jonah-Echo, where Mt 14:28–31 already focused on Peter as an antitype of Jonah and foreshadowed Peter’s vicariate. Now Jesus makes it official, instituting this vicariate through his vicar Peter, beginning with a reference to the previous event, blessing him as *son of Jonah*.

The immediate counter-argument to this claim would be that *son of Jonah* was simply Simon Peter’s family-name, nothing more than a patronym—no connection to the prophet Jonah whatsoever. This restrictive traditional interpretation is doubtful.

The semantic connotations of the phrase *son of [X]* go far beyond literal sonship and patronyms: The truth is that the phrase *son of [X]* is very typically used in a figurative sense all across the Bible “to imply almost any kind of descent or succession”<sup>380</sup> denoting “a mental or moral resemblance, etc.”<sup>381</sup> In fact, the phrase *son of [X]* is even “more characteristic of Biblical usage” and “common in the New Testament” to “indicate membership in a class or guild, as in the common phrase ‘sons of the prophets,’ which implies nothing whatever as to the ancestry” and “‘son’ is used with a following genitive of quality to indicate some characteristic [or quality] of the person [...]”<sup>382</sup> Here is a brief list of such non-literal, figurative occurrences<sup>383</sup> of the expression *son(s) of [X]*:

Deut 13:13 <sup>384</sup>	בני־בליעל	<i>sons of worthlessness</i>
Judg 6:33 <sup>385</sup>	בני־קדם	<i>sons of the east</i>
Judg 18:2 <sup>386</sup>	בני־חיל	<i>sons of strength/virtue/wealth</i>
1Sa 18:17 <sup>387</sup>	בן־חיל	<i>son of strength/virtue/wealth (Sg.)</i>
Is 5:1	בן־שמן	<i>son of fat/oil (Sg.) (fertility-symbol)</i>
Is 14:12	בן־שחר	<i>son of the morning (Sg.) (Lucifer)</i>
Is 21:10	בן־גרני	<i>son of the threshingfloor (Sg.)</i>
Is 49:15	בן־בטנה	<i>son of her womb (Sg.)</i>

380“Son” in *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*. (Examples given are: “[...] as ben shanah, ‘son of a year,’ i.e. a year old; ben kesheth, ‘son of a bow,’ i.e. an arrow.”)

381“Son” in *ATS Bible Dictionary*. (Examples given are: “Jud 19:22 Psalm 89:6 Isaiah 57:3 Acts 13:10. In a similar sense men are sometimes called sons of God, Luke 3:38 Romans 8:14.”)

382“BAR (prefix); BEN-” in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. (Examples given are: 2 Samuel 3:34; Deuteronomy 15:13; Numbers 24:17; Mark 3:17; Luke 11:19; “‘children of the kingdom,’ ‘children of light,’ etc.”)

383Not counting the expressions *Son(s) of (the living) God* or *Son of Man*, though they may be just as relevant.

384See also: Judg 19:22, 20:13; 1Sa 2:12, 10:27, 25:17 (Sg.); 1Ki 21:10,13; 2Chr 13:7.

385See also: Judg 7:12, 8:10; 1Ki 5:10; Is. 11:14; Jer 49:28; Ezek 25:10; Job 1:3.

386See also: 1Sa 14:52; 2Sa 2:7, 13:28, 17:10; 2Ki 2:16; 1Chr 5:18; 2Chr 26:17, 28:6.

387See also: 2Sa 17:10; 1Ki 1:52.

1Sa 20:31; 2Sa 12:5	בן־מות	<i>son of death</i> (Sg.)
1Sa 26:16 <sup>388</sup>	בני־מות	<i>sons of death</i>
2Sa 3:34, 7:10 <sup>389</sup>	בני־עולה	<i>sons of iniquity</i>
Jer 48:45	בני שאון	<i>sons of tumult</i>
Ps 89:6	בני אלים	<i>sons of (the) mighty</i> (i.e. gods)
Is 57:3	בני עננה	<i>sons of the sorceress</i>
Jonah 4:10	בן־לילה	<i>son of the night</i> (x2) (growing plant)
Mic 1:16	בני תענוגים	<i>sons of your delight</i>
Job 5:7	בני־רשף	<i>sons of flash/arrow/coal</i> (i.e. spark)
Job 41:20/28	בן־קשת	<i>son of the bow</i> (i.e. arrow)
Job 41:26/34	בני־שחץ	<i>sons of pride</i>
Prov 31:5	בני־עני	<i>sons of affliction</i>
Lam 3:13	בני אשפתו	<i>sons of his quiver</i> (i.e. arrows)
Dan 11:14	בני פריצו	<i>sons of violence(es)</i> (Aleppo Codex)
Luke 10:6	υἱὸς εἰρήνης	<i>son of peace</i>
Acts 4:36	υἱὸς παρακλήσεως	<i>son of consolation</i> (lit. Barnabas)
Acts 13:10	υἱὸς διαβόλου	<i>son of [the/a] devil</i>
2Th 2:3	υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας	<i>son of perdition</i>

Thus, it is perfectly possible that Jesus is indicating that Peter is *of mental or moral resemblance to Jonah*, that Peter has *characteristics or qualities of Jonah*, that he is *a successor to Jonah*. The adjective “barjona” has, in fact, been used for zealots (barjonîm) in the Talmud and meant *impulsive* or *hotheaded*,<sup>390</sup> which might very well have been inspired by the impulsive and hotheaded nature of how that prophet had been rendered. It would be quite plausible that (even without any political connotation of zealotry) Jesus could apply this attestedly existing word as title for Simon Peter to highlight his role as a *jonah-like* antitype of Jonah.<sup>391</sup>

388See also: Ps 79:11, 102:20/21.

389See also: Hos 10:9; Ps 89:22/23 (Sg.); 1Chr 17:9, 26:7,9,30,32.

390c.f. Hengel M. (1961): *Die Zeloten*. p. 57.

391This explanation does not necessarily deny that *son of Jonah* could have been Simon Peter’s patronym—just NOT just a patronym. As Jesus’ sonship with a descendant of David named Joseph made Jesus both the prophesied *Messiah ben David* as well as the *Messiah ben Joseph*, Simon Peter could have descended from a *Bar-Jonah* bloodline, the name of which suited the fact that God needed somebody as a Jonah-antitype. No coincidence, but part of God’s plan for salvation (which is at the core of biblical types and antitypes). However, as nice as such ponderings may be, there is absolutely no need to espouse this idea for this thesis. Alternatively, it is perfectly possible that Simon Peter’s patronym was *son of John* (as recorded in the Gospel of John), but that Matthew decided to modify the name to emphasize the connection between Jonah and Peter—also a possibility, but not essential to this thesis.

Even the immediate context<sup>392</sup> of the scene favors such an interpretation: In all of Matthew, (in fact, all of the Bible)<sup>393</sup> this is the only scene in which Simon Peter is called *son of Jonah* (rather than *son of John*<sup>394</sup> in the later gospel Jn 1:42, 21:15 without any Jonah-context, but Matthew’s Gospel was earlier and thus may reflect the original context more accurately)—in the very scene in which Jesus gives him a new, symbolic name: “*And I tell you that you are Peter (or Cephas), and on this rock I will build My church.*” The context of Peter getting his symbolic name(s) fits the possibility that *son of Jonah* might equally be another name or title which Christ is giving him here.

So, there is sufficient reason to think that Jesus called Simon Peter *son of Jonah* not for genealogical but for theological reasons, in order to make a point about the broader context of the previous Jonah-Echo (Mt 14:28–31 in particular) and about Peter’s papal role in that broader Jonah-context.

Last but not least, this scene is where Simon Peter is given his name: Peter, Cephas—*the Rock*.<sup>395</sup> Of all the references to Jonah, this one is the most subtle—so subtle, in fact, that in the entire Book of Jonah, the word *rock* appears... not even once.

However, Jonah’s prayer in Jonah 2 is a poetic collage which consists of phrases (and themes) found in several Psalms, as has been shown on pp. 92ff., and some of these psalmic passages include a particular phrase: *God, the Rock* or *God, my Rock*.<sup>396</sup>

This expression can be found in David’s *Song of Praise* which contains multiple similarities to Jonah 2, recorded in 2 Samuel 22:2,3,32,47 and its psalmic parallel Psalm 18:2[3],31[32],46[47]. This song includes the rhetorical question: *Who is God except YHWH, and who is [the] Rock except our God?* (2 Samuel 22:32; Psalm 18:31[32]). Although this question must be understood as

392And the broader context as well: Matthew has two different passages referring to a *sign of Jonah* (Mt 12:39–42 & 16:1–4), the second of which is not further explained here in Mt 16:1–4 (unlike the first reference, explained to be about the crucifixion), directly followed by a scene (connected to the second Jonah-Echo) which highlights how Jesus’ sayings can be (mis-)understood in various ways (i.e. *yeast of the Pharisees*). This context leading up to Jesus calling Simon Peter *son of Jonah* might suggest a polyvalence with which the *sign of Jonah* shall be understood: Although the crucifixion of Christ is indeed *THE sign of Jonah*, Peter’s confession and the subsequent institution of the Church and the papacy might be *ANOTHER sign of Jonah*—allowing for deeper layers to the name *son of Jonah*.

393Apocryphal references can be found in the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* (not really a gospel, but the name given to a set of non-canonical references mentioned by several Church Fathers):

1) **Naz 1:14** comments about Mat 16:17 that *the Jewish Gospel* [has] “*son of John*” (instead of “*Bar-Jonas*”) (Τὸ Ἰουδαϊκόν: “*υἱὲ Ἰωάννου.*”), pointing out different readings for Simon Peter’s patronym, or even of Mat 16:17.

2) **Naz 1:16** recounts Jesus’ parable of the camel fitting through a needle’s eye but adds Jesus calling Peter (to whom he is speaking in this version, other than in Matthew where he is addressing all his disciples) *Simon, Son of Jonah* (“*Simon, fili Ionae*”, Origen, Comm. in Matt. 15.14 [on Matt 19:16–22]).

394John 1:42 Σίμων ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννου (*Simon the son of John*); John 21:15–17 Σίμων Ἰωάννου (x3) (*Simon of John*).

395The reference to Peter as a *rock* on which the *Church* be built might, in addition to what is being presented in the following paragraphs, chiasmatically bookend Jesus’ speech about *building a house not on sand but on rock* (Mt 7:21–29), which shares other similarities as well and occurs in Mt 7 and thus closely precedes the Jonah-Echoes.

396Passages with *God as Rock* but without Jonah-themes: Deut 32:15,18; 1Sa 2:2; Ps 62:2,6,7, Ps 78:35, 89:26, 94:22.

rhetorical, Jesus seems to be giving a sincere answer, a new and unexpected answer: There is indeed a *Rock* besides God, namely his vicar who is given that title of *Rock*. Jesus giving this genuine response to a rhetorical question psalmically embedded in words akin to those of Jonah could easily have brought that prophet and his story to the ancient audience's mind.

The phrase *God my Rock* also appears in Ps 42:9[10], right after an expression in Ps 42:7b[8b] which is not merely jonahesque but the exact same phrase as Jonah 2:4b, word for word: *all your waves and breakers (have) swept/passed over me* (כל־משבר־יך וגליך עלי עברו).

So, when Mt 16:18 refers to Peter, *the Rock*, right after referencing the name *Jonah* in connection to Simon Peter in Mt 16:17, Jesus creates a callback to Mt 14:29–31, which creates a callback to Jonah 2, which in turn references Ps 42:7b[8b] verbatim, thus creating a mental connection to the very nearby Ps 42:9[10] about the *Rock*. This connection would not have been lost on the ancient audiences who were very familiar with the Psalms.

At this point it is important to remember SMMJ 250 I.1 (see page 115), the Armenian prayer from the 14<sup>th</sup> century: “I am floundering and tossed about in torrents of iniquity. But I take refuge in You, reach out Your hand to me as You did to Peter.”<sup>397</sup> Since the metaphors about *drowning in a sea of sin* utilized in these Armenian prayers, here explicitly referencing the Second Jonah-Echo's key-moment of putting Peter into the role of Jonah shared by Jesus, have a strong resemblance to Jonah 2 but also to the Psalms (including Ps 18 / 2Sa 22), the writer seems to have understood the subtle connection between David's *Song of Praise* about God the Rock, Jonah, and Peter the Rock (implying a long-standing tradition of seeing that connection, even in the not so strongly Peter-centered Eastern Church).

So, Matthew 16's institution of the papal office is the culmination of what the two previous Jonah-Echoes have lead up to, especially throughout the Gospel of Matthew.

To sum up the aftermath: Some time after the two Jonah-Echoes and their immediate callbacks leading up to the institution of the papacy (which strengthen the Jonah-themes of the two Jonah-Echoes), Jesus gets crucified and thereby fulfills his messianic role as the new and greater Jonah by descending into the realm of the dead for roughly three days and rising again (echoing Jonah 2) before preaching for forty more days (echoing Jonah 3) and leaving the boundaries of this realm again (echoing Jonah 4).

397McCollum A.C. (2015): “‘Sinking in the sea of sin’, pt. II: Ephraem Armeniacus Adorator”, on *Hill Museum & Manuscript Library Orientalia*. Citing Mathews E.G. Jr. (editor & translator) (2014): “The Armenian Prayers attributed to Ephrem the Syrian”, in *Texts from Christian Late Antiquity* 36. Piscataway: Gorgias Press LLC.

In the broader context, the Gospel-story is indeed one huge Jonah-Echo, but nested within is a pair of smaller Jonah-Echoes via the Storm-Calmings echoing Jonah 1 and the Multitude-Feedings echoing Jonah 2:1 with the implication of fish as multitude, yet again hinting at the NT recording a tradition of Jonah 2:1 itself implying a piscine plenitude.

### 5.3.: Jonah-Echoes — Parallels (Greek Version)

The NT-verses of the two Jonah-Echoes not only correspond to the OT-verses thematically, but also share similar vocabulary, when the Greek NT-verses are being compared to the Greek LXX. This should not come as too big a surprise: Both stories speak of *water, waves, storms, clouds, and fear*.

Noteworthy is, however, that the corresponding words very strongly tend to appear not just randomly scattered across the two pericopes, but are more often than not neatly aligned with the corresponding verses, e.g.: several words that appear in Mt 8:25 etc. are words which appear in the corresponding OT-verse Jonah 1:6 (often in the same grammatical forms, though not always), just like words specific to Mt 8:27 also appear in Jonah 1:16, rather than in some other verse of Jonah 1.

In some cases, the vocabulary does not directly line up with the thematically correlating verse but is placed roughly around that corresponding verse, or the vocabulary of one verse might bleed into its surrounding correlating verses. In this regard, one should keep in mind that in antiquity, the biblical texts had not yet been numbered and demarcated as individual verses.

Intriguingly, there is also a likelihood that half a dozen peculiar words appear in a verse from Jonah, then Matthew's corresponding verse grabs a third of those words, Mark grabs another third, and Luke or John grab the last third (e.g. Mt 8:27, Mk 4:41, 8:25 vs. Jonah 1:16). It looks like all four Evangelists were aware of the verse-per-verse links their verses had to the OT-verses, and they all chose parts of the Jonah-verses independently in their retellings of the NT-story—as if Jonah 1 was, metaphorically speaking, an elephant touched and described by four Evangelists, who may have been selective but certainly not blind.<sup>398</sup>

By showing the linguistic parallels, this sub-chapter strengthens the argument that there are thematic parallels between Jonah 1 and the two Storm-Calmings as well. Since, in Jewish tradition, Scripture was known by heart, and shared vocabulary and motifs make the most sense in the case of a fully intentional NT-retelling, there definitely was an OT-Vorlage present in the authors' memory.

In the following two tables for the two Storm-Calmings in Greek, shared vocabulary will be marked with various, randomly chosen colors, marking same or similar words with the same color in the correlating passage. These two tables will only focus on the two Storm-Calmings, not including any of the surrounding thematic parallels—not even the Multitudes-Feedings, because their connection to Jonah 2:1 is of a purely thematic kind, and shared vocabulary is not expected.

<sup>398</sup>To put a spin on the common idea of a group of blind men trying to describe an elephant but only being able to describe the limited parts which each man was able to feel, resulting in various incomplete descriptions.

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JONAH
Mt 8:23 Και <b>ἐμβάντι</b> αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ <b>πλοῖον</b> ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ	Mk 4:35 Καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ὁσίας γενομένης Διέλθωμεν εἰς τὸ πέραν  Mk 4:36 καὶ ἀφέντες τὸν ὄχλον παραλαμβάνουσιν αὐτὸν ὡς ἦν ἐν τῷ <b>πλοίῳ</b> καὶ ἄλλα <b>πλοῖα</b> ἦν <b>μετ' αὐτοῦ</b>	Lk 8:22 Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ἡμερῶν καὶ αὐτὸς <b>ἐνέβη</b> εἰς <b>πλοῖον</b> καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς Διέλθωμεν εἰς τὸ πέραν τῆς λίμνης καὶ ἀνήχθησαν	Jonah 1:3 καὶ ἀνέστη Ἴωνᾶς τοῦ φυγεῖν εἰς Θαρσεῖς ἐκ προσώπου Κυρίου, καὶ <b>κατέβη</b> εἰς Ἴοππην· καὶ εὔρεν <b>πλοῖον</b> βαδίζον εἰς Θαρσεῖς, καὶ ἔδωκεν τὸ ναῦλον αὐτοῦ καὶ <b>ἐνέβη</b> εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦ πλεῦσαι <b>μετ' αὐτῶν</b> εἰς Θαρσεῖς ἐκ προσώπου Κυρίου.
Mt 8:24 καὶ ἰδοὺ σεισμός <b>μέγας ἐγένετο ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ</b> ὥστε τὸ <b>πλοῖον</b> καλύπτεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων [...]	Mk 4:37 Καὶ <b>γίνεται</b> λαῖλαψ <b>μεγάλη</b> ἀνέμου καὶ τὰ κύματα ἐπέβαλλεν εἰς τὸ <b>πλοῖον</b> ὥστε ἤδη γεμίζεσθαι τὸ <b>πλοῖον</b>	Lk 8:23 πλεόντων δὲ αὐτῶν [...] καὶ <b>κατέβη</b> λαῖλαψ ἀνέμου εἰς τὴν λίμνην καὶ συνεπληροῦντο καὶ <b>ἐκινδύνεον</b>	Jonah 1:4 Καὶ Κύριος ἐξήγειρεν πνεῦμα ἐπὶ τὴν <b>θάλασσαν</b> , καὶ <b>ἐγένετο κλύδων μέγας ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ</b> , καὶ τὸ <b>πλοῖον ἐκινδύνεον</b> συντριβῆναι.
Mt 8:24 [...] αὐτὸς δὲ <b>ἐκάθευδεν</b>	Mk 4:38 καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν ἐν τῇ πρύμνῃ ἐπὶ τὸ προσκεφάλαιον <b>καθεύδων</b> [...]	Lk 8:23 [...] ἀφύπνωσεν [...]	Jonah 1:5 [...] Ἴωνᾶς δὲ <b>κατέβη</b> εἰς τὴν κοίλῃν τοῦ πλοίου, καὶ <b>ἐκάθευδεν</b> καὶ ἔρεγγεν.
Mt 8:25 <b>καὶ προσελθόντες</b> ἤγειραν <b>αὐτὸν</b> λέγοντες Κύριε <b>σῶσον ἀπολλύμεθα</b>	Mk 4:38 [...] καὶ ἐγείρουσιν <b>αὐτὸν</b> καὶ λέγουσιν <b>αὐτῷ</b> Διδάσκαλε οὐ μέλει σοι ὅτι <b>ἀπολλύμεθα</b>	Lk 8:24 <b>Προσελθόντες</b> δὲ διήγειραν <b>αὐτὸν</b> λέγοντες Ἐπιστάτα ἐπιστάτα <b>ἀπολλύμεθα</b> [...]	Jonah 1:6 <b>καὶ προσήλθεν</b> πρὸς <b>αὐτὸν</b> ὁ πρωρεὺς καὶ εἶπεν <b>αὐτῷ</b> Τί σὺ ῥέγγεις; ἀνάστα καὶ ἐπικαλοῦ τὸν θεόν σου, ὅπως <b>διασώσῃ</b> ὁ θεὸς ἡμᾶς καὶ μὴ <b>ἀπολώμεθα</b> .
			Jonah 1:7–10 1:7 καὶ εἶπεν ἕκαστος πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ Δεῦτε βάλωμεν κλήρους καὶ ἐπιγνῶμεν τίνας ἔνεκεν ἡ κακία αὕτη ἐστὶν ἐν ἡμῖν. καὶ ἔβαλον κλήρους, καὶ ἔπεσεν ὁ κλῆρος ἐπὶ Ἴωνᾶν. 1:8 καὶ εἶπον πρὸς αὐτὸν Ἀπάγγειλον ἡμῖν τίς σου ἡ ἔργασία

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JONAH
			<p>ἐστίν, καὶ πόθεν ἔρχη, καὶ ἐκ ποίας χώρας καὶ ἐκ ποίου λαοῦ εἶ σύ; 1:9 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοῦς Δοῦλος Κυρίου ἐγὼ εἰμι, καὶ τὸν κύριον θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐγὼ σέβομαι, ὃς ἐποίησεν τὴν <b>θάλασσαν</b> καὶ τὴν ξηρὰν.</p> <p>1:10 <b>καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν οἱ ἄνδρες φόβον μέγαν</b> καὶ εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτόν Τί τοῦτο ἐποίησας; διότι ἔγνωσαν <b>οἱ ἄνδρες</b> ὅτι ἐκ προσώπου Κυρίου ἦν φεύγων, ὅτι ἀπήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς.</p>
<p>Mt 8:26 Καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς Τί δειλοί ἐστε ὀλιγόπιστοι τότε ἐγερθεὶς ἐπετίμησεν τοῖς ἀνέμοις καὶ τῇ <b>θαλάσῃ</b> καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνη <b>μεγάλη</b></p>	<p>Mk 4:39 Καὶ διεγερθεὶς ἐπετίμησεν τῷ ἀνέμῳ καὶ εἶπεν τῇ <b>θαλάσῃ</b> Σιώπα πεφίμωσο καὶ ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνη <b>μεγάλη</b></p> <p>Mk 4:40 Καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Τί δειλοί ἐστε οὐπω ἔχετε πίστιν</p>	<p>Lk 8:24 [...] Ὁ δὲ διεγερθεὶς ἐπετίμησεν τῷ ἀνέμῳ καὶ τῷ <b>κλύδωνι</b> τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ ἐπαύσαντο καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνη</p> <p>Lk 8:25 Εἶπεν δὲ αὐτοῖς Ποῦ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν [...]</p>	<p>Jonah 1:11–14 1:11 καὶ εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτόν Τί σοι ποιήσομεν, καὶ κοπάσει ἢ <b>θάλασσα</b> ἀφ' ἡμῶν; ὅτι ἡ <b>θάλασσα</b> ἐπορεύετο καὶ ἐξήγειρεν μᾶλλον <b>κλύδωνα</b>.</p> <p>1:12 καὶ εἶπεν Ἰωνᾶς πρὸς αὐτοῦς Ἄρατέ με καὶ ἐμβάλετέ με εἰς τὴν <b>θάλασσαν</b>, καὶ κοπάσει ἢ <b>θάλασσα</b> ἀφ' ὑμῶν· διότι ἔγνωκα ἐγὼ ὅτι δι' ἐμὲ ὁ <b>κλύδων</b> ὁ <b>μέγας</b> οὗτος ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἐστίν.</p> <p>1:13 καὶ παρεβιάζοντο <b>οἱ ἄνδρες</b> τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι πρὸς τὴν γῆν, καὶ οὐκ ἠδύναντο, ὅτι ἡ <b>θάλασσα</b> ἐπορεύετο καὶ ἐξηγείρετο μᾶλλον ἐπ' αὐτούς.</p> <p>1:14 καὶ ἀνεβόησαν πρὸς Κύριον καὶ εἶπαν</p>

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JONAH
			Μηδαμῶς, Κύριε· μὴ ἀπολώμεθα ἕνεκεν τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τούτου, καὶ μὴ δῶς ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς αἷμα δίκαιον, διότι σύ, Κύριε, ὄν τρόπον ἐβούλου πεποίηκας. 1:15 καὶ ἔλαβον τὸν Ἰωνᾶν καὶ ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν <b>θάλασσαν</b> , καὶ ἔστη ἡ <b>θάλασσα</b> ἐκ τοῦ σάλου αὐτῆς.
Mt 8:27 <b>Οἱ</b> δὲ <b>ἄνθρωποι</b> <b>ἐθαύμασαν</b> λέγοντες Ποταπὸς ἐστὶν οὗτος ὅτι καὶ οἱ ἄνεμοι καὶ ἡ <b>θάλασσα</b> αὐτῷ ὑπακούουσιν	Mk 4:41 <b>Καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν</b> καὶ ἔλεγον πρὸς ἀλλήλους Τίς ἄρα οὗτός ἐστιν ὅτι καὶ ὁ ἄνεμος καὶ ἡ <b>θάλασσα</b> ὑπακούει αὐτῷ	Lk 8:25 [...] <b>Φοβηθέντες</b> δὲ <b>ἐθαύμασαν</b> λέγοντες πρὸς ἀλλήλους Τίς ἄρα οὗτός ἐστιν ὅτι καὶ τοῖς ἀνέμοις ἐπιτάσσει καὶ τῷ ὕδατι καὶ ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ	Jonah 1:16 <b>καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν οἱ ἄνδρες φόβῳ μεγάλῳ</b> τὸν κύριον, καὶ <b>ἔθυσαν</b> θυσίας τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ εὕξαντο εὐχάς.

The density of shared vocabulary is the highest at the start and at the end of the 1. Jonah-Echo, but some of the shared vocabulary is not immediately obvious in how the verses are paralleled, or might just need some further explanation:

- Mt 8:24, Mk 4:37, Lk 8:23 to Jonah 1:4.
  - As the table shows, Lk 8:23 not only corresponds to Jonah 1:4 but also reaches into the segment that corresponds to Jonah 1:5, and both, Lk 8:23 and Jonah 1:5, have κατέβη. Additionally, κατέβη occurs in Jonah 1:3, the corresponding verse preceding Lk 8:23.
  - Although the corresponding verse Jonah 1:4 contains κλύδων, Lk 8:23 does not, but...
- Mt 8:25, Mk 4:38, Lk 8:24 to Jonah 1:6.
  - ... the very next verse Lk 8:24 has κλύδωνι, and Lk 8:24 subtly parallels the entire segment Jonah 1:6–15, which includes κλύδων (Jonah 1:11) and κλύδωνα (Jonah 1:12).
  - The words σωσον (Mt 8:25) and διασωση (Jonah 1:6) are not exact parallels, but both include “σωσ” for they are both forms of σώζειν. Furthermore, both are closely surrounded by Κύριε/θεὸς and ἀπολλύμεθα/ἀπολώμεθα.
  - In case it is unclear, the words ἀπολλύμεθα (Present Indicative Middle) and ἀπολώμεθα (Present Substantive Middle) are just two different forms of the same word ἀπόλλυμι.
- Mt 8:26, Mk 4:39 to Jonah 1:15 and 1:11–14.

- Mt 8:26 and Mk 4:39 both have θαλάσση, which directly corresponds to θάλασσαν and θάλασσα in Jonah 1:15. Beyond that, though, Mt 8:26 also parallels the segment Jonah 1:11–14, where the word appears five more times: θάλασσα (2x in Jonah 1:11), θαλάσσαν and θάλασσα (Jonah 2:12), θάλασσα (Jonah 2:13).
- Mt 8:27, Mk 4:41, Lk 8:25 to Jonah 1:16.
  - Οἱ [...] ἄνθρωποι in Mt 8:27 and οἱ ἄνδρες in Jonah 1:16 may not be exactly the same, though considering the other similarities visible in the list, the words ἄνθρωποι and ἄνδρες are semantically very close, especially since both stories refer solely to *men*—more importantly, the sailors in Jonah 1 are also being referred to as τοῦ ἀνθρώπου earlier in Jonah 1:14, but as οἱ ἄνδρες twice in Jonah 1:10 and once in 1:13, which comes to show how interchangeable these two words really are in this context.
  - The word ἐθαύμασαν in Mt 8:27 and Lk 8:25 is not exactly the same word as ἔθυσαν in Jonah 1:16, but ἐθαύμασαν might be an embellishment of the earlier ἔθυσαν—despite their different etymologies, their forms and semantic meanings share strong similarities:
    - ἐθ-άυμα-σαν: θεάομαι *behold* > θαῦμα *marvel/amazement* > θαυμάζω *admire*.
    - ἔθ-υ-σαν: θῦμός *soul/breath/mind/passion/life* > θύω *celebrate/offer sacrifice*.
 Even if it be called into question whether the two words mean the same here (for in Jonah 1:16 ἔθυσαν is followed by the *sacrifice* θυσίας and could therefore be taken as a literal ceremonial sacrifice, possibly offered after the sailors got back onto dry land), in both scenes the verbs are used to express *awe-induced worship of God*, and can thus be understood in the same sense.

MATTHEW	MARK	JOHN	JONAH
<p>Mt 14:22 Και εὐθέως ἠνάγκασεν τοὺς μαθητὰς <b>ἐμβῆναι</b> εἰς τὸ <b>πλοῖον</b> καὶ προάγειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ πέραν, ἕως οὗ ἀπολύσει τοὺς ὄχλους. Mt 14:23 καὶ ἀπολύσας τοὺς ὄχλους <b>ἀνέβη</b> εἰς τὸ ὄρος κατ' ἰδίαν προσεύξασθαι. ὁψίας δὲ γενομένης μόνος ἦν ἐκεῖ. Mt 14:24 τὸ δὲ <b>πλοῖον</b> ἦδη σταδίους πολλοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἀπεῖχεν, [...]</p>	<p>Mk 6:45 Και εὐθέως ἠνάγκασεν τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ <b>ἐμβῆναι</b> εἰς τὸ <b>πλοῖον</b> καὶ προάγειν εἰς τὸ πέραν πρὸς Βηθσαϊδάν, ἕως αὐτὸς ἀπολύει τὸν ὄχλον. Mk 6:46 καὶ ἀποταξάμενος αὐτοῖς ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι. Mk 6:47 καὶ ὁψίας γενομένης ἦν τὸ <b>πλοῖον</b> ἐν μέσῳ τῆς <b>θαλάσσης</b>, καὶ αὐτὸς μόνος ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.</p>	<p>Jn 6:15 Ἰησοῦς οὖν γνοὺς ὅτι μέλλουσιν ἔρχεσθαι καὶ ἀρπάζειν αὐτὸν ἵνα ποιήσωσιν βασιλέα, ἀνεχώρησεν πάλιν εἰς τὸ ὄρος αὐτὸς μόνος. Jn 6:16 Ἵς δὲ ὁψία ἐγένετο, <b>κατέβησαν</b> οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν,</p>	<p>Jonah 1:2 Ἀνάστηθι καὶ πορεύθητι εἰς Νινευὴ τὴν πόλιν τὴν μεγάλην καὶ κήρυξον ἐν αὐτῇ, ὅτι <b>ἀνέβη</b> ἡ κραυγὴ τῆς κακίας αὐτῆς πρὸς μέ. Jonah 1:3 καὶ ἀνέστη Ἴωνᾶς τοῦ φυγεῖν εἰς <b>Θαρσεῖς</b> ἐκ προσώπου Κυρίου, καὶ <b>κατέβη</b> εἰς Ἴοππην· καὶ εὔρεν <b>πλοῖον</b> βαδίζον εἰς <b>Θαρσεῖς</b>, καὶ ἔδωκεν τὸ ναῦλον αὐτοῦ καὶ <b>ἐνέβη</b> εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦ πλεῦσαι μετ' αὐτῶν εἰς <b>Θαρσεῖς</b> ἐκ προσώπου Κυρίου.</p>
<p>Mt 14:24 [...] βασανιζόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων, ἦν γὰρ ἐναντίος ὁ ἄνεμος.</p>	<p>Mk 6:48 καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτοὺς βασανιζομένους ἐν τῷ ἐλαύνειν, ἦν γὰρ ὁ ἄνεμος ἐναντίος αὐτοῖς, [...]</p>	<p>Jn 6:17 καὶ <b>ἐμβάντες</b> εἰς <b>πλοῖον</b> ἤρχοντο πέραν <b>τῆς θαλάσσης</b> εἰς Καφαρναοῦμ. καὶ σκοτία ἤδη ἐγεγόνει καὶ οὐπω ἐληλύθει πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Jn 6:18 ἢ <b>τε θάλασσα</b> ἀνέμου <b>μεγάλου</b> πνέοντος διεγείρετο.</p>	<p>Jonah 1:4 Καὶ Κύριος ἐξήγειρεν πνεῦμα ἐπὶ <b>τὴν θάλασσαν</b>, καὶ ἐγένετο κλύδων <b>μέγας</b> ἐν <b>τῇ θαλάσσει</b>, καὶ τὸ <b>πλοῖον</b> ἐκινδύνευεν συντριβῆναι.</p>
<p>Mt 14:25 τετάρτη δὲ φυλακῆ τῆς νυκτὸς ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς περιπατῶν ἐπὶ τὴν <b>θάλασσαν</b>.</p>	<p>Mk 6:48 [...] περὶ τετάρτην φυλακὴν τῆς νυκτὸς ἔρχεται πρὸς αὐτοὺς περιπατῶν ἐπὶ τῆς <b>θαλάσσης</b>· καὶ ἠθέλην παρελθεῖν αὐτούς.</p>	<p>Jn 6:19 ἐληλακότες οὖν ὡς σταδίους εἴκοσι πέντε ἢ τριάκοντα θεωροῦσιν τὸν Ἰησοῦν περιπατοῦντα ἐπὶ τῆς <b>θαλάσσης</b> καὶ ἐγγὺς τοῦ πλοίου γινόμενον, [...]</p>	
<p>Mt 14:26 οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν ἐπὶ <b>τῆς θαλάσσης</b> περιπατοῦντα ἐταράχθησαν λέγοντες ὅτι Φάντασμα ἐστίν,</p>	<p>Mk 6:49 οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν ἐπὶ <b>τῆς θαλάσσης</b> περιπατοῦντα ἔδοξαν ὅτι φάντασμα ἐστίν, καὶ ἀνέκραξαν· Mk 6:50</p>	<p>Jn 6:19 [...] <b>καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν</b>.</p>	<p>Jonah 1:5 <b>καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν</b> οἱ ναυτικοὶ καὶ ἀνεβόησαν ἕκαστος πρὸς τὸν θεὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐκβολὴν</p>

MATTHEW	MARK	JOHN	JONAH
καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ φόβου ἔκραζαν.	πάντες γὰρ αὐτὸν εἶδαν καὶ ἐταράχθησαν. [...]		ἐποίησαντο τῶν σκευῶν τῶν ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ εἰς τὴν <b>θάλασσαν</b> , τοῦ κουφισθῆναι ἀπ' αὐτῶν· Ἰωνᾶς δὲ κατέβη εἰς τὴν κοίλην τοῦ πλοίου, καὶ ἐκάθευδεν καὶ ἔρεγγεν.
Mt 14:27 εὐθὺς δὲ ἐλάλησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς αὐτοῖς λέγων <b>Θαρσεῖτε, ἐγὼ εἰμι</b> · μὴ φοβεῖσθε.	Mk 6:50 [...] ὁ δὲ εὐθὺς ἐλάλησεν μετ' αὐτῶν, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς <b>Θαρσεῖτε, ἐγὼ εἰμι</b> , μὴ φοβεῖσθε.	Jn 6:20 ὁ δὲ λέγει αὐτοῖς <b>Ἐγὼ εἰμι</b> , μὴ φοβεῖσθε.	Jonah 1:6–9 1:6 καὶ προσῆλθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ πρωρεὺς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Τί σὺ ῥέγγεις; ἀνάστα καὶ ἐπικαλοῦ τὸν θεόν σου, ὅπως διασώσῃ ὁ θεὸς ἡμᾶς καὶ μὴ ἀπολώμεθα. 1:7 καὶ εἶπεν ἕκαστος πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ Δεῦτε βάλωμεν κλήρους καὶ ἐπιγνώμεν τίνος ἕνεκεν ἢ κακία αὕτη ἐστὶν ἐν ἡμῖν. καὶ ἔβαλον κλήρους, καὶ ἔπεσεν ὁ κλῆρος ἐπὶ Ἰωνᾶν. 1:8 καὶ εἶπον πρὸς αὐτὸν Ἀπάγγειλον ἡμῖν τίς σου ἡ ἐργασία ἐστίν, καὶ πόθεν ἔρχῃ, καὶ ἐκ ποίας χώρας καὶ ἐκ ποίου λαοῦ εἶ σύ; 1:9 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοῦς Δοῦλος Κυρίου <b>ἐγὼ εἰμι</b> , καὶ τὸν κύριον θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐγὼ σέβομαι, ὃς ἐποίησεν τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὴν ξηράν.
Mt 14:28 ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ Πέτρος <b>εἶπεν Κύριε</b> , εἰ σὺ εἶ, κέλευσόν με <b>ἐλθεῖν πρὸς σέ</b> ἐπὶ τὰ <b>ὔδατα</b> .			Jonah 2:1 Καὶ προσέταξεν <b>Κύριος</b> κήτει μεγάλῳ καταπιεῖν τὸν Ἰωνᾶν· καὶ ἦν Ἰωνᾶς ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κήτους τρεῖς ἡμέρας

MATTHEW	MARK	JOHN	JONAH
<p>Mt 14:29          ὁ δὲ <b>εἶπεν</b> Ἐλθέ. καὶ <b>καταβὰς</b> ἀπὸ τοῦ πλοίου Πέτρος περιεπάτησεν ἐπὶ τὰ <b>ὔδατα</b> καὶ <b>ἦλθεν πρὸς</b> τὸν Ἰησοῦν.</p>			<p>καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας.          Jonah 2:2 καὶ προσηύξατο Ἰωνᾶς πρὸς <b>Κύριον</b> τὸν θεὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας τοῦ κήτους,          Jonah 2:3 καὶ <b>εἶπεν</b> Ἐβόησα ἐν θλίψει μου πρὸς <b>Κύριον</b> τὸν θεόν μου, καὶ εἰσήκουσέν μου. ἐκ κοιλίας ἄδου κραυγῆς μου ἤκουσας φωνῆς μου·          Jonah 2:4 ἀπέρριψάς με εἰς βάθη <b>καρδίας θαλάσσης</b>, καὶ ποταμοὶ με ἐκύκλωσαν, πάντες οἱ μετεωρισμοὶ σου καὶ τὰ κύματά σου ἐπ’ ἐμὲ διῆλθον.          Jonah 2:5 καὶ ἐγὼ <b>εἶπα</b> Ἀπῶσμαι ἐξ ὀφθαλμῶν σου· ἄρα προσθήσω τοῦ ἐπιβλέψαι πρὸς τὸν ναὸν τὸν ἅγιόν σου·          Jonah 2:6 περιεχύθη <b>ὔδωρ</b> μοι ἕως ψυχῆς, ἄβυσσος ἐκύκλωσέν με ἐσχάτη, ἔδου ἡ κεφαλὴ μου εἰς σχισμὰς ὀρέων,          Jonah 2:7 <b>κατέβην</b> εἰς γῆν ἧς οἱ μοχλοὶ αὐτῆς κάτοχοι αἰώνιοι· καὶ ἀναβήτω φθορὰ ζωῆς μου, <b>Κύριε</b> ὁ θεός μου,          Jonah 2:8 ἐν τῷ ἐκλιπεῖν ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ τὴν ψυχὴν μου τοῦ <b>κυρίου</b> ἐμνήσθην, καὶ <b>ἔλθοι πρὸς σέ</b> ἡ εὐχή μου εἰς ναὸν ἅγιόν σου.          Jonah 2:9 φυλασσόμενοι μάταια καὶ ψευδῆ ἔλεος αὐτῶν ἐγκατέλιπον.          Jonah 2:10 ἐγὼ δὲ μετὰ φωνῆς αἰνέσεως καὶ ἐξομολογήσεως θύσω</p>

MATTHEW	MARK	JOHN	JONAH
			σοι, ὅσα ηὐξάμην ἀποδώσω σοι <b>σωτηρίου</b> τῷ <b>κυρίῳ</b> . Jonah 2:11 Καὶ προσετάγη τῷ κήτει, καὶ ἐξέβαλεν τὸν Ἰωνᾶν ἐπὶ τὴν ξηράν.
Mt 14:30 βλέπων δὲ τὸν ἄνεμον <b>ἐφοβήθη</b> , καὶ ἄρξάμενος καταποντίζεσθαι ἔκραξεν λέγων <b>Κύριε, σῶσόν</b> με.			Jonah 1:10 καὶ <b>ἐφοβήθησαν</b> οἱ ἄνδρες φόβον μέγαν καὶ εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτόν Τί τοῦτο ἐποίησας; διότι ἔγνωσαν οἱ ἄνδρες ὅτι ἐκ προσώπου <b>Κυρίου</b> ἦν φεύγων, ὅτι ἀπήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς.
Mt 14:31 εὐθέως δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ἐπελάβετο αὐτοῦ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ Ὁλιγόπιστε, εἰς τί ἐδίστασας;			Jonah 1:11–14  1:11 καὶ εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτόν Τί σοι ποιήσομεν, καὶ κοπάσει ἡ θάλασσα ἀφ’ ἡμῶν; ὅτι ἡ θάλασσα ἐπορεύετο καὶ ἐξήγειρεν μᾶλλον κλύδωνα. 1:12 καὶ εἶπεν Ἰωνᾶς πρὸς αὐτούς Ἄρατέ με καὶ ἐμβάλετέ με εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, καὶ κοπάσει ἡ θάλασσα ἀφ’ ὑμῶν· διότι ἔγνωκα ἐγὼ ὅτι δι’ ἐμὲ ὁ κλύδων ὁ μέγας οὗτος ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς ἐστίν. 1:13 καὶ παρεβιάζοντο οἱ ἄνδρες τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι πρὸς τὴν γῆν, καὶ οὐκ ἠδύναντο, ὅτι ἡ θάλασσα ἐπορεύετο καὶ ἐξηγείρετο μᾶλλον ἐπ’ αὐτούς. 1:14 καὶ ἀνεβόησαν πρὸς Κύριον καὶ εἶπαν Μηδαμῶς, Κύριε· μὴ ἀπολώμεθα ἕνεκεν τῆς

MATTHEW	MARK	JOHN	JONAH
			ψυχῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τούτου, καὶ μὴ δῶς ἐφ' ἡμᾶς αἷμα δίκαιον, διότι σύ, Κύριε, ὄν τρόπον ἐβούλου πεποιήκας.
Mt 14:32 καὶ ἀναβάντων αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ πλοῖον ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος.	Mk 6:51 καὶ ἀνέβη πρὸς αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ πλοῖον, καὶ ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος·	Jn 6:21 ἤθελον οὖν λαβεῖν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ πλοῖον, καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο τὸ πλοῖον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἰς ἣν ὑπῆγον.	Jonah 1:15 καὶ ἔλαβον τὸν Ἰωνᾶν καὶ ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, καὶ ἔστη ἡ θάλασσα ἐκ τοῦ σάλου αὐτῆς.
Mt 14:33 οἱ δὲ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ λέγοντες Ἀληθῶς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς εἶ.	Mk 6:51 καὶ λίαν ἐκ περισσοῦ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐξίσταντο· Mk 6:52 οὐ γὰρ συνῆκαν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄρτοις, ἀλλ' ἦν αὐτῶν ἡ καρδιά πεπωρωμένη.		Jonah 1:16 καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν οἱ ἄνδρες φόβῳ μεγάλῳ τὸν κύριον, καὶ ἔθυσαν θυσίας τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ εὐξάντο εὐχάς.

The shared Greek vocabulary in the second Jonah-Echo aligning with corresponding verses is far slimmer than in the 1. Jonah-Echo, which shall here be summarized as a short list instead:

- Mt 14:22,24, and Mk 6:45,47 have πλοῖον, which also appears in the corresponding Jonah 1:3, and Jn 6:15 has κατέβησαν while Jonah 1:3 has κατέβη (two forms of the same word).
- Both Jn 6:17 and the corresponding Jonah 1:4 have πλοῖον, θάλασσ(ης/α/αν/η), μεγά(λου/ς).
- θαλάσσης in Mk 6:47 corresponds to θάλασσαν and θαλάσση in the nearby verse Jonah 1:4; θάλασσ(αν/ης) also occurs in the verses Mt 14:25, Mk 6:48, and Jn 6:19, which are sandwiched between the two θάλασσα-heavy verses Jonah 1:4 and 1:5 (Jn 6:19 actually reaches into the Jonah 1:5 parallels).
- καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν appears in Jn 6:19 as well as in the corresponding Jonah 1:5.
- Jesus presents himself to the others as God in Mt 14:27, Mk 6:50, and Jn 6:20 by saying ἐγὼ εἰμι—words uttered by Jonah in Jonah 1:9 (albeit to present himself as a servant of God).
- Mt 14:30 has ἐφοβήθη then Κύριε, corresponding Jonah 1:10 has ἐφοβήθησαν then Κυρίου.
- Jn 6:21 has λαβεῖν, the corresponding Jonah 1:15 has ἔλαβον.<sup>399</sup>
- Mt 14:28 and 29, vaguely corresponding to all of Jonah 2, are of special interest:

<sup>399</sup>Though the thematic context is a mirror-image (taking someone to throw him overboard ↔ taking someone to pull him on board), which makes it look like an antitypical fulfillment.

- Κύριε appears in both Mt 14:28 as well in the corresponding Jonah 2:7 (not to forget Κύριον/Κύριος/κυρίῳ in Jonah 2:1,2,3,10).
- Jonah 2:6 has ὕδωρ, just like the corresponding Mt 14:28 and 29 have ὕδατα (which appears nowhere else in both Jonah-Echoes—peculiar for a story so much about water).
- Jonah 2:8 has ἔλθοι πρὸς σὲ, the corresponding verses Mt 14:28 and 29 have ἐλθεῖν πρὸς σὲ, Ἐλθέ, and ἦλθεν πρὸς.
- Mt 14:29 has καταβάς, Jonah 2:7 has κατέβην.

There are a few elements which may not be direct, exact or neatly aligned parallels, but which should be pointed out none the less:

- Θαρσεῖτε (*be of good courage!*) in Mt 14:27 and Mk 6:50 may not parallel anything in the directly corresponding verse(s) Jonah 1:6–9, but the word is oddly similar to Θαρσεῖς (*Tarsus/Tarshish*), the destination of the ship mentioned in Jonah 1:3.<sup>400</sup> This may be entirely coincidental, or some subtle wordplay hinting at Jonah, not unlike the poetic polyvalence often encountered in OT-Hebrew.<sup>401</sup>
- Κύριε σῶσόν με (Mt 14:30) matches σωτηρίου τῷ κυρίῳ (Jonah 2:10), since σῶσόν and σωτηρίου are just verb- and noun-form of the exact same word (σώζειν), even though the phrasing is grammatically different (*Lord, save me!* ↔ *salvation [is of the] Lord*). Jonah 2:10 does not directly correspond to Mt 14:30, but to its preceding verse Mt 14:29; and since σωτηρίου τῷ κυρίῳ appears towards the end of Jonah 2 (all of which corresponds to the two verses preceding Mt 14:30), it occurs pretty close to Mt 14:30 in the table.
- Jonah 2:4 has the words καρδίας θαλάσσης, and with Mk 6:51 the 2. Jonah-Echo (in which θαλάσσης is still a somewhat prominent theme, albeit less prominent than in the 1. Jonah-Echo; e.g. θάλασσαν/θάλασσα occur in the penultimate verse of Jonah 1) ends on a verse that has καρδία as the penultimate word.

400A friend of mine asked me whether the usage of θαρσεῖτε (pl.) or θάρσει (sg.) would be unusual in a situation like that. The answer is no, it is by no means unusual for such a context, though at least it can be said that it does not occur all that often in the NT either: The only other time θαρσεῖτε (pl.) appears in the NT is in Jn 16:33, though θάρσει (sg.) appears four times (Mt 9:2,22, Mk 10:49, Acts 23:11).

401There might be another, similar pun or wordplay at the starts of both Jonah-Echoes: Both μαθηταὶ (Mt 8:23, Lk 8:22) and μαθητὰς (Mt 14:22, Mk 6:45) may or may not correspond to Ἀμαθει (Jonah 1:1, καὶ ἐγένετο λόγος κυρίου πρὸς Ἰωνᾶν τὸν τοῦ Ἀμαθει λέγων), due to the similarity between μαθη- and -μαθε-. Even though this may be unlikely, the idea might warrant being mentioned in a footnote.

#### 5.4.: Structural Precedent in Genesis 1 & Unity in the Church

The main reason for discussing the Jonah-Echoes in this thesis has been made clear already—namely that the Feedings of the Multitudes may imply multiplicity of the fish in Jonah 2:1, due to a structural parallelism echoing Jonah. However, there might be an even deeper theological message hidden in the Jonah-Echoes—a message which is not of immediate importance to the topic of this thesis, but nonetheless important enough to deserve being mentioned—, and the key to that message lies in that parallelism’s rather peculiarly broken structure.

Considering how the second Jonah-Echo contains a brief little window into Jonah 2, foreshadowing the future events in Matthew 16 and thereby being a sort of “window into the future”, it could be argued that this window breaks the parallelism and therefore could disprove that there even is a parallelism present in regards to these two Jonah-Echoes. The question then is whether a parallelism of such peculiar a form can be found anywhere else in the Bible—the answer being yes, namely in Genesis 1. The *Framework Theory* sees a topical parallelism, where the creation-days 1–3 correspond to 4–6 as two triads of similar topics—the first triad describing God’s environmental distinctions to form the cosmos, the second triad is about God filling these domains:

- |                               |   |   |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. separation of light & dark | ↔ | 4. lights to separate light & dark            |
| 2. separation of sky & sea    | ↔ | 5. creatures to inhabit the sky & the sea     |
| 3. separation of sea & land   | ↔ | 6. creatures to inhabit the land, also humans |

The existence of such a parallelism in Genesis 1 has been argued to be hinted at already by St. Augustine: “[...] He made all things together, disposing them in an order based not on intervals of time but on causal connections”.<sup>402</sup> If the *Framework Theory* is correct, and Genesis 1 does indeed contain a such a parallelism, then two things are noteworthy:

- Before closing Genesis 1 with a formula typical of the rest of this creation-account,<sup>403</sup> the second triad culminates in Genesis 1:26–30 talking about mankind. This is rather peculiar, because Genesis 1:26–30 seems to briefly summarize the creation of man, making them male and female, God telling them to multiply, and that they shall subdue the earth—events which are then reflected in the events which unfold in Genesis 2–4. Independent of whether Genesis 2–4 is an elaborate retelling of THE SAME EVENTS as are summarized in Genesis 1:26–30 (not future events, but about the same people), or whether Genesis 2–4 tells of events

402St. Augustine of Hippo (415): *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*. Quoted in: Young D.A. (1988): “The Contemporary Relevance of Augustine’s View of Creation”, in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, 40 (1). pp. 42–45.

403Gen 1:31 — *And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.*

which FOLLOWED the creation-account<sup>404</sup> (not about the same people, but clearly a window into future events), either way the second half of the parallelism in Genesis 1 contains a brief segment towards the end which in some way foreshadows future chapters—as does the window in Matthew 14:28–31, towards the end of the second Jonah-Echo, foreshadow future events in both Matthew 16 and Jonah 2.

- Genesis 1 contains thematic and linguistic parallels (both synonymous and antithetical) to Genesis 3, contrasting the creation of a good world and its culmination in a holy mankind with the subsequent fall of mankind and their banishment into a harsh world.<sup>405</sup> The fact that Genesis 1 draws parallels to another chapter is (albeit not quite as clean)<sup>406</sup> comparable to the fact that the Jonah-Echoes are paralleling Jonah 1.

So, there is indeed a precedent for a parallelism which is broken up with a window into future chapters, and not just in any Bible-text, but in one of the undeniably most essential ones, Genesis. Jesus’s ministry antitypically reverses the fall of man to bring forth a new creation by giving his generation the sign of Jonah—so, fittingly, the Jonah-Echoes thematically echo Jonah 1 (twice), but structurally echo Genesis 1 (once). A new Genesis, revolving around (a new) Jonah.

The Jonah-Echoes do, however, contain thematic parallels to Genesis as well. The windows in both parallelisms foreshadow the institution of Adam’s and of Peter’s special priesthood in the chapters to follow. Adam was tasked to be God’s “priestly vice-king [... a vicarious] ‘priest-king’”,<sup>407</sup> and priestly duties are implied by the vocabulary for *work* and *take care* in Gen 2:15 (compare the vocabulary in Ex 3:12, Num 3:7–10, 8:15)—Adam’s office was a type to which Peter’s office was the antitype, sharing in Christ’s role as the New Adam.

And yet, as Adam faltered, so, too, did Peter falter: When he sank in the water, when he would later deny Christ, and even just moments after being made Pope, prompting Jesus to say to Peter “*get thee behind me, Satan*” (KJV, Mt 16:23 ὑπάγε ὀπίσω μου σατανᾶ; see also Mk 8:33)—which is also roughly what Jesus said to the actual Satan (Mt 4:10 ὑπάγε σατανᾶ). Obviously, St. Peter is not *the* Satan, but in spite of his office he proved to be just as much *a* satan as every single person (even the Pope) can be.<sup>408</sup> As Satan was bound to be let loose after a thousand years (c.f. Rev 20:1–3), the Church was united under one Pope for a thousand years before the Great Schism tore

404Compare the *generations*-formula in Gen 2:4 with Gen 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10,27, 25:12,19, 36:1, 37:2. This reading also solves the problem of where the children of Adam & Eve found other humans to mate with.

405c.f. Ouro R. (2002): “Linguistic and Thematic Parallels Between Genesis 1 and 3”, in *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 13/1 (Spring 2002). pp. 53–54.

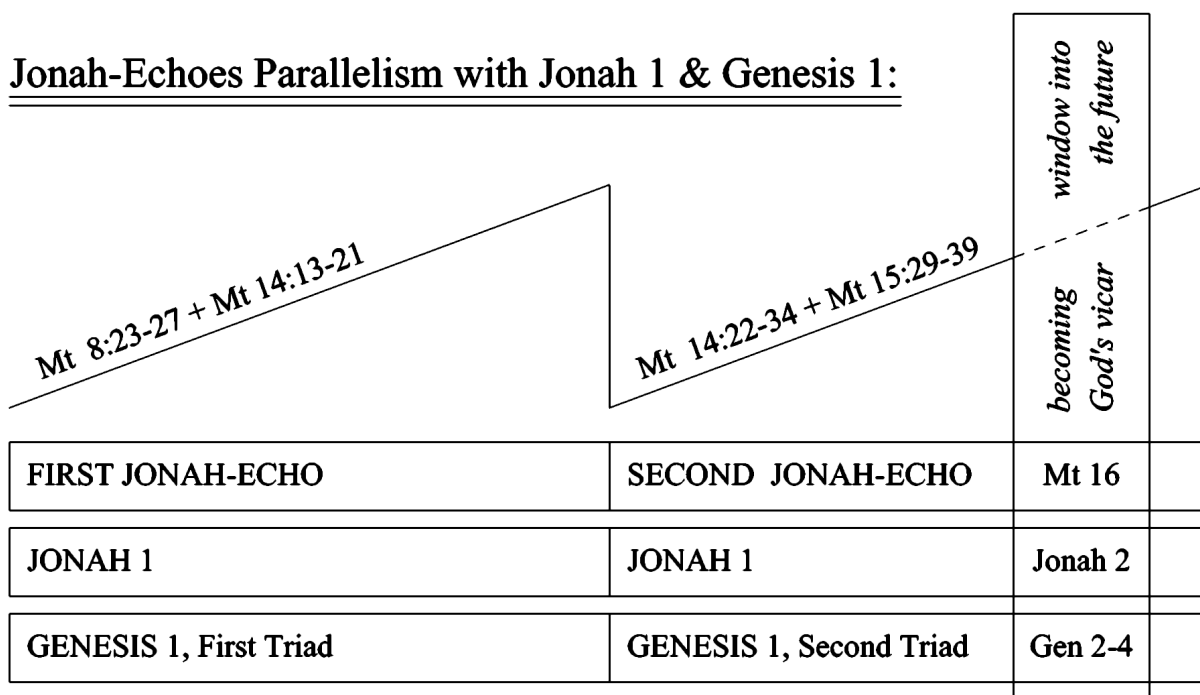
406These thematic parallels do not follow the same order in both Genesis-chapters, and are not one unbroken narrative paralleling the other, as is the case with the two Jonah-Echoes paralleling Jonah 1. However, considering that the parallelism contained in Genesis 1 by itself bears such a striking resemblance to the parallelism of the Jonah-Echoes already, this additional but admittedly weaker similarity is just nice to have on top of the stronger similarity.

407Beale G.K. (2004): *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*. pp. 69–70.

apart the unity in 1054, with further schisms to follow. And yet, in spite of the seemingly broken unity, and no matter how many churches there may be, all are one in Christ. In other words, the many little fishes are one in the One whose symbol is the ΙΧΘΥΣ.<sup>409</sup> Tertullian, too, said that “we, little fishes, after the example of our ΙΧΘΥΣ Jesus Christ, are born in water [i.e. baptism], nor have we safety in any other way than by permanently abiding in water [i.e. in the Holy Spirit]”.<sup>410</sup>

The relationship between the New Testament, Jonah, and Genesis might thus offer a deeper theological insight into matters of the unity of the Church in the face of division.

To close off this larger chapter about the Jonah-Echoes, here is a rather simple visualization of how these echoes’ parallelism, broken up by a window into the respective future chapter(s) shortly before the end of each full parallelism, maps onto Jonah 1 and Genesis 1:



408As the saying goes, we ourselves can be our worst enemies, can be not only the hero but also the villain of our own story. This is something that Jonah had to learn, and so does every individual, so does the world, and so does the Church: “We are each our own devil, and we make this world our hell.” (Oscar Wilde, *The Duchess of Padua*)

409Presumably an acronym for ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ, *Jesus Christ God's Son* [and the] *Redeemer*.

410Tertullian (A.D. 200): *On Baptism* 1:3.

## 6.: Synopsis & Final Thoughts

Now that the thesis has been presented in its entirety, it is time for a brief summary of the main arguments and some concluding thoughts, as a sort of synopsis.

First, the core of this thesis: the **linguistic evidence**—the average probability for which is **ca. 80%**:

- The Hebrew word for *fish* utilizes the singular masculine **דג (dāg)** in Jonah 2:1, which CAN quite likely be a collective-plural (e.g. Neh 13:16), while Jonah 2:2 then utilizes the feminine collective **דגה (dāgâ)** which can ONLY be used as a collective<sup>411</sup> (these rules apply to the entire OT as well as to extra-biblical sources like the Mishna)—so, the דג (dāg) in Jonah 2:1 which CAN be a collective **MUST be a collective**. The switch from implicit collective דג (dāg) in Jonah 2:1 to explicit collective דגה (dāgâ) in Jonah 2:2 is typical for the stylistic tendencies of the author of the Book of Jonah,<sup>412</sup> which further supports the thesis. The fact that דג (dāg) appears with an **article is no issue**, because **collectives often appear with the article** in the Hebrew.
- Neither is גדול (gādôl) a hindrance to the thesis, since most occurrences of גדול **do not mean great/big**—the general meaning is rather a vague expression of *grandeur* of any kind, which is how the author of Jonah uses גדול almost exclusively (which might even apply to *the great city* Nineveh).<sup>413</sup> The word גדול can imply connotations of *much/plenty/abundant* when used with a noun which implies a plurality (as is the case in Jonah 2:1), which is about **two-thirds as likely** across the OT as the expected meaning *great/big*. This connotation of *much* is also present in the word's **etymology**, which has led to some surrounding **Afroasiatic languages** evolving as such that their words corresponding with גדול would **keep the meaning much**—a phenomenon which might have influenced the linguistic understanding of גדול due to possible **language-contact through trade relations and the diaspora**.
- The Hebrew word מנה (mānâ) for God having *prepared/appointed* the fish also means *count/number* or *gather/herd* (implying multitudes); most OT-מנה are **used for pluralities**.
- The word בלע (bālaʿ) for when the fish *swallows* Jonah is almost only used **figuratively**, with the meaning of *destroy* (i.e. death or **near-death**), and to *engulf*. All of these fit.
- The word מעה (meʿâ) for the fish's *belly* in Jonah 2:1,2 mostly **DOES NOT mean stomach**, and it can be seen as a **figure of speech for the inside**. Additionally, מעה (meʿâ) can refer to the

411e.g. Num 11:5, Ez 47:9, Ex 7:18,21, Deut 4:18.

412Men on the ship (1:5 vs. 1:8,13,16); days needed to go through Nineveh (3:3 vs. 3:4); Ninevites (3:7,8, 4:11 vs. 3:5).

413Either due to Nineveh consisting of multiple cities (c.f Gen 10:11,12), or it was called *great* for its magnificence.

reproductive system and thus refer to *womb*-imagery as in *where the fish come from* (i.e. the deep sea). It is possible (but highly speculative) that מַעָה (me‘â; exclusively *human innards*) replaced earlier קֶרֶב (qereb; exclusively *animal innards*, but also used for prepositional phrases for *in/from the midst* of a multitude).

- The word קוֹא (qô‘) for when the fish *vomits* Jonah onto dry land in Jonah 2:11 is mostly used **figuratively**, e.g. for **exclusion from any form of system** (i.e. one implication here).
- Last but not least, regarding the **grammar**: There is evidence in the OT that **verbs and adjectives** for a collective-noun in the singular **can appear in the singular** (and do not have to appear in the plural), just like the collective-noun they belong to. So, it is entirely legitimate that the adjective גָּדוֹל (gādôl) in Jonah 2:1 and the verb קוֹא (qô‘) in Jonah 2:11 would appear in the singular, like the collective-noun דָּג (dāg) they belong to.

So, the alternative reading of Jonah 2:1 which is proposed in this thesis could be expressed like this:

***And God gathered much fish to engulf Jonah, and Jonah was  
amidst the fish(es) for three days and three nights.***

Jonah was not swallowed by one single fish, but engulfed by a multitude, surrounded by fish en masse, though these fish could be thought of as one in the sense of a collective, and the collective building one volume, one entity by virtue of the many forming one—not unlike the chaotic fiend “Ygramul The Many” (one monster made up of innumerable tiny insects) in *The Neverending Story*, or the collective of thousands of intelligent rats which calls itself “Many-as-One” in the videogame *Planescape: Torment*, or the Pokémon “Wishiwashi” (a *demon of the sea* which can appear as a school of multiple fish forming one larger fish-like creature), or the dragons in the Makoto Shinkai movie *Weathering With You* (which consist of many tiny “fish”). These examples might not exactly reflect the thought of ancient Hebrew writers, but they are good contemporary examples of a common theme present in human storytelling—a theme which is also present in the story of Jonah.

Next, Jonah in the light of **Jewish traditions**:

- **A Midrash of 365,000 fetal fish** tells not of one but of two fish (in an attempt to explain the masculine and feminine words across Jonah 2:1,2) and has Jonah swallowed up by a pregnant fish, after which he finds himself surrounded by a huge multitude of little baby-fish—an element which hints at a secondary tradition involving a piscine plenitude.
- **A Midrash of fish-eye windows and a Genesis fish** implies that at least some Jewish audiences did not necessarily read the *belly of the fish* directly as a literal *belly* or *stomach*, but instead understood the word to mean a rather vague sort of *inside*.

- **A Midrash of death and many fish** combines ideas from both of the previously mentioned Midrashîm, but its version of the idea that Jonah was surrounded by a multitude is distinctly different from the other Midrash (inverting the theme of life via pregnancy and baby-fish, instead telling about the fish's death and how a swarm of little fish devoured its corpse), which might hint at the basic idea of a piscine plenitude being a much older tradition (thus evolving into different versions).
- That **Jonah echoes the Psalms** is no secret, but what is interesting about this little fact is that some of the Psalms referenced in Jonah 2 mention *God the Rock* and rhetorically ask *who is [the] Rock besides God?* This question is later answered by Jesus during the institution of the papacy, which is one of the ways in which he connects that event to the preceding Jonah-Echoes in the NT.
- **Themes of Jonah in Tobit** suggest that Tobit was embedded in Jonah's tradition(s) and can indeed be compared to the Book of Jonah, which makes it noteworthy that (looking at both the long and the short version of Tobit) Tobit 6:1–2 speaks of *a great fish* which *tried to devour the boy*, but the *great fish* was really just a regular fish, just great enough to bite the young man's foot. So, it is entirely possible to read such terminology without conjuring up the idea of a giant creature which would actually and completely swallow up a whole man.
- **A relief at the Khakhuli monastery** shows the prophet Jonah as being swallowed up entirely by a dragon, but at the same time there are two little fish surrounding his face and merely nibbling on his hair. This, too, implies an awareness of multiple strands of tradition.
- **A mosaic at the Huqoq synagogue** depicts the prophet Jonah as being swallowed by a great fish, which is swallowed by a greater fish, which is swallowed by an even greater fish, and all the while a wide range of various sea-creatures and smaller fish surround and observe the event. This, too, might hint at an awareness of a secondary strand of tradition.

There are some interesting elements in these traditions: Support for the notion that the belly might be referring to a rather vague kind of *inside*; the *devouring great fish* not necessarily having to be read as all that large or truly devouring; the element about *God the Rock* being connected to Jonah's prayer, which would become relevant later on.

However, the most important thing which can be learned from these traditions is a certain degree of certainty that **there were indeed two strands of tradition**—one tradition interpreting Jonah as having been *swallowed by one great fish*, and one tradition interpreting Jonah as having been *surrounded by much fish*. The fact that these two strands of tradition could even exist implies that the Book of Jonah itself allows for such an alternative reading, which strongly supports the core argument of this thesis.

Next, the **metaphors**. Since the metaphors have already been summarized at greater length with further conclusions on pp. 144ff., this segment shall be highly condensed and rudimentary:

- The Hebrews knew the idiom *to feed the fishes* as a metaphor for (death by) *drowning*, as is implied by the Huqoq-mosaics and Homeric parallels (Odyssey 5:270–429, a possible influence for Jonah 1–2), the latter of which show that the ocean was thought of as the *ἰχθυόεντα* (*fish-like, full/consisting of fish*), using *fish* as a metonymy for the sea itself. Jonah being swallowed by *the fish(-like)* meant that he drowned. This supports the core argument of this thesis.
- Jonah’s *fish* (דג *dāg*, דגה *dāgâ*) might be a play on words, suggesting that Jonah was swallowed up by his own *anxiety* (אג *dā’ag*, אגה *dē’āgâ*). Story-elements of Jonah resemble Palestinian proverbs and idioms which utilize fish as a symbol of chaos, sin, ungodliness, and death, still understood by Christians in later eras. This chaotic ungodliness gives Jonah’s fish satanic, leviathanic connotations (Leviathan has been associated with Jonah in later Midrashîm) as a symbol of the *abyss* (one possible meaning of LXX κῆτος).
  - This abyss might be the literal *watery deep* (c.f. literal water in Jonah 1, Homer’s *ἰχθυόεντα*)—this would support the core argument of the thesis.
  - This abyss might be a symbol for an ungodly *womb* of the deep below opposed to the godly *womb* of mercy above: Jonah is *born again*, and Jonah 2 has subtle *birth-giving* vocabulary (compare the Midrash about the pregnant fish).
  - This abyss might be *Sheol/Hades*—Jonah is near-dead, figuratively swallowed up by a *Hellhound* (actually a (sea-)serpent) guarding Hades, the entrance to which was thought of as a *Hellmouth* which *swallows* people up like the fish swallows Jonah.

The story’s theme of overcoming (erroneously perceived) differences between self and other subtly plays into why the fish’s collectivity (as well as Nineveh’s) is expressed in such an obscure way: The blurred line between the individuated and the collective is instrumental in expressing that.

All of the possibilities listed above can work together, none of them has to exclude any other. So the multiple metaphorical layers of Jonah suggest that Jonah “**fed the fishes,**” **drowning** in both his **anxiety** as well as the actual **water**, as he passed out and had a **near-death experience**.

That Jonah had a near-death experience (NDE) is quite likely from the text (the *belly of Sheol*, the *bars of the earth*) and would fit other NDE-reports. Jonah having had an NDE would be one way to explain how Jonah spent three days in the *belly of the fish* if that *belly* was just the literal watery deep in which Jonah was drowning: **NDEs are associated with a different perception of time,**

where darker regions are perceived in such a way that time is progressing more slowly, in which case a three second long NDE could easily feel **like three whole days**. (Or maybe Jonah swam in the ocean for three days—similar to Homer’s *Odyssey* 5:390—before he passed out and drowned.)

And, at last, the **Jonah-Echoes** in the NT, and their relevance to the thesis:

Embedded in the greater, subtler Jonah-themes of the NT is a pair of events—the two Jonah-Echoes—paralleling one another (i.e. a narrative parallelism) and, at the same time, paralleling Jonah. Each of these Jonah-Echoes structurally follows the same themes as Jonah 1–2:1, with each Storm-Calming paralleling Jonah 1:3–16 (i.e. pretty much all of Jonah 1), followed by the Multitude-Feedings which parallel Jonah 2:1 (i.e. what would follow right after Jonah 1:16). The Multitude-Feedings are about a strange muchness of fish satiatingly feeding a crowd (although the fish seem to be few), and the Multitude-Feedings parallel Jonah 2:1; so, it is implied that Jonah 2:1 was understood to be about a muchness of fish.

It seems that not only was the secondary tradition regarding Jonah 2:1 (about Jonah being surrounded by multiple fish) well known, but it even influenced the NT’s Jonah-themes.

So, Jonah was *NOT* *swallowed up by one huge fish*, but *engulfed by much fish*—surrounded by a piscine plenitude. If this theory is correct, then it is important to know it and to argue for it, even for the pursuit of truth alone. More importantly though, this thesis can be seen as an appeal to openness towards minority-readings and unusual but possibly compelling interpretations.

Traditions are a great thing, though as this thesis has shown, some traditions can be drowned out by others, even though these oft forgotten traditions might contain viable information. Once a majority of people accept a certain strand of tradition, and possibly accept it blindly, there can be a real danger of losing sight of what viable information an alternative tradition might have to offer, even if it has become a minority-reading.

Such an alternative minority-reading might help some people make sense of a story like the Book of Jonah—a story supposedly about spending three days in the acidic stomach of a giant fish before being vomited out again, but, in the meantime, describing a scene of drowning.

The story is not as unbelievable as the heathens against whom St. Augustine had to defend it thought it was; it is not as satirical as some critics may still think. Unwarranted dismissal of the story as unbelievable satire, if it really is not, would equate to attacking a straw man and thus be fallacious. So, if the story of Jonah *CAN* be approached from a reasonable and believable angle, then it *SHOULD* be approached accordingly.

This thesis has presented an option which hopefully is both truthful and useful.

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