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Ezekiel 16 and the Song of Moses: A Prophetic Transformation?

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Scholars have long recognized that in Ezekiel 16 the prophet draws on the harlotry metaphor of his prophetic predecessors to indict Jerusalem for its idolatry and foreign relations.[1] Moshe Greenberg, for example, described Ezekiel's expansion of this common motif when he noted, "By extending the metaphor in time, Ezekiel provides the adulterous wife of Hosea and Jeremiah with a biography."[2] However, commentators have thus far failed to notice that the building blocks

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[1] See, e.g., Keith W. Carley, *Ezekiel among the Prophets: A Study of Ezekiel's Place in Prophetic Tradition* (SBT 2/31; London: SCM, 1975), 49; Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (trans. Ronald E. Clements; 2 vols.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 1:342; Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Com2mentary* (AB 22; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 298; Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19* (WBC 28; Dallas: Word Books, 1994), 247; Julie Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh's Wife* (SBLDS 130; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 61; Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Das Buch des Propheten Hesekiel,* vol. 1, *Kapitel 1–19* (ATD 22.1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 223; Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel,* vol. 1, *Chapters 1–24* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 466.

This is not to imply that the biblical prophets share a single, coherent "marriage metaphor" (see Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel* [Oxford Theological Monographs; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008], 6), but only that Ezekiel's harlot imagery has prophetic antecedents. On this, along with my position on the sexual and marital imagery that has dominated the discussion of Ezekiel 16 in recent years, see my review of Moughtin-Mumby's monograph in *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 9 (2009), online: http://www.jhsonline.org.

[2] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 299.

of the oracle are found in the Song of Moses (Deut 32:1–43).[3] In this essay I will argue that Ezekiel's depiction of Israel in ch. 16 (chiefly section A, vv. 1–43)[4] represents a prophetic transformation of the rise and decline of Israel depicted in the Song, whereby he adopts the structure and themes of Deuteronomy 32 and infuses them with the prophetic motif of harlotry.[5]

I begin the investigation by outlining the thematic, lexical, and structural links between the two passages and then more explicitly discuss criteria for establishing literary dependence. In the subsequent sections I address the following questions: Could Ezekiel have known and used the Song? Is it likely that he would have known and used the Song? Did he in fact use the Song elsewhere in his prophetic book? And is it likely that he would have used the Song in the way proposed in this essay? Finally, I mention numerous ways in which Ezekiel uniquely builds on and transforms his underlying text and then conclude by addressing the rhetorical import of Ezekiel's use of the Song.

I. Plot Structure and Thematic Links

Ezekiel 16 and Deuteronomy 32 display remarkable similarities of plot and themes, the full extent of which has not been fully noted. The two texts exhibit virtually identical plot structures, both depicting the rise and decline of YHWH's people. In both, (a) YHWH discovers destitute Israel in a barren location; (b) he delivers her and renders lavish care upon her so that (c) she prospers; (d) Israel in her prosperity forsakes YHWH; (e) she pursues other gods and (f) forgets her origins, thereby (g) provoking YHWH to anger; (h) Israel is punished for her sins; and finally, (i) Israel is restored. Several verbal parallels, synonyms, and rare motifs found in the two passages at the same point in the plot make it unlikely that these similarities are coincidental. The two texts also share similar formal features. Though Ezekiel 16 may be properly considered a *rîb* ("dispute")[6] and Deuteronomy 32 a *šîr* ("song, hymn"),[7] the latter nevertheless contains strong *rîb* elements, including an indictment (vv. 15–18) and sentence (vv. 19–29).[8]

[3] The possibility of thematic links between Ezekiel 16 and the Song of Moses was brought to my attention by Daniel Block in personal conversation.

[4] On the tripartite arrangement of Ezekiel 16 (vv. 1–43, 44–58, and 59–63, labeled sections A, B, and C), see Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20,* 292–96.

[5] In this article I use "Deuteronomy 32" as a shorthand for Deut 32:1–43, which constitutes the Song of Moses.

[6] See Block, *Ezekiel*, 1:459–62.

[7] See section IV below.

[8] This is evidenced by many earlier scholars' identification of Deuteronomy 32 as a *rîb* (see esp. G. Ernest Wright, "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* [ed. Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962], 26–67).

Before considering the links in detail, a few comments are necessary by way of preface. First, the texts exhibit some fundamental differences in imagery, and Ezekiel's oracle is fuller and more detailed at certain points. Most of these differences are due to the liberty with which the prophet expands and transforms the Song. The particulars of Ezekiel's transformation will be taken up later, but in what follows I will focus on the thematic links and parallel plot structures, while recognizing, for example, that the harlot imagery is lacking in Deuteronomy 32. Second, criteria for establishing literary dependence and its direction will be discussed below in section II. It is to be noted in advance only that the case for literary dependence across entire pericopes involves a cumulative argument. The persuasiveness of individual parallels would vary on a scale of possibility to probability when considered separately. When taken together, however, and in the close proximity of two well-defined passages, numerous distinctive parallels in combination can make a compelling case for literary dependence.

A. YHWH's Discovery of Israel (Deut 32:10 // Ezek 16:6)

The accounts of Israel's history with her God begin with YHWH finding destitute Israel in a barren location. In Ezekiel 16 the prophet depicts Jerusalem's origins with the image of an infant cast aside by her parents and later rescued from dire straits and cared for by YHWH. In vv. 5–6 YHWH passes by (עבר על) the infant and sees (ראה) her destitute in an open field (שדה). The Song similarly describes YHWH's discovery of Israel in a barren location. In Deut 32:10 he finds (מצא) Jacob in a desert land (מדבר) and encircles (סבב) him (in this case using masculine pronouns[9]). Though Ezekiel prefaces the discovery of the foundling with a "biography," to which we will return below, in both texts the discovery marks the start of Israel's relationship with her God YHWH.

Though Ezekiel does not adopt the exact same language in this instance, the terms שדה and מדבר in the Bible have overlapping semantic domains, as evidenced by those passages where they occur together, as synonyms or in parallel poetic lines (Josh 8:24; Job 24:5–6; Isa 43:19–20; Joel 1:19–20; 2:22).[10] The verbs ראה and מצא are also conceptually similar, as is illustrated in Hos 9:10 where the two verbs occur in parallel in a context nearly identical to our passages, namely, in reference to YHWH finding Israel.

[9] Adjustment of person, number, and gender for both verbal subjects and objects is a common feature of inner-biblical literary borrowing, since later authors change the language to fit a new context (see Michael A. Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy: Ezekiel's Use of the Holiness Code* [Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 507; New York: T&T Clark, 2009], 79). In the present case, Ezekiel 16 has YHWH speak in the first person to Jerusalem, who is addressed in the second person. In the Song a narrator speaks of both YHWH and Israel with third person pronouns.

[10] Meir Malul, "Adoption of Foundlings in the Bible and Mesopotamian Documents: A Study of Some Legal Metaphors in Ezekiel 16:1–7," *JSOT* 46 (1990): 103.

> Like grapes in the wilderness,
> I found [מצא]Israel.
> Like the first fruit on the fig tree in its first season,
> I saw [ראה]your fathers. (Hos 9:10)

Though it is unlikely that Ezekiel is dependent on Hosea here, since the imagery of the latter focuses on YHWH finding Israel "like grapes" and "like the first fruit on the fig tree," instead of like a destitute foundling rescued and cared for as in Ezekiel and Deuteronomy,[11] Hos 9:10 wonderfully shows the semantic overlap of מצא and ראה in a similar context and thus demonstrates that both verbs can be used to refer to a discovery.

Since the foundling or discovery motif (*Fundmotiv*) for Israel's relationship to YHWH appears only in Ezekiel 16 and Deuteronomy 32 in the Hebrew Bible,[12] one might reasonably propose influence from Deuteronomy 32 on Ezek 16:6 alone. Thus, contra Hermann Gunkel's hypothesis that Ezekiel draws the motif from a common folktale type,[13] it is argued here—in conjunction with the prophet's wider dependence on Deuteronomy 32 noted next—that he appropriates it from the Song of Moses. A few scholars have noted the similar image in these two passages,[14] but Millar Burrows came closest to the thesis presented here when he observed that "[Ezekiel] seems to combine the thought of [the foundling in] Dt 32 with [Hosea's] conception of Jerusalem as a girl tenderly reared by Yahweh."[15] However, uncertain of the priority of these two texts, Burrows refrained from conclusively deciding that Ezekiel is dependent on the Song and did not recognize parallels beyond the discovery and care of Israel. Greenberg intimated a further connection when he noted that the foundling motif functions in the same way in both the Song and Ezekiel 16, namely, "to start the account of God's relation to his people with a situation best designed to enhance his beneficence toward them and illustrate his providential and tender care of them,"[16] but scholars have not recognized the full

[11] It is more likely that Hosea is also dependent on Deut 32:10, borrowing the notion of finding Israel in the wilderness, but he takes it in a different direction.

[12] Psalm 27:10 speaks of YHWH's adoption of the petitioner but not of a discovery.

[13] Hermann Gunkel, *The Folktale in the Old Testament* (trans. M. D. Rutter; Historic Texts and Interpreters in Biblical Scholarship; Sheffield: Almond, 1987), 128–31; trans. of *Das Märchen im Alten Testament* (Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher 2; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1917). Greenberg earlier presented a persuasive critique of this hypothesis (*Ezekiel 1–20*, 300–301).

[14] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 299; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel,* 1:336; idem, *Old Testament Theology in Outline* (trans. David E. Green; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978), 23. Though scholars debate the exact referent of Ezekiel's foundling metaphor in Israel's history (see, e.g., Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 236–37; Thomas Krüger, *Geschichtskonzepte im Ezechielbuch* [BZAW 180; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989], 184), the similarity in the metaphorical vehicle alone can suggest literary borrowing.

[15] Millar Burrows, *The Literary Relations of Ezekiel* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society Press, 1925), 23.

[16] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 299–300.

extent of the distinctive thematic and plot parallels that continue throughout the two passages.

B. YHWH's Lavish Care (Deut 32:10b–14 // Ezek 16:7–13a)

In both passages, after discovering Israel, YHWH rescues her and renders lavish care upon her. In Ezek 16:7a, YHWH recounts: "I made you flourish like a plant of the field, and you grew up and became tall and arrived at full adornment." And after YHWH passed by a second time[17] and entered into a covenant with the young girl by passing his garment over her, he brought her from rags to riches:

> I bathed you with water and washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil. I clothed you also with embroidered cloth and provided you with sandals of fine leather. I wrapped you in fine linen and covered you with fine fabric. And I adorned you with jewelry and put bracelets on your wrists and a chain on your neck. And I put a ring on your nose and earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen and fine fabric and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour and honey and oil. (Ezek 16:9–13a)

Similarly, in the Song of Moses, YHWH tenderly cares for Jacob and provides him with the finest things.

> . . . he cared for him;
> he protected him as the apple of his eye.
> Like an eagle that stirs up its nest,
> that hovers over its young,
> spreading out its wings, catching them,
> bearing them on its pinions,
> YHWH alone guided him;
> no foreign god was with him.
> He enabled him to ride on the high places of the land,
> and he ate of the produce of the field,
> and he suckled him with honey out of the rock,
> and oil out of the flinty rock.
> Butter from the herd, and milk from the flock,
> with the fat of lambs, rams of Bashan and goats,
> with the finest of the wheat—
> and from the juice of the grapes you drank wine. (Deut 32:10b–14)

[17] Greenberg claims that this is an adjustment to the exodus tradition, whereby the intermediate period refers to Israel's time in Egypt, when it grew, waiting for YHWH's redemption (*Ezekiel 1–20*, 301). However, the second passing may be necessary for the metaphorical vehicle, since one cannot marry an infant (also contra the motive of YHWH suggested by Linda Day, "Rhetoric and Domestic Violence in Ezekiel 16," *BibInt* 8 [2000]: 208–9).

The most fascinating verbal parallel between these two passages is found at this point in the story in Deut 32:11 and Ezek 16:8, namely, the phrase פרש כנף. In Deuteronomy 32, YHWH's care for Israel is portrayed as an eagle spreading (פרש) its wings (כנף) over its young; in Ezekiel 16, when YHWH enters into a marriage covenant with Jerusalem, he spreads (פרש) his garment (כנף) over her. While spreading a garment over a woman undoubtedly refers to acquiring her in marriage (cf. Ruth 3:9),[18] if Ezekiel is drawing from Deuteronomy 32, then the phrase also represents an allusion to Deut 32:11—a double entendre of sorts. Not only do the two פרש כנף statements appear in the same section of the plot, but both also occur immediately after the ראה/מצא and עבר על/סבב word pairs (Deut 32:10a // Ezek 16:8a) and are followed by the extended descriptions of YHWH's lavish care (Deut 32:12–14 // Ezek 16:9–13).

This section of the plot witnesses another significant verbal parallel. As Georg Fohrer has pointed out, in the context of YHWH's care both passages speak of Israel eating honey and oil.[19]

> Deut 32:13
> He ate the produce of the field,
> and he suckled him with honey [דבש] out of the rock,
> and oil [שמן] out of the flinty rock.
>
> Ezek 16:13 (also v. 19)
> You ate fine flour and honey [דבש] and oil [שמן].

Though דבש and שמן occur together a couple times in longer lists of commodities (Jer 41:8; Ezek 27:17), only here does the Hebrew Bible speak of Israel (in extended metaphors) eating honey and oil—both in the context of YHWH's care.

C. Israel Prospers (Deut 32:15a // Ezek 16:13b–14)

Because of YHWH's upbringing, Israel prospers. Deuteronomy 32:15a describes Israel's prosperity to the point of excess: "Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked; you grew fat, stout, and sleek." This compares with Ezek 16:13b–14, where Ezekiel describes Jerusalem's rise to prominence and renown: "You grew exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty, and your fame went forth among the nations because of your beauty. Indeed, it was perfect through the splendor that I had bestowed on you, declares the Lord YHWH."

[18] Paul A. Kruger, "The Hem of the Garment in Marriage: The Meaning of the Symbolic Gesture in Ruth 3:9 and Ezek 16:8," *JNSL* 12 (1984): 79–86. See Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 172 n. 72, for further bibliography.

[19] Georg Fohrer, *Die Hauptprobleme des Buches Ezechiel* (BZAW 72; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1952), 144; followed by Rimon Kasher, *Ezekiel: Introduction and Commentary,* vol. 1, *Chapters 1–24* (in Hebrew; Miḳra le-Yiśraʾel; Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2004), 55.

D. Israel Forsakes Her God (Deut 32:15b // Ezek 16:15a)

Immediately after Israel increases, she forsakes YHWH her God who rescued her and made her thrive. Both texts ascribe the turning point to her self-confidence. In the Song it was after Jeshurun grew fat from YHWH's luxurious provision that he "forsook God who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation" (32:15b). Ezekiel depicts Jerusalem's turn from YHWH as the moment she trusts in her beauty (16:15a).

E. Israel's Idolatry (Deut 32:16–17 // Ezek 16:15b–22)

In the Song, Israel's idolatry takes up two verses:

> They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods;
> with abominations they provoked him to anger.
> They sacrificed to demons that were no gods,
> to gods they had never known,
> to new gods that had come recently,
> whom your fathers had never dreaded. (32:16–17)

True to Ezekiel's intense detestation of idolatry,[20] the prophet expands the account of idolatry into a graphic display of harlotrous idolatry that encompasses eight verses, followed by a continuation of the metaphor to refer to Jerusalem's illegitimate foreign relations as well (16:23–34).[21] In this latter section, Jerusalem is said to take זרים ("strangers") instead of her husband (16:32), a possible allusion to Deut 32:16, where זרים refers to the gods that Israel worshiped.

F. Israel Forgets Her Origins (Deut 32:18 // Ezek 16:22[22])

In her idolatry, Israel forgets her origins. The Song states that Jacob "forgot the God who gave [him] birth" (32:18), and in Ezek 16:22 the prophet indicts Jerusalem for not remembering the "days of [her] youth when [she] was naked and bare." In both cases, after being blessed by YHWH, Israel forgets that it was YHWH who caused her to prosper.

[20] John F. Kutsko identifies idolatry as "the quintessential cause of the Babylonian exile" for Ezekiel (*Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel* [Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego 7; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000], 25); so also Jill Middlemas, "Transformation of the Image," in *Transforming Visions: Transformations of Text, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel* (ed. Michael A. Lyons and William A. Tooman; Princeton Theological Monograph Series; Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010), 115–16.

[21] Zimmerli considered this latter section on foreign relations to be secondarily added to the idolatry section (*Ezekiel,* 1:334–35, 347–48), but cf. Krüger, *Geschichtskonzepte*, 147–51. Even without these and the other verses that Zimmerli excises from the original Ezek 16:1–43 (see *Ezekiel,* 1:347–48), the essential components outlined here remain.

[22] It is reiterated as the justification for the punishment in 16:43.

G. Israel Angers Yhwh (Deut 32:16, 21 // Ezek 16:26)

In both passages, Israel angers Yhwh, which is signified by the verbal root כעס, "to provoke to anger." In the Song, Israel's idols are the source of Yhwh's anger.

Deut 32:16
They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods [זרים];
with abominations [תועבות] they provoked him to anger [יכעיסהו].

Deut 32:21a
They have made me jealous with what is no god [לא־אל];
they have provoked me to anger [כעסוני] with their idols [הבלים].

In Ezekiel the word occurs in the extended account of Jerusalem's harlotry. After the accounts of her idolatry and illegitimate foreign relations, it is stated that her actions have "provoked me to anger" (להכעיסני).

H. Israel's Indictment and Punishment (Deut 32:19–25 // Ezek 16:35–43)

Then, Yhwh punishes Israel. Both Ezekiel and the Song cite Israel's idolatry as the reason for her punishment. Thus, Deuteronomy 32 cites the provocation (כעס) of Yhwh caused by his people's idols (v. 21). Ezekiel as well indicts her for harlotry with idols in v. 36: "Because [יען] your lust was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your whoring with your lovers and with all your abominable idols. . . ." The difference between the modes of punishment will be noted in the final section.

I. Israel's Restoration (Deut 32:35–36, 41–43 // Ezek 16:53–55, 59–63)

One further correspondence remains to be considered, namely, that of Israel's restoration after her punishment. Though the Song emphasizes Yhwh's vindication (32:35–36, 41–43), embodied in this is a clear restorative element. In v. 36 Yhwh "will have compassion on his servants when he sees that their power is gone," and in v. 43 he "avenges the blood of his servants" (LXX and 4QDeut^{q}: sons) and "atones [כפר] for his people's land."[23] In Ezekiel, restoration is found in sections B (16:44–58, esp. vv. 53–55) and C (16:59–63). Though many see these sections as supplements by the prophet himself or his disciples,[24] the fact that the last sentence of

[23] Taking the MT's אדמתו עמו in v. 43 as אדמת עמו (cf. LXX; Samaritan Pentateuch; 4QDeut^{q}). Alternatively, one may retain the MT's אדמתו עמו, "his land, his people," as the *lectio difficilior*.

[24] E.g., Zimmerli, *Ezekiel,* 1:333–34. All agree that the parts of ch. 16 display an organic connection, in which section B (vv. 44–58) draws from and builds on the themes of vv. 1–43 and then section C (vv. 59–63) builds on both earlier sections (see Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 295).

Ezekiel 16 and the last sentence of the Song employ כפר,[25] a unique word in restoration oracles, to describe YHWH's renewal of his people suggests that the prophet's dependence on the Song may continue into sections B and C of ch. 16. If so, then in these latter sections, as in the section on idolatry above, Ezekiel takes the liberty to go well beyond the less developed elements of restoration in the Song, adding the characteristic restoration language "restore the fortunes" (v. 53), "return to the former state" (v. 55), and Ezekiel's distinctive theme of bearing shame (v. 54).

For a synopsis of the plots of Deuteronomy 32 and Ezekiel 16, see the chart on the next page.

II. Literary Dependence?

Establishing true literary dependence is a notoriously precarious task. Having outlined the links between Deuteronomy 32 and Ezekiel 16, we may discuss criteria used to establish dependence and observe whether they are met in the present case.

The first obvious requirement for literary dependence is *availability;* that is, could Ezekiel have borrowed from the Song? In the discussions that follow, I will show that Ezekiel could have known and used Deuteronomy 32 by appealing to arguments for the new consensus that the Song is an early composition and likely well known in the preexilic period. Beyond this initial prerequisite, however, it is necessary to investigate whether similarities between an earlier and later text are the result of purposeful borrowing or are simply due to chance, perhaps because a given parallel is a common motif or formulaic expression. Though such a task is as much an art as a science,[26] several scholars have discussed criteria to help distinguish dependence from coincidental similarities of theme and language.[27]

In some cases inner-biblical allusions are characterized by a relatively high degree of verbal and syntactic correspondence, which is an excellent indicator of literary dependence.[28] As Earl Miner points out, however, an allusion may consist of

[25] Ezekiel 16:63: ". . . when I atone for you for all that you have done."

[26] See Benjamin D. Sommer, "Exegesis, Allusion and Intertextuality in the Hebrew Bible: A Response to Lyle Eslinger," *VT* 46 (1996): 485–86, and the sources cited therein; see also Jeffery M. Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case," *JBL* 127 (2008): 264.

[27] Most notably Richard L. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation: Verbal Parallels in the Prophets* (JSOTSup 180; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 222–39; Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 29–30; Christopher A. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians* (Biblical Interpretation Series 96; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 27–34; Lyons, *Law to Prophecy*, 47–75; Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions," 241–65.

[28] Schultz, *Search for Quotation*, 222–24; Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions," 252–53.

A Synopsis of the Plot of Deuteronomy 32 and Ezekiel 16

Yhwh's Discovery of Israel Deut 32:10a Setting: desert/wilderness (מדבר) "He found (מצא) him" "He encircled (סבב) him"	*Yhwh's Discovery of Jerusalem* Ezek 16:6 Setting: open field (שדה) "I saw (ראה) you" "I passed over (עבר על) you"
Yhwh's *Lavish Care* Deut 32:10b–14 "Like an eagle . . . spreading (פרש) its wings (כנף) . . . Yhwh . . ." "He suckled him with honey (דבש) out of the rock, and oil (שמן) out of the flinty rock"	*Yhwh's Lavish Care* Ezek 16:7a, 9–13a " I spread (פרש) my garment (כנף) over you" "You ate fine flour and honey (דבש) and oil (שמן)"
Israel Prospers Deut 32:15a	*Jerusalem Prospers* Ezek 16:13b–14
Israel Forsakes God Deut 32:15b	*Jerusalem Forsakes God* Ezek 16:15a
Israel's Idolatry Deut 32:16-17 "They stirred him to jealousy with זרים" (Deut 32:16)	*Jerusalem's Idolatry (as Harlotry)* Ezek 16:15b-34 "She takes זרים instead of her husband" (Ezek 16:32)
Israel Forgets Its Origin Deut 32:18 "You forgot the God who gave you birth"	*Jerusalem Forgets Its Origin* Ezek 16:22 (also v 43) "You did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare . . ."
Israel Angers Yhwh Deut 32:16, 21 "They provoked him to anger" (*hiphil,* כעס) "They provoked me to anger" (*piel,* כעס)	*Jerusalem Angers Yhwh* Ezek 16:26 "(You) . . . provoked me to anger" (*hiphil,* כעס)
Israel's Punishment Deut 32:23-25	*Jerusalem's Punishment* Ezek 16:35-43
Israel's Restoration Deut 32:35-43 Yhwh atones (כפר) for his people's land	*Jerusalem's Restoration* Ezek 16:53-63 Yhwh atones (כפר) for his people's sins

a single common word or even just a shared concept.[29] What matters is that the parallel is sufficiently distinctive to suggest dependence. Thus, the first criterion relevant for this discussion is *rare concept similarity.*[30] As the opposite of a common motif, the presence of a rare concept in two texts suggests that one may be drawing from the other.[31] For example, one may think of the rock motif of Deuteronomy 32, which is picked up in Isaiah (17:10; 26:4; 44:8).[32] In our texts the primary rare concept is the foundling motif, which occurs at the outset of the two accounts of Israel's history with YHWH. As an image to describe the discovery and adoption of a destitute foundling, the motif occurs only in Ezekiel 16 and Deuteronomy 32 in the Hebrew Bible,[33] and in both cases in reference to YHWH's discovery of Israel. We may also note here the distinctive motif of spreading a wing/garment (פרש כנף) and the word pair דבש and שמן, "honey and oil."

A related consideration at this point is the presence of what Jeffery Leonard calls nonshared language. In the discovery of the foundling at the outset of the two passages, Ezekiel appears to draw from the foundling motif in Deuteronomy 32, but not its exact terminology. However, Leonard is emphatic that the presence of such differences of expression "*in no way* undermines the possibility of a connection," since "unique or idiosyncratic language may be a reflection of the creativity or writing style of a given author."[34]

A second criterion for dependence is *frequency.* When considering multiple links, the more parallels within two single pericopes, the greater the possibility that they are the result of purposeful borrowing and not just chance similarity. Though some individual parallels may lack concrete evidence for dependence and may therefore vary on the scale of possibility to probability, numerous possible allusions mutually corroborate each other as evidence of literary borrowing. Of course, numerous weak links together provide a weak case for dependence. However, the presence of a few probable allusions, marked by a high degree of verbal and syn-

[29] Earl Miner, "Allusion," *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (ed. Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 38–39.

[30] Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 29; cf. Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions," 251–52.

[31] In some cases two texts might not be dependent on each other but rather both might be dependent on a different source (e.g., Ezek 16:16 and Hos 9:10 on the foundling motif of Deut 32:10). However, in the present case it is unlikely that both Ezekiel 16 and the Song depend on a third source, given the familiarity and widespread use of the Song by other biblical writers and the distinctiveness and ubiquity of the plot and thematic links between the two passages.

[32] Thomas Keiser, "The Song of Moses: A Basis for Isaiah's Prophecy," *VT* 55 (2005): 488–90. Cf. 1 Sam 2:2; 2 Sam 23:3; Psalms passim; Hab 1:12.

[33] Hosea 9:10 (cited above) witnesses the verbs ראה and מצא, but it lacks a destitute foundling and her subsequent care by YHWH.

[34] Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions," 249 (emphasis original).

tactic correspondence or a sufficiently distinctive motif or idea, lends credence to other parallels that alone are considered only possible allusions.[35]

In some cases, the frequency of links is corroborated by their *distribution*. If parallels display a consistent or unique distribution, this may suggest that a later author alluded to an earlier work extensively or even structured his composition on it.[36] Together the frequency and distribution of allusions create a cumulative argument for literary dependence, as summarized by Benjamin Sommer:

> The argument that an author alludes, then, is a cumulative one: assertions that allusions occur in certain passages become stronger as patterns emerge from those allusions. In any one passage that may rely on an older text, the critic must weigh evidence including the number of shared terms and their distinctiveness, [and] the presence of stylistic or thematic patterns that typify the author's allusions.[37]

In the present case, the frequency and distribution of parallels between these two texts offer overwhelming evidence for dependence. The accumulation of thematic links in a nearly identical plot structure, corroborated by several lexical links at the same point in the plot, including the פרש כנף motif, the eating of דבש and שמן, the verbal root כעס to signify Israel's provocation of YHWH, and כפר in Israel's restoration, makes it extremely unlikely that these parallels occur by chance. Admittedly, elements of this plot are scattered in other parts of the Hebrew Bible, but no other passage contains all the elements and none in the same order as we find here.[38] Indeed, each element of the plot structure of Ezek 16:1–43 is found in Deuteronomy 32 in essentially the same order, and the two passages are likewise

[35] The same point is made by Jacob Stromberg: "It is necessary to stress this cumulative aspect of the argument only because such words and phrases that echo DI [Deutero-Isaiah] might be regarded, when viewed in isolation from one another, as mere coincidence" ("An Inner-Isaianic Reading of Isaiah 61:1–3," in *Interpreting Isaiah: Issues and Approaches* [ed. David G. Firth and H. G. M. Williamson; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009], 263).

[36] Drawing on Robert Alter's narrative "type-scene," Paul R. Noble makes a similar case for allusions within biblical narratives: "A catalogue of individual, unrelated points of resemblance between two texts is not, in general, a sufficient criterion for identifying a probable authorial or redactional allusion of one text to the other. But . . . a common pattern in two texts *is* a sufficient criterion for postulating intentional allusion—unless the pattern is a very simple one (consisting, say, of only two or three elements, with little or no interconnection between them) it is difficult to believe that it should happen to occur in two different locations just by chance" ("Esau, Tamar, and Joseph: Criteria for Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions," *VT* 52 [2002]: 251).

[37] Sommer, "Exegesis, Allusion and Intertextuality," 485. So also Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions," 253–54; Rex Mason, "Zechariah 9–14," in *Bringing Out the Treasure: Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 9–14* (ed. Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd, with a major contribution by Rex Mason; JSOTSup 370; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 201; Cynthia Edenburg, "How (Not) to Murder a King: Variations on a Theme in 1 Sam 24; 26," *SJOT* 12 (1998): 72.

[38] The closest instance of these concentrated in one passage is Hos 13:4–6, which over three verses mentions the wilderness, prosperity, and forgetting YHWH.

unique in the extent of their story. Finally, the foundling motif and the other plot parallels mutually corroborate each other: the rare foundling motif gives a firm basis to propose wider dependence in these texts, and the subsequent plot similarities, marked by distinctive lexical links at the same point in the plot, confirm the hypothesis of dependence in the foundling motif.

It is also useful to consider the *likelihood* that an author might allude to the alleged source.[39] In the following sections I will argue that the Song of Moses was well known to Ezekiel and his contemporaries and that it exerted a strong influence on subsequent biblical writers. A further criterion that bolsters the case for dependence is *recurrence,* that is, the frequency with which an author cites or alludes to the same passage.[40] In section V below I will show that Ezekiel clearly draws from the Song in other passages as well. Though it is not necessary to show recurrence or a high likelihood of borrowing to establish true dependence, these features nevertheless serve to confirm other criteria.

Lastly, regarding the direction of dependence, Richard Schultz has shown that evidence of *interpretive reworking* is one of the major criteria for determining which text borrowed from the other.[41] I will argue below that Ezekiel 16 represents a reinterpretation of the Song or a reapplication of it to the time of Ezekiel and his contemporaries. Though in our case the preexilic provenance of Deuteronomy 32 rules out the possibility that the Song draws from Ezekiel 16, it would be difficult to imagine that the Song reworks Ezekiel 16 by stripping it of its harlotry imagery and offering a condensed version. Thus, Ezekiel 16 seems to represent a creative transformation of Deuteronomy 32, whereby the prophet uses the Song as the building blocks of his oracle.

In summary, the evidence for Ezekiel's use of Deuteronomy 32 displays all the signs of dependence outlined by Sommer above. The nearly identical plot structure and themes, corroborated by verbal parallels and rare concepts at the same points in the plot, confirm the presence of literary dependence.

III. Could Ezekiel Have Known and Used the Song?

To postulate Ezekiel's use of and allusion to the Song of Moses requires that Deut 32:1–43 predate the book of Ezekiel. Though a wide range of dates have been postulated for the Song in the history of scholarship,[42] scholars since the 1930s have overwhelmingly supported an early date.[43] This view has been substantiated in the

[39] Sommer, "Exegesis, Allusion and Intertextuality," 485.

[40] Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 30.

[41] Schultz, *Search for Quotation*, 231.

[42] A comprehensive review of scholarship is found in Paul Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32* (OtSt 37; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 1–98.

[43] See ibid., 21–36, citing Otto Eissfeldt, *Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32:1–43 und Das*

recent comprehensive studies of Deuteronomy 32 by Paul Sanders and Solomon Nigosian, who considered multiple lines of evidence and both convincingly established the Song's early preexilic provenance.[44] In what follows I will briefly outline the arguments for this conclusion.

A. Linguistic Considerations

Both Sanders and Nigosian built upon the linguistic study of David A. Robertson, who had established an early date for the Song based on its linguistic features.[45] Such features include the presence of early vocabulary, especially the verbal root מחץ in v. 39, defective and plene spellings, the poetic suffix מו–, the appearance of the final *yod* in the perfective verb חָסָיוּ (v. 37), and the ubiquity of *yiqtol* forms expressing narrative (preterite) tense.[46] The seventeen preterite *yiqtol* verbs are particularly noteworthy, since they rarely occur in exilic and postexilic biblical writings.[47] Moreover, many lexemes in the Song previously thought to be late have since been shown to have counterparts in the Ugaritic literature.[48] The presence of any single early feature is inconclusive for dating a text, since many of these phenomena occur as archaisms in standard Biblical Hebrew poetry. However, in his study on dating early Hebrew poetry, Robertson concluded that the accumulation of these features in a single poem represents the best evidence for establishing an early composition.[49]

Lehrgedicht Asaphs Psalm 78: samt einer Analyse der Umgebung des Mose-Liedes (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958); William Foxwell Albright, "Some Remarks on the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy XXXII," *VT* 9 (1959): 339–46; Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel from Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); Wright, "Lawsuit of God"; G. E. Mendenhall, "Samuel's 'Broken *rîb*': Deuteronomy 32," in *No Famine in the Land: Studies in Honor of John L. McKenzie* (ed. James W. Flanagan and Anita Weisbrod Robinson; Homage Series 2; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), 63–74. See also Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy:* דברים. *The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 512–13.

[44] Sanders, *Provenance*; Solomon A. Nigosian, "The Song of Moses (Deut. 32:1–43)" (Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 1975); idem, "The Song of Moses (Dt 32): A Structural Analysis," *ETL* 72 (1996): 5–22; idem, "Linguistic Patterns of Deuteronomy 32," *Bib* 78 (1997): 206–24; idem, "Historical Allusions for Dating Deut 32," *BN* 119–20 (2003): 30–34.

[45] Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (SBLDS 3; Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972), 155.

[46] Sanders, *Provenance*, 296–333.

[47] Ibid., 300, 313–15; Nigosian, "Linguistic Patterns," 211. For the preterite *yiqtol* form as the remnant of a short *yiqtol* form found in Byblian Canaanite, see Anson F. Rainey, "The Ancient Hebrew Prefix Conjugation in the Light of Amarnah Canaanite," *HS* 27 (1986): 4–19; and the response articles by Edward L. Greenstein, John Huehnergard, and Ziony Zevit, in *HS* 29 (1988): 7–42; also *IBHS,* 497.

[48] Sanders, *Provenance*, 320.

[49] Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence*, 135; so also Nigosian, "Linguistic Patterns," 211.

B. Historical Context

Many scholars have attempted to date Deuteronomy 32 by correlating historical allusions in the Song with events in the history of Israel. Their assumption is that the Song was written after an enemy had delivered a crushing defeat to Israel. Consequently, the chief clue in the Song is the identity of this enemy, described as a "non-people" (לא־עם) and a "foolish nation" (גוי נבל). Corresponding to different time periods, common designations have included Canaanite tribes, the Arameans, the Assyrians, and the Babylonians.[50] While Nigosian favored a particular historical referent,[51] and Sanders emphasized that the diversity of opinion suggests that the Song does not aim to identify clearly a historical context, both agree that nothing in the Song betrays a late date.[52] For example, if the Song were exilic or postexilic we might expect some implicit or explicit reference to Babylon, deportation, or return to the land. Furthermore, nothing betrays knowledge of the demise of the northern kingdom or even the presence of a united or divided monarchy. While this is an *argumentum e silentio*, it is nevertheless noteworthy, since, as G. Ernest Wright reminds us, the threat of exile is a characteristic component of the exilic prophets and Deuteronomic historians, and thus its absence in Deuteronomy 32 is all the more striking.[53]

C. Intertextual Links

Further confirmation comes from the intertextual links between the Song of Moses and the prophetic books. Early critical scholarship, represented as early as 1891 by C. H. Cornill,[54] viewed the Song as dependent on the prophets and thus exilic. Many scholars followed Cornill by citing strong links between the Song and Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah 40–66. S. R. Driver, for example, cited approvingly Cornill's assertion that the Song was a "compendium of prophetic theology."[55] More recent studies, however, have reversed the traditional interpretation by arguing that the prophets made use of the Song and not vice versa. These include studies of Isaiah 40–66 by Thomas Keiser, Benjamin Sommer, and Hyun Chul Paul Kim,

[50] For bibliographical information on those who have espoused these theories, see Sanders, *Provenance*, 6–39.

[51] Nigosian argued for the religious and political circumstances of the northern state near the second half the ninth century B.C.E. ("Historical Allusions").

[52] Sanders, *Provenance,* 39; cf. Nigosian, "Structural Analysis," 22.

[53] G. Ernest Wright, "Deuteronomy: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB* 2:517.

[54] Cornill, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1891), 71.

[55] S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), 308.

and Isaiah 1–39 by Ronald Bergey.[56] Older studies of Jeremiah by William Holladay and of Hosea by Umberto Cassuto affirm the same.[57]

IV. Is It Likely That Ezekiel Would Have Known and Used the Song?

But how likely is it that Ezekiel would have borrowed from the Song? The influence of the Song on later biblical writers can be partially explained by considering the place of Deuteronomy 32 in ancient Israel. Matthew Thiessen's study of the formal and generic properties of Deuteronomy 32 determined that the Song of Moses functioned as a liturgical text in the public cultic sphere and thus was likely well known among Ezekiel's audience.[58] Though he speaks of a *rîb* embedded in the Song, several features suggest that the overall form of the work is a cultic hymn, including the numerous shifts in grammatical person, the imperatives of worship, and multiple speakers.[59] This suggests that Ezekiel would have known the Song and would have chosen it for rhetorical purposes because his contemporary audience or readers also knew the text.[60]

In addition, though not direct evidence for the status of the Song in the preexilic period, its liturgical function in Second Temple Judaism is attested by both the manuscript evidence and rabbinic tradition. We may first note the Qumran manuscript 4QDeut^{q}, about which Patrick Skehan and Eugene Ulrich write: "The limited height of the scroll, the arrangement of the lines, the small number of words per column, and the absence of the final verses of ch. 32 strongly suggest that

[56] Keiser, "Song of Moses"; Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Contraversions; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 134–36; Kim, "The Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32.1–43) in Isaiah 40–55," in *God's Word for Our World,* vol. 1, *Biblical Studies in Honor of Simon John De Vries* (ed. J. H. Ellens et al.; JSOTSup 388; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 147–71; see also Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 478–79; Bergey, "The Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1–43) and Isaianic Prophecies: A Case of Early Intertextuality?" *JSOT* 28 (2003): 33–54.

[57] Holladay, "Jeremiah and Moses: Further Observations," *JBL* 85 (1966): 17–27; Cassuto, "The Prophet Hosea and the Books of the Pentateuch" (in Hebrew), in *Abhandlungen zur Erinnerung an Hirsch Perez Chajes* (ed. V. Aptowitzer and A. Z. Schwartz; Vienna: Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1933), 262–75; Eng. trans. "The Prophet Hosea and the Books of the Pentateuch," in Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, vol. 1, *Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1973), 79–100.

[58] Thiessen, "The Form and Function of the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1–43)," *JBL* 123 (2004): 401–24, esp. 422–23, where he cites Cassuto approvingly that the Song was widely known and the prophets frequently drew from it (*Biblical and Oriental Studies*, 1:44).

[59] Thiessen, "Form and Function," 407–10.

[60] Thiessen himself recognized the implications of his study for the relationship of the Song to the prophetic literature ("Form and Function," 423).

4QDeut^{q} probably contained only the Song of Moses (Deut 32:1–43). It would thus 1oin the category of 'special use' manuscripts."[61] This special use likely indicates a liturgical use of some sort for the Song,[62] and one wonders how far back this tradition reaches. Rabbinic traditions as well held that the poem was chanted by the Levites in the temple on the Sabbath (*b. Roš Haš.* 31a; *y. Meg.* 3.8, 74b).[63]

V. Did Ezekiel Know and Use the Song?

Support for the thesis presented here may be found in other allusions to Deuteronomy 32 in the book of Ezekiel. The examples offered below show that the prophet does in fact know the Song of Moses and uses it for his prophetic message.[64]

A. חצים, רעב, *"Arrows, Famine" (Ezek 5:16–17 // Deut 32:23–25, 42)*

In Ezek 5:16–17 the prophet appears to conflate Priestly and Deuteronomic traditions. Though this passage clearly draws from Lev 26:22–26,[65] many commentators agree that Ezekiel borrows the terms "arrows" and "famine" from Deut 32:23–25, 42.[66] In fact, the image of Yhwh using arrows as punishment on his people is unique to Deut 32:23–25 and Ezek 5:16–17 in the Hebrew Bible.[67] Regarding

[61] Patrick W. Skehan and Eugene Ulrich, "4QDeut^{q}" in *Qumran Cave 4.IX: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Kings* (ed. E. Ulrich et al.; DJD 14; Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 138. *B. Meg.* 16b also notes that the Song was written stichographically.

[62] See Emanuel Tov, "Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts from Qumran," *RevQ* 16 (1995): 581–600.

[63] Ishmar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History* (trans. Raymond P. Scheindlin; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993), 98, 139.

[64] Of course, this evidence depends on the unity of Deuteronomy 32:1–43. The major analyses of the structure of the Song of Moses have affirmed its unity, e.g., Wright, "Lawsuit of God," 26–67; Thiessen, "Form and Function," 417. Sanders writes: "My conclusion is that this version of the song can be regarded as a unity of composition dating to the pre-exilic period. There is nothing in the song which demonstrates that specific parts of it must be secondary. Most arguments that have been adduced against the unity of the song are extremely weak. Interpretation of v. 30–31 as a secondary passage is possible but not necessary" (*Provenance*, 429–31).

[65] Lyons, *Law to Prophecy,* 94.

[66] Fohrer, *Hauptprobleme*, 144; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 116–17; Block, *Ezekiel,* 1:213; Risa Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah* (JSOTSup 358; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 96–97; Ka Leung Wong, *The Idea of Retribution in the Book of Ezekiel* (VTSup 87; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 94; Kasher, *Ezekiel*, 54; cf. Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 77. Rabbinic interpreters as well drew a connection between these two texts in Sifre to Deuteronomy 321:1.

[67] Numbers 24:8 refers to Yhwh using arrows against the nations.

רעב, it is unlikely that Ezekiel derives it from the phrase "break the staff of bread" in Lev 26:26, because of the close association of חצים and רעב in both Deuteronomy 32 and Ezekiel 16. As a final possible validation of this point, Ka Leung Wong suggests that in Ezek 5:16 בהם, "against them," often emended to the expected בכם, is a literary remnant of the third person context of Deut 32:23 in which בם appears.[68]

B. חרבי*, "My Sword" (Ezekiel 21 // Deut 32:41–42)*

Ezekiel borrows another of YHWH's agents of death found in the Song: the sword.[69] The Song's distinctive חרבי, "my sword (i.e., YHWH's)," mentioned twice in Deut 32:41–42, occurs three times in Ezekiel 21 (21:8–10 [Eng. 3–5]), along with twelve other occurrences of חרב (also in Ezek 30:25; 32:10). In the Song the object of the sword's destruction is YHWH's enemies, but Ezekiel appropriates the motif to describe God's judgment on his people (21:17 [12]). Though the covenant curses of Leviticus 26 mention the sword,[70] these two passages share several common motifs: (1) the sword is sharpened; (2) the sword flashes; (3) the sword is in the hand; and (4) the sword consumes flesh. First, in Deut 32:41, YHWH states, "I sharpen my flashing sword" (שנותי ברק חרבי). Ezekiel 21 speaks repeatedly of a sharpened sword, e.g., Ezek 21:14 [9]: "a sword, a sword, sharpened and polished" (חרב חרב הוחדה וגם־מרוטה). While the two use synonyms (from the roots שנן and חדד), the common motif is nevertheless present. Second, in three instances in Ezekiel 21 the flashing sword motif from Deut 32:41 is found: "polished that it might flash (lit. have flashing)" (21:15 [10]; למען־היה־לה ברק מרטה); "made to flash (lit. for lightning)" (21:20 [15]; עשויה לברק); "polished . . . to flash" (21:33 [28]; מרוטה . . . למען ברק); cf. Nah 3:3. Third, Deut 32:41 also states, "my hand takes hold [of the sword] in judgment" (תאחז במשפט ידי), and Ezek 21:16 [11] speaks of the sword grasped in the hand (ביד, בכף). Finally, just as Deut 32:42 states that "my sword will devour flesh" (חרבי תאכל בשר), so Ezek 21:9 [4] states, "my sword shall be drawn from its sheath against all flesh" (תצא חרבי מתערה אל־כל־בשר); cf. Jer 12:12; Hos 11:6.

Ezekiel's reference to the sword in 7:15 may also have been influenced by the Song, specifically Deut 32:25,[71] the same context from which Ezekiel borrowed רעב and חצים. Ezekiel's threat that "the sword shall be outside, and pestilence and famine

[68] Wong, *Idea of Retribution*, 94.

[69] See Fohrer, *Hauptprobleme*, 144.

[70] Indeed, Ezekiel borrows from Lev 26:33 the phrase והריק אחריכם חרב, "draw the sword after you," in Ezek 5:2, 12; 12:14 (cf. 28:7; 30:11) (see Lyons, *Law to Prophecy*, 63–64). However, in ch. 21 the prophet prefers the phrase מתערה הוצא חרבי, "remove my sword from its sheath" (vv. 3–5), which further suggests that Leviticus 26 is not the basis for ch. 21.

[71] Fohrer, *Hauptprobleme*, 144; Kasher, *Ezekiel*, 55; note Sifre to Deuteronomy 321:6.

inside" (החרב בחוץ והדבר והרעב מבית) closely resembles that of the Song: "outside the sword shall bereave, and inside terror" (מחוץ תשכל־חרב ומחדרים אימה).

C. קנא, "To Make Jealous" (Ezek 8:3 // Deut 32:16, 21)

A less conclusive example is the occurrence of the verbal root קנא in Ezek 8:3 and Deut 32:16, 21, which is used to speak of idolatry provoking God to jealousy.[72] The verb is not used in this sense elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible except in 1 Kgs 14:22 and Ps 78:58, thus ruling out influence from the Priestly literature or another source.[73] Moreover, because the word does not occur often enough in the Deuteronomistic literature to be considered common Deuteronomistic language, it is possible that Ezekiel is influenced by this specific text.

VI. Ezekiel's Programmatic Use of Scripture

Finally, is it likely that Ezekiel would have used Deuteronomy 32 in the way proposed in this essay? Here we may note that there are other examples of Ezekiel's programmatic use of earlier biblical texts. In particular, we note two types comparable to his use of the Song in Ezekiel 16: the creative reformulation of an earlier text and the use of an earlier text for the structure of a new oracle. As an example of the former, Pancratius C. Beentjes and other scholars have shown that Jacob's blessing on Judah in Genesis 49 appears to be the basis for the language and imagery of Ezekiel 19.[74] In the first poem of ch. 19 (vv. 2–9) the prophet draws extensively from the description of Judah as a lion in Gen 49:9:

> Judah is a lion's cub [גור אריה];
> from the prey [טרף] you have gone up [עלית], my son.
> Like a lion he lies down and crouches [רבץ];
> As with a lioness [לביא], who dares to rouse him?

[72] Noted by Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 142; Fohrer, *Hauptprobleme*, 144; Kasher, *Ezekiel*, 56. While H. C. Lutzky ("On the 'Image of Jealousy' [Ezekiel viii 3, 5]," *VT* 46 [1996]: 121–24) has hypothesized that originally a single word lay behind הקנאה המקנה in the phrase סמל הקנאה המקנה, which is derived from the root קנה, "to (pro)create," John Day (*Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* [JSOTSup 265; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002], 62–63) has defended the traditional interpretation that the word reflects a III-א root written as a III-ה.

[73] Though cf. the epithet אל קנא in Exod 20:5; 34:14; etc.

[74] Beentjes, "What a Lioness Was Your Mother: Reflections on Ezekiel 19," in *On Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender-Specific & Related Studies in Memory of Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes* (ed. B. Becking and M. Dijkstra; Biblical Interpretation Series 18; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 26–31; Moshe Greenberg, "Notes on the Influence of Tradition on Ezekiel," *JANESCU* 22 (1993): 29–37; idem, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 357–58; Block, *Ezekiel,* 1:603, 608–10.

This is confirmed by his use of the vine language of Gen 49:10–12 in the second poem (vv. 10–14), including "vine" (גפן) and "blood" (דם), but also "scepter" (שבט), a term denoting rulership.[75] If these links are purposeful, then Ezekiel 19 represents a creative play on the association of Judah with the lion, in which he subverts the noble lion image to portray brutality and exploitation on the part of Judah's monarchy.

An example of the prophet's structural use of Scripture is found in Ezek 22:25–29, where he adopts the text of Zeph 3:3–4 and transforms it freely.[76]

> Her princes in the midst of her are roaring lions;
> her judges are evening wolves;
> they leave nothing for the morning;
> her prophets are wanton and treacherous people;
> her priests have profaned that which is holy;
> they have violated the Torah. (Zeph 3:3–4)

Ezekiel adds a fifth category to Zephaniah's fourfold list of objects of accusation (עם הארץ, "the people of the land") and alters the order, moving the priests to the second position. He changes שרים to נשיאים[77] and שפטים to שרים and expands the oracle in other ways so that the result is more than twice the length of the original.[78]

VII. Ezekiel's Prophetic Transformation

Though Ezekiel adopts the plot and themes of Deuteronomy 32, he takes many liberties in reworking the earlier passage. The foremost among these, as we have noted, is his infusion of the prophetic harlotry motif. This includes the transformation of Israel into Yhwh's metaphorical wife, marked by the addition of a marriage after the discovery of Israel and the expansion of the two verses on Israel's idolatry into a detailed—and graphic[79]—account of her harlotries. The prophet develops the story further at other points as well. He includes an account of Israel's destitute state before her deliverance, including details about her parents (v. 3) and birth story (v. 4), which, along with the introduction of her "sisters," Samaria and

[75] On the possible influence of Nah 2:12–14 and Zeph 3:3, see Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 357–58.

[76] D. H. Müller, "Der Prophet Ezechiel entlehnt eine Stelle des Propheten Zephanja und glossiert sie," *WZKM* 10 (1905): 30–36; see also Block, *Ezekiel,* 1:724–27; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation,* 461–63.

[77] Reading אשר נשיאיה with the LXX, against the MT's קשר נביאיה, "the conspiracy of her prophets" (see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel,* 1:465; Block, *Ezekiel,* 1:720).

[78] For a fuller list of the changes, see Block, *Ezekiel,* 1:724 n. 26.

[79] Ezekiel makes a common metaphor shocking with sexual imagery. See Galambush, *Jerusalem*, 102; Thomas Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* (VTSup 76; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 144–48.

Sodom, in section B (vv. 44–52), make up the "biography" that Ezekiel supplies for the infant. Michael Fishbane calls this type of creative reuse of an earlier text "transformative exegesis," whereby "a received oracle-format or its language is retained though its meaning is transformed by virtue of additions, specifications, or applications."[80]

The infusion of the harlotry motif may account for some distinctives of Ezekiel's oracle, which can be explained as adjustments to the metaphorical vehicle. For example, in Ezekiel's account of Israel's punishment (vv. 35–43), it is noteworthy that he does not draw from the language of Israel's punishment in the Song (Deut 32:23–25), though he clearly does in 5:16–17 and ch. 21. Why does he not in ch. 16, which otherwise has pervasive links with Deuteronomy 32? It seems that he adopts a different mode of punishment for Israel that corresponds to the nature of her transgression: Ezekiel has Israel's lovers stone her in accordance with the Mosaic prescription for adultery (Deut 22:21, 24). Indeed, this is made explicit in Ezek 16:38, where YHWH declares, "I will sentence you with the sentences of adulteresses and murderers" (ושפטתיך משפטי נאפות ושפכת דם).[81] Though capital punishment is prescribed for murder in the legal corpora (Exod 21:12; Lev 24:17; Num 35:16–34), stoning is explicitly specified for adultery. Regardless of whether Ezekiel has in mind or is drawing specifically from Deuteronomy 22,[82] he is surely familiar with the convention that adulterers are put to death by stoning. Similarly, Ezekiel's account of Jerusalem's prosperity, which speaks of her renowned beauty, being adorned with a necklace, earrings, and fine clothes, reflects an adjustment to the metaphorically female Israel.

Even while Ezekiel incorporates the harlot imagery from his prophetic predecessors, he modifies this tradition as well. First, as Julie Galambush points out, "Ezekiel . . . departs from the pattern of Hosea and Jeremiah in consistently distinguishing between idolatry and inappropriate foreign alliances in his depiction of Jerusalem's infidelity."[83] Jerusalem prostitutes herself with two groups: gods (vv. 15–22) and foreign powers (vv. 23–43), thus reflecting both cultic and political infidelity. Second, the oracle reflects Ezekiel's own special concerns. For example, faithful to his concern for the purity of the Jerusalem temple, he "recasts the adultery metaphor to focus on the pollution that precipitates YHWH's abandonment of the Jerusalem temple."[84] Other links to the temple in ch. 16 include the adornment of YHWH's wife with the same materials that adorn YHWH's sanctuary (made

[80] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 465. As one of many examples, he cites the use of Deut 32:9, 13 in Isa 58:14 (pp. 478–79).

[81] Ezekiel attributes the means of punishment to Jerusalem's metaphorical sin, harlotry, rather than idolatry, though Deut 13:7–12 [Eng. 6–11] prescribes stoning as punishment for idolatry as well.

[82] Ezekiel uses the verb רגם (cf. Lev 20:2, 27), whereas Deuteronomy uses סקל.

[83] Galambush, *Jerusalem*, 99–100.

[84] Ibid., 78; see pp. 79–89 for details.

explicit by the Targum's rendering).[85] Third, Ezekiel incorporates other external elements into the metaphor. For example, after adding the marriage imagery to the foundling motif, he incorporates ancient Near Eastern legal terms and metaphors for the abandonment and adoption of the infant foundling.[86]

VIII. The Rhetoric of Transformation

To conclude, we reflect briefly on the purpose of Ezekiel's transformation of the Song of Moses, namely, to accuse and judge his fellow Israelites for their transgressions. By adopting the plot structure of the rise and fall of Israel in Deuteronomy 32, the prophet applies it to his contemporary context of idolatry and illegitimate foreign relations. As we have seen, this was accomplished by expanding the story of Israel's relationship with YHWH and transforming it with the prophetic harlotry metaphor.

The rhetoric of Ezekiel's use of the Song lies in the recontextualization of Moses' depiction of Israel's decline. Since Deuteronomy 32 was a well-known song, Ezekiel's audience would have recognized his allusions to it and felt the force of his application of the judgment in their treasured song to their current circumstances. Perhaps better than recontextualization is the term actualization, since Moses' Song foretells a coming fall into idolatry and Ezekiel declares that Moses' prediction of punishment has come to pass in the current generation. The internal witness of Deuteronomy itself lends credence to this assertion. In the narrative framework of the Song, Moses predicts that "when many evils and troubles have come upon [the people], this Song shall confront them as a witness, for it will live unforgotten in the mouths of their offspring" (Deut 31:21). Surely Ezekiel's generation remembered Moses' Song, and Ezekiel confronted them with it as a witness.

[85] Ibid., 95.

[86] Malul has argued that when parents abandoned a child in Mesopotamia, the use of the phrase "in her/the blood" represented a legal renunciation of their claim to her, and thus YHWH's command to live "in her blood" signifies his formal adoption of the girl ("Adoption of Foundlings," 106, 110).