Benjamin A. Foreman

Animal Metaphors and the People of Israel in the Book of Jeremiah

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Preface

Animal Metaphors and the People of Israel in Jeremiah is a revised version of my doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Aberdeen in 2009. It is perhaps providential that before I began writing this volume, I did not fully understand the magnitude of the task; had I been completely aware of the difficulty of the undertaking, I may never have started in the first place. Nevertheless, the hard work has paid off, and I am delighted to take this opportunity to warmly thank those who have contributed in one way or another to the production of this work.

First and foremost I would like to thank my Ph. D. supervisor Prof. Joachim Schaper for his guidance and support in seeing this work through from start to finish. His advice to "keep writing" proved to be wise counsel, and were it not for his patience and continual encouragement this project would never have been completed. His keen eyes have spared me many embarrassments, and his critical comments have sharpened my academic skills. It goes without saying that any remaining mistakes are, of course, my own.

I would also like to thank Dr Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer and Dr Sharon Moughtin-Mumby for reading the earlier draft of this study with great care and for their very constructive feedback in my Ph. D. oral examination. Their comments were extremely helpful and this book has benefited from their input.

Prof. Kirsten Nielsen also read a portion of this work and offered a number of insightful comments for which I am grateful. I would also like to thank Dr Daniel Bourguet, who in a personal correspondence took the time to share his thoughts with me about the metaphors in Jer 13:17–20.

I am particularly indebted to David Morgan, who read earlier drafts of some of my material, and was always eager to engage in a stimulating conversation. Yair Frank was instrumental in helping me track down several articles that were not available to me, and I am thankful for his help. Also, my appreciation goes out to Heather Surls for her assistance with the formatting of this work.

A special thanks is also due to my father Howard Foreman and to my brother in law Preston Sprinkle. The three of us share a special relationship: we all were Ph. D. students together at the University of Aberdeen! With the three of us working in different areas of biblical studies (Church History, New Testament, and Hebrew Bible), we certainly had a number of interesting discussions! I am grateful not only for their constant

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encouragement, but also for their willingness to read some of my work. I would also like to thank the other members of my family in Scotland, America, and Israel, for their continual support and encouragement. It is no exaggeration to say that this project could not have been possible without it. In addition, I am greatly indebted to a number of family members and friends in Israel who made generous financial contributions. Their generosity will never be forgotten.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife Yael for her unending support throughout the entire writing process. Had it not been for her patience and continual encouragement, I could never have completed this venture. She has proved to be a woman of valour many times over, and it is with great delight that I dedicate this volume to her.

Benjamin A. Foreman Jerusalem, Israel

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Abbreviations

AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
ANET	J. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd edn
ANEP	J. Prichard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BDB	F. Brown, S. Driver, C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BT	*The Bible Translator*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
CAD	J. Ignace, *et al.* (ed.), *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
Dict Talm	M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
ESV	English Standard Version
ET	English Translation (the author's own)
GKC	W. Gesenius, E. Kautzsch, A. Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JPS	The Jewish Publication Society's Translation of the Old Testament
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KB	L. Koehler/W. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*
KJV	King James Version
Kt	K^{e}tîb
NEB	New English Bible

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NET	New English Translation
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OS	*Oudtestamentische Studiën*
PEFQS	*Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
Ps.-J	Pseudo-Jonathan
Q	Q^{e}rê
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
TB	*Tyndale Bulletin*
Tg.	Targum
TNK	Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures according to the Traditional Hebrew Text
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
ZAH	*Zeitschrift für Althebraistik*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

All translations of the biblical texts are the author's own unless explicitly stated otherwise.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Focus of the Investigation

The book of Jeremiah is a cornucopia of metaphor.[1] From the outset it is clear that in order for the reader to properly understand the message of the book, s/he will have to come to grips with its imagery. Chapter two alone contains metaphors of betrothal, first fruits, cisterns, slaves, lions, harlots, vineyards, camels, wild donkeys, thieves, the wilderness, virgins, and immoral women. According to Daniel Bourguet, the number of metaphors in Jeremiah reaches up to nearly 250.[2] It is not an overstatement, therefore, to say that in Jeremiah, meaning and metaphor are inseparably intertwined.

Although research on metaphor in the Hebrew Bible has blossomed in recent years, the study of metaphor in the book of Jeremiah has been neglected. Only a few book-length studies dedicated to metaphors in Jeremiah have been published in the past twenty or so years.[3] Commentaries often do not pay adequate attention to the language and imagery of the metaphors and thus their analyses are often imprecise, or even incorrect. Sometimes scholars simply translate the metaphors literally into English (or another modern language), and offer little or no comment on what exactly the metaphors mean. Their analogies are also sometimes misunderstood, and the limits of the metaphor are not always clearly delineated. In short, an investigation dedicated to the interpretation of metaphors in Jeremiah is needed.

There are a number of ways in which a study of the metaphors of the book of Jeremiah might be carried out. Since the bulk of the research for this project was completed in north-east Scotland, it may be appropriate to illustrate this by comparing the book of Jeremiah to a common sight in this part of the world: a sixteenth century castle. There are an almost infinite number of features which can be admired in any particular castle.

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[1] The cornucopia ("the horn of plenty") is a common symbol of the harvest and is an emblem for abundance.

[2] Bourguet (1987: 64).

[3] E.g. Shields (2004); Bourguet (1987).

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One might choose to examine the architectural features of the structure and compare them with the architecture of other historic buildings from the same period. Others may be more interested in what is inside the castle. This could also take many shapes. Some may be fascinated by the quality and variety of the building's furniture and in what this has to say about its inhabitants. The similarities and dissimilarities of the different rooms may catch the eye of others. Still others might focus on one particular room and consider its distinguishing features in light of the castle as a whole. In short, the exploration of a castle can take many different shapes depending on one's interest. The same thing is true for the study of the imagery of the book of Jeremiah. An almost infinite number of approaches are possible, and every approach will lead to different results. It is the questions which are asked which will shape the nature of the outcome.

In this study we shall direct our attention to one particular "room" in the castle: animal imagery. Very simply put, the driving question of our study is: How is animal imagery used in the book of Jeremiah? Although a number of scholars have researched the animal images in the Psalms[4] and other books of the Hebrew Bible,[5] as far as I am aware, there is to date no study which is devoted exclusively to the investigation of animal imagery in the book of Jeremiah. But just as the more one looks around the room, the more one realises just how much there is to appreciate, an exhaustive investigation of all the faunal metaphors would exceed the limits of this project. As such, we will have to narrow our focus to one particular dimension of the animal imagery in the book of Jeremiah. I have identified five entities for which animals are used metaphorically in the book: enemies, individuals, foreign nations, God, and Israel. This study will focus primarily on the animal metaphors for the people of Israel, although in the introductions to the three main chapters of this book we shall also briefly survey other uses of animal imagery in Jeremiah so as to offer a fuller picture of how animals are used for other topics in the book. My decision to focus on *these* animal metaphors (rather than, say, animal metaphors for God, or foreign nations) is motivated by the fact that very few studies examine the representations of the people of Israel. In a recent collection of essays on metaphors in the Hebrew Bible, nearly all of the articles touched on metaphors for God, and metaphors for the enemies and for the self were also treated by some authors, but none of the essays focused on metaphors for Israel.[6] This is an accurate reflection of the tendency of scholars to give preference to the study of divine metaphors. The research of metaphors relating to Yahweh's chosen nation has largely been ignored.

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[4] E.g. Riede (2000); Brown (2002: 135–66); Dell (2000: 275–91); Whitekettle (2008: 404–19).
[5] E.g. Forti (2008); Forti (1996: 48–63).
[6] See Van Hecke (2005a).

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