Daddy's Little Girls?:
An Examination of Daughters in the Hebrew Bible

By

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Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Religion

May, 2016

Nashville, Tennessee

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Dedicated to my parents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This, as Anna Julia Cooper said, is "when and where I enter."[1] My project, which reflects my scholarly commitments to narrative and ideological criticism, centers on daughters, those unmarried women who are not yet mothers that reside under the authoritative gaze and protective arm of the father, and how they negotiate systems of power in the world of the Hebrew Bible's narratives. In my project, I read biblical daughters as robust, three-dimensional characters in hopes that readers may no longer simply read over them as ancillary characters relegated to the margins of narratives of ancient Israel.

My feminist and womanist sensibilities fuel this project with a passion to ensure that my goddaughter, Avery Dawn Elmore, and her contemporaries have the tools they need to ferret out their place in the community that considers the Bible a sacred text. As they mature to adulthood, I also want my nephew, Sean William Floyd Shelton, my godson, Jonathan Maxwell Guthrie, and their friends to read the biblical text in ways that encourage them to examine the daughters they encounter as meaningful, robust, three-dimensional individuals rather than merely sexualized beings. If they can do this, they can approach their world with an expectation of greatness from everyone they encounter—including those "others" who have been discarded, minimized, and relegated to the margins of societal acceptability.

Many named and unnamed individuals ensured my completion of this project. I wish to thank all of the supportive and helpful members of my dissertation committee. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Herbert R. Marbury, who served as its chair. When I presented my preliminary thoughts to him several years ago, he was encouraging, and immediately went about the work of helping me find my scholarly voice as I navigated the various phases of dissertation development. Dr. Marbury stuck with my project when others questioned, "what daughters?" as

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[1] Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South* (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 1990), 31.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AASOR   Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research

ABD   *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by D. N. F. Freedman. 6 vols. New York: 1992.

AHR   *American Historical Review*

BA   *Biblical Archaeologist*

BAR   *Biblical Archaeology Review*

BASOR   *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*

BDB   Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford: 1907.

BibInt   *Biblical Interpretation*

BLE   *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique*

BSac   *Bibliotheca sacra*

CBQ   *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

CJT   *Canadian Journal of Theology*

COS   *The Context of Scripture*. Edited by W. W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden: 1997-

Di   *Dialog*

Enc   *Encounter*

HALOT   Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: 1994-1999.

HTR   *Harvard Theological Review*

Int   *Interpretation*

JAAR   *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*

JANESCU   *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*

JANER	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
Kairós	*Kairós*
Neot	*Neotestamentica*
PRSt	*Perspectives in Religious Studies*
Proof	*Prooftexts*
RelSRev	*Religious Studies Review*
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RevExp	*Review and Expositor*
Sem	*Semeia*
SemeiaSt	*Semeia Studies*
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
USQR	*Union Seminary Quarterly Review*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WW	*Word and World*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentlich Wissenschaft*

CHAPTER I

BIBLICAL DAUGHTERS

Introduction

Female characters are essential to biblical stories. The Creation Story is incomplete without the woman, Eve. The patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac, are paired with Sarah and Rebekah. Readers remember Laban's daughters, Leah and Rachel, as Jacob's wives and the matriarchs of the Tribes of Israel. Alongside King David, Bathsheba figures prominently into the monarchical narrative of crime, punishment, and family dysfunction, and Jezebel stands as the alluring and seductive cause of group dissention, disorder, and chaos during the reign of her husband, King Ahab. As these examples demonstrate, female characters oftentimes function as foils to powerful, marquee males, but such is usually the case only when the women are wives or mothers. In a patriarchal world like that depicted in the biblical text, fathers, male offspring, wives, and mothers enjoy status unavailable to other kinds of women, like daughters. Institutions and power structures privilege the father as the patriarch of the household, and sons inherit those benefits. Wives and mothers, on the other hand, are ascribed special status because they ensure the patrilineal legacy by birthing sons. Furthermore, because women of the Bible are often remembered for their functions as wives and mothers, it is difficult for readers of the biblical text to "find" daughters, or to consider them important and thereby conceptualize them as robust, multi-dimensional participants in the biblical narrative. Thus, readers are challenged because the world depicted in the biblical text centers male concerns and privileges females for their contributions to patriarchal systems of power.

For this dissertation, a working definition of daughter is a female member of the household who is not yet a mother. This daughter character resides under the legal authority of the head of household, and is readily identifiable with a parent.[2] This dissertation is particularly interested in daughters whose parents are identified in the text because lineage is an important concept for the biblical writers,[3] for whom parentage determines legitimacy within the Yahwistic community. This project examines Lot's unnamed daughters, Pharaoh's daughter, and Rebekah before they become mothers in their narratives. Characters such as Aiah's daughter, Rizpah, Haran's daughter, Milcah, Levi's daughter, Jochebed, and Eliam's daughter, Bathsheba, fall beyond the bounds of my conscription of "daughter" because they are mothers throughout their narratives.

This bifurcation of women as either wives or mothers is reflected in the structure of popular anthologies of women in the bible. Texts such as Carol Meyers' *Women in Scripture*, Edith Deen's *All of the Women of the Bible*, and M. L. del Mastro's *All the Women of the Bible* minimize the significance of daughters by focusing on wives and mothers or cataloguing women according to profession.[4] This division is a result of the fact that patriarchal discourses, both in the stories and in their scholarly reception, imply that women function primarily (if not solely) in

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[2] Daughters like Abishag are excluded from this project because they are not readily identified with a parent.

[3] The names of many biblical characters are often derived from the name of a father or male ancestor (patronymics), however here I am most concerned with those characters whose father or mother is designated or named in the text. Daughters like the nameless maidservant of En-rogel, who delivered messages to Jonathan and Ahimaaz in 2 Sam 17:17, and Naaman's nameless servant girl, who recommended Elisha to heal Naaman in 2 Kgs 5:2-4, are also excluded from this project because their parent is not identified in the text. Similarly, despite the fact that there is no mention of a husband or children for the midwives Shiphrah and Puah, these two are excluded because their parents are not identified in the text.

[4] Carol Meyers, ed., *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000); Edith Deen, *All of the Women of the Bible* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1983); and M. L. del Mastro, *All the Women of the Bible* (Edison: Castle Books, 2004). Other examples of anthologies of women in the Bible include, Alice Bach, ed., *Women in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Frederick Drimmer, *Daughters of Eve: Women in the Bible* (Norwalk: The C. R. Gibson Company, 1975); and Colleen Reece, *Women of the Bible* (Uhrichsville: Barbour, 1993). Also see Athalya Brenner's *Feminist Companion to the Bible* volumes, published by Sheffield Press.

relationship to male leaders, and that the value of women is driven by their ability to procreate. In this type of discourse, however, girls and women are obligations until they become mothers. In other words, as non-mothers, daughters are liabilities. This would suggest to readers that non-mothers—and particularly daughters—are not important or positive figures. While I do not claim that biblical daughters possessed the agency to be the exemplary models that might inspire 21st century feminist politics, I do contend that, in the historical world, daughters, as all of the members of a patriarch's household, lived as an extension of the father's will and under his legal authority. This dissertation excavates what that life might have been and posits possible spaces for agency. In fact, this dissertation attempts to describe both the small spaces of agency possible for biblical daughters and gestures toward places where the stories reveal possible aporias where these characters may have resisted systems of power.

Because of their reproductive contributions to the labor-intensive society depicted in the biblical text, mothers are highly valued, and marriage presents as the primary event that precipitates motherhood. Biblical women become wives and almost immediately become mothers. For example, Rebekah becomes a wife by marrying Isaac at the end of Gen 24 and almost immediately gives birth to Esau and Jacob in Gen 25. Similarly, after Leah becomes Jacob's wife (albeit through Laban's trickery), in Gen 29:23, Leah conceives and produces a son in Gen 29:32. As a result of the pivotal nature of marriage, daughter scholarship often centers on aspects of two life phases of women: pre-marriage and transition to marriage. Within the first phase, Phyllis Trible and Esther Fuchs discuss the importance of obedience for daughters in the pre-marriage stage.[5] Phyllis Trible treats Tamar's obedience to her father and brothers in 2 Sam

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[5] Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) and Esther Fuchs, *Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman* (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 2003).

13, while Esther Fuchs identifies Jephthah's subservient daughter as ideal in her obedience. Athalya Brenner and Carol Meyers examine various household tasks assigned to unmarried daughters.[6] Brenner discusses the domestic tasks of shepherding and gathering water for the household that were performed by Leah and Rachel, and Meyers claims that daughters complete tasks such as cooking, weaving, childcare, gardening, and shepherding small animals. Tikva Frymer-Kensky highlights the physical vulnerability of daughters before they become wives when she argues that the daughter, Tamar, is enmeshed in harmful family relations.[7] A daughter's compliance with social norms, work contributions to the household, and safety are important in the pre-marriage stage.

As daughters transition into marriages in the second phase, their physical appearance and sexual (in)activity become important in the narratives. Naomi Steinberg and Nichole Duran examine physical appearance of daughters as part of betrothals.[8] Steinberg takes up the physical appearance of Rebekah in Gen 24, and Duran examines Esther similarly. Fuchs considers virginity as sexual defilement in the betrothal of Rebekah while Hennie J. Marsman, Elisheva Baumgarten, and Trible each consider the function of defilement in the story of Jephthah's

[6] Athalya Brenner, ed., *Genesis: A Feminist Companion to the Bible (Second Series)* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), and Carol L. Meyers, "Procreation, Production, and Protection: Male-Female Balance in Early Israel," in *Community, Identity and Ideology: Social Science Approaches to the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Charles E. Carter and Carol L. Meyers (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 489-514.

[7] Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible* (New York: Schocken Books, 2002), 166. Also see, George Rideout, "The Rape of Tamar," in *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, ed. Jared J. Jackson and Martin Kessle (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1974), 75-84.

[8] Naomi Steinberg, "Gender Roles in the Rebekah Cycle," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 39.3 (1984): 175-188, and Nicole Duran, "Who Wants to Marry a Persian King?: Gender Games and Wars and the Book of Esther," in *Pregnant Passion: Gender, Sex, and Violence in the Bible*, ed. Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 71-84.

daughter.[9] Fuchs takes up aspects of the betrothal of daughters in her treatment of Rebekah, and

Marsman and Baumgerten each discuss Jephthah's daughter.

In addition to narratives that highlight a daughter's industry, physical appearance, and

sexual compliance with patriarchy's expectations, laws and traditions displayed in the biblical

text undergird systems of power that tend to diminish women in general, and daughters in

particular. For example, Genesis demonstrates the low visibility of daughters. The mothers,

Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel, are highlighted alongside Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his

sons in the narrative arc of the patriarchs; however, Dinah, the daughter, is discounted. That

Dinah does not engage in any direct speech act or internal dialogue and that she occupies the

object position in which others act on her behalf for the majority of Gen 34 discount her. These

narrative acts diminish her value to the household and render Dinah invisible in her own

narrative. Similarly, in the story of the Exodus, the words and actions of Moses and Aaron

overshadow the daughter, Miriam. Additionally, the intrigue associated with the mother,

Bathsheba, and the turmoil between the sons, Amnon, Absalom, Joab, and Solomon which spans

2 Sam 2 through 2 Sam 19, eclipses the daughter, Tamar whose narrative is relegated to 2 Sam

13.

Biblical daughters are difficult to locate because they exist in the shadows while male

offspring occupy the prized position of heir with competitors. Power structures and institutions

favor the father as the male head of household, and sons inherit those benefits. As an example,

according to Deut 21:15-17, men must acknowledge sons of loved and unloved wives. Thus, the

sons of both Rachel and Leah receive blessings from their father, Jacob, in Gen 49, while the

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[9] Esther Fuchs, "Structure, Ideology and Politics in the Biblical Betrothal Type-Scene," in *A Feminist Companion to Genesis*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 273-281; Hennie J. Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel: Their Social and Religious Position in the Context of the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); and Elisheva Baumgerten, "'Remember that Glorious Girl': Jephthah's Daughter in Medieval Jewish Culture," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 97 (2007): 180-209.

daughter, Dinah, receives no mention. In all of this, it is evident that daughters must navigate

systems and institutions of power in various ways. In this dissertation, I argue that biblical

daughters employ strategies of resistance, acquiescence, or some combination of both in order to

navigate these antagonistic systems.

I do not claim that resistance as understood in the context of modern day women was

likely in the social world of the Levant,[10] nor do I claim that these characters attempted to act in

ways that may be construed as particularly heroic. Rather, these narratives reveal more than

scholars have currently brought to light regarding the characterization of daughters. As such, this

dissertation contributes a new conceptualization of daughters as multi-dimensional characters who

act strategically to the discourse.

As the question mark in the title of this dissertation suggests, the relationship between

daughters and their fathers is dubious. The Bible contains inconsistent portrayals of relationships

between daughters and their parents, particularly their fathers.[11] Here, the biblical text

contradicts its affirmation of patriarchy in that not all portrayals of daughters who acquiesce to

patriarchal interests result in their being affirmed or rewarded. The story of Jephthah's daughter

reflects this inconsistency. Similarly, not every daughter who thrwarts patriarchal ends are

vilified, punished or marginalized. The story of Pharaoh's daughter reflects this inconsistency.

Some fathers treat their daughters with disdain. For example, Jephthah and Saul use their

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[10] Levant is a historical and archaeological term that describes the large geographic area east of the Mediterranean Sea. This region includes but is not limited to modern Israel, Jordan, and Palestine.

[11] For treatments of mothers and their children, see Athalya Brenner, *I Am … Biblical Women Tell Their Own Stories* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005); Stephanie B. Crowder, "Biblical Mother Working/Wrecking, Black Mother Working/Wrecking," *Semeia*, 61 (November 2009): 157-167, and "When Mommy Goes to Work: An Analysis of the Canaanite Mother," in *Matthew (Texts & Contexts)*, ed. Nicole Wilkenson Duran and James Grimshaw (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 81-91; Esther Fuchs, "The Literary Characteristics of Mothers and Sexual Politics in the Hebrew Bible," in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins (Chico, CA: Society for Biblical Literature, 1985), 117-136; and Wilda C. Gafney, "Mother Knows Best: Messianic Surrogacy and Sexploitation in Ruth," in *Mother Goose, Mother Jones, Mommie Dearest*, ed. Cheryl Kirk Duggan and Tina Pippin (Boston: Brill, 2009), 23-36.

daughters to meet their personal needs. Jephthah sacrifices his daughter to fulfill a vow and Saul offers his daughters as rewards for achievement.[12] Lot offers his daughters to the crowd in an act of hospitality towards his visitors.[13] Other fathers exhibit care for the welfare of their daughters. For example, Job and Caleb provide their daughters with property, and Laban and Mordecai transition their daughters into the households of other men through marriage, as was the expectation of fathers in the ancient world.[14]

The presentation of biblical daughters warrants careful investigation. Modern images of daughters dancing lovingly with their doting fathers on their wedding day romanticizes the transactional act of the father transferring authority to the husband. The idyllic portrayal of the wedding day rituals do not comport with the portrayals of biblical daughters. A meticulous examination of the narratives of biblical daughters uncovers father-daughter, familial, and communal relationships that are neither romantic nor endearing. And yet, despite these disconcerting portrayals and the challenge of the general underrepresentation of daughters in the biblical text, an interrogation of these characters reveals that they are more than background

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[12] Jephthah kills his daughter in an act of physical sacrifice while Saul gives up his daughters in various marriage negotiations and renegotiations in order to better his political position in relational acts of sacrifice.

[13] Lot sacrifices his daughters when he encourages the members of the angry mob to "do with them as you please" in Gen 19:8. Katherine Low asserts that, in this episode, Lot violates his daughters by forcing a sexual situation upon them, regardless of their consent or non-consent, and Ilona Rashkow offers that Lot *volunteers* to hand the daughters over to be abused by the corwd. See Katherine B. Low, "The Sexual Abuse of Lot's Daughters: Reconceptualized Kinship for the Sake of our Daughters," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 26 (2010): 40, and Ilona N. Rashkow, *Taboo or Not Taboo: Sexuality and Family in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 105.

[14] Sidnie Ann White Crawford, "Esther," in *Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 131-137; Alice Ogden Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007); and Rebecca Hancock, "Esther and the Politics of Negotiation: An Investigation of Public and Private Spaces in Relationship to Possibilities for Female Royal Counselors" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2012) all represent the diversity in the scholarship that considers the familial designation of Mordecai. Crawford uses the term "guardian" to refer to Mordecai based upon his function while Bellis describes him as a cousin, and Hancock employs the familial term "uncle." For additional examples of the variety of terms for Mordecai, see Michael Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), and Carey Moore, "It Takes a Village to Produce a Commentary," in *The Book of Esther in Modern Research*, ed. Sidnie White Crawford and Leonard J. Greenspoon (London: T & T Clark, 2003).

players in others' narratives. The remainder of the chapter reviews the scholarship around

daughters, paying particular attention to discourses centered on virginity, inheritance, and

spatiality. The chapter concludes by articulating the dissertation's methodological approaches

and outlining the structure of the argument, thus situating it among the work of other feminist

biblical critics.

<center>Feminist Scholarship on Biblical Daughters</center>

Beginning with Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *The Woman's Bible* (first published in 1895),

feminist scholars examined women in the biblical world and the biblical text. In particular, Julia

Asher-Greve, Carol Meyers, and Hennie Marsman have marshaled their energies around the

concerns of women in ancient Near Eastern societies.[15] Trible interprets the biblical stories of

women in order "to recover a neglected history so that these terrors do not come again,"[16] while

J. Cheryl Exum considers the androcentric interests these stories promote.[17] Esther Fuchs

cautions against ignoring the patriarchal implications of the way in which women in the biblical

text are silenced.[18] The sections below include an in-depth examination of such scholarship,

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[15] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman's Bible: A Classical Feminist Perspective* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2002); Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); J. Cheryl Exum, "Feminist Criticism: Whose Interests are Being Served?," in *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 65-90; and Esther Fuchs, *Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman* (Sheffield: Sheffield, 2003). For treatments of women in ancient societies, see Julia M. Asher-Greve, "Feminist Research and Ancient Mesopotamia: Problems and Prospects," in *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies*, ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), 218-237; Carol Meyers, "Recovering Objects, Re-Visioning Subjects: Archaeology and Feminist Biblical Study," in *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies*, ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), 270-284; and Hennie J. Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel: Their Social and Religious Position in the Context of the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

[16] Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 30.

[17] Exum, "Whose Interests," 70.

[18] Fuchs, *Sexual Politics,* 39. Fuchs argues that the silencing of women is particularly prevalent in stories of rape and adultery.

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particularly that which devotes specific attention to discourse centered on virginity, inheritance, and spatiality in the literature of the ancient Near East, ancient Egypt, and ancient Israel; the Hebrew Bible.

Virginity

The virginity of biblical daughters presents itself early in their narratives. As an example, Lot explains that he has two virgin daughters who have not known a man (Gen 19:8). Additionally, the narrator describes Rebekah as a virgin, whom no man had known (Gen 24:16), while Jephthah's daughter speaks of bewailing her virginity (Judg 11:37). Modern readers must be careful not to apply modern notions of sex, sexuality, and autonomy to the concept of virginity in the Hebrew Bible, however. Despite virginity being physically located within or embodied by a daughter, I contend that customs, traditions and laws focus on virginity in ways that do not privilege the daughter. There is no concern for modesty, professional requisites, or justice regarding a daughter's virginity. Customs outline methods to prove a woman's virginity in very public ways that do not consider the daughter's privacy or modesty. In Deut 22:13-21, for example, the parents of the new bride submit bed sheets bloodied by the tearing of the woman's hymen on her wedding night to the elders at the city gate as evidence of her virginity. Traditions stipulate that a high priest may only marry a virgin in Lev 21:13-14. This requirement reflects the special, sanctified position of the priest in the community, and maintains the purity of his male offspring: ostensibly, the next high priest. Laws stipulate the settlement of cases involving the violation of virgins to the end that the father receives recompense from the offender who sexually violates his virgin daughter. For instance, Deut 22:28-29 specifies that a man who sexually violates a virgin must give the woman's father fifty shekels of silver and

marry the woman. As these examples suggest, virginity in the ancient world can be a complicated concept, and the scholarship helps readers grasp the notion that, beyond female modesty or sexual inactivity, virginity is a commodity and a male enterprise.

Virginity in Ancient Near Eastern Literature

The use of בתולים (virginity)[19] in the biblical text emerges out of larger ancient Near Eastern understandings of virginity. Both the legal corpus and narrative material of the ancient Near East take up the concern of a woman's virginity.[20] Assyriologist Jerrold Cooper claims that expectations of virginity before marriage correlate strongly with patrilineal inheritance and descent as well as with patriarchal family structure in Mesopotamia. Cooper points to Neo-Babylonian marriage agreements that designate brides as *batultu*, and suggests that the designations mean she is a young woman who has not been married previously and is sexually inexperienced.[21] He also challenges the idea that oaths and physical tests were viable indicators of virginity in ancient Mesopotamia. Cooper questions the practice of relying upon the statements of the accused to prove the presence of absence of virginity. Cooper references the examples of a woman of the 3rd Dynasty of Ur who refuses to take an oath that she has only slept

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[19] The two Hebrew terms בתולים and בתולה mean different things. בתולים (virginity) is something possessed by an individual. A בתולה (virgin) is a person.

[20] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*; Jerrold S. Cooper, "Virginity in Ancient Mesopotamian," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Simo Parpola and R. M. Whiting (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002), 91-112; Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Virginity in the Bible," in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Victor Matthews, Bernard M. Harold, and Tikva S. Frymer-Kensky (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1988), 79-96; and Mieke Bal, "Dealing/With/Women: Daughters in the Book of Judges," in *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader*, ed. Alice Bach (New York: Routledge, 1999), 317-333.

[21] Cooper, "Virginity in Ancient Mesopotamia," 93. Cooper states, "when Neo-Babylonian marriage agreements designate the bride as *batultu*, they mean she is a young woman who has not been married previously and is sexually innocent, i.e. a virgin."

with her husband, and of a woman who is asked to swear a particular man did not "know" her.[22]

In these two examples, the declarations of innocence from the accused serves as proof of

virginity. Cooper also points to the example of female witnesses being used in an Old

Babylonian legal text to establish a bride has remained sexually inactive.[23] These female

witnesses presumably performed a physical examination to prove the bride's sexual inactivity.

Cooper challenges using this reference as an example of a physical test of virginity because a

close read of the text demonstrates that the witnesses did not testify to actual sexual activity

between the husband and wife, but to the couple's treatment of each other. Additionally, Cooper

posits that the bride was probably an older widow or divorcee with sexual experience before she

entered into marriage with her groom.   The bride's sexual inactivity is therefore, a mute point.

For Cooper, defloration was not a sign of lost virginity. Cooper concludes that t*here was no sign*

that marked a virgin nor were their physical tests to determine virgininty's presence or absence

in ancient Mesopotamia.[24] As Cooper states, "if virginity was an asset both to a girl and her

father in Mesopotamia, there is no indication that there existed anything like the much-discussed

'honor and shame' complex of the Circum-Mediterranean region, in which the honor of a man

and his family is to a very great extent determined by the chastity of the family's women."[25] In

fact, a woman's virginity had no bearing on family honor. Cooper posits that the only two

logical reasons for virginity before marriage are to prevent the self-selection of marriage partners

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[22] Cooper, "Virginity in Ancient Mesopotamia," 94-95.

[23] Cooper, "Virginity in Ancient Mesopotamia," 96.

[24] Cooper, "Virginity in Ancient Mesopotamia," 94 - 99.

[25] Cooper, "Virginity in Ancient Mesopotamia," 101. Cooper uses the term, "chastity," however this term, which stems from the Latin, *castus* ("pure") is anachronistic in that it was first used in the 13th century. See "Chaste." Page 55 of *The Oxford English dictionary.* Edited by James A. H. Murray and Society Philological. Oxford: Clarendon. 1933.

(i.e., eloping), and as preparation for marital fidelity. The ancient patriarchal community rejected practices of self-selection of marriage partners because elopement challenged the legal authority of the patriarch. This position on virginity assumes the synchronous sexual activity of a girl who is betrothed. Taken a step further, the concern may not be whether the daughter has had sex at all, but whether she has had multiple sex partners during the same period.

The psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud offers a helpful argument for the anxiety men feel over a woman's sexuality and chastity when he suggests that virginity is less about a woman's sexual inactivity and more about her memory.[26] Freud argues that the demand that a girl shall not bring to her marriage with a particular man any memory of sexual relations with another is indeed nothing other than the logical continuation of the right to exclusive possession of a woman. According to Freud, this possessive position forms the essence of monogamy. In this way, virginity as a complement to monogamy is a concept designed to benefit men.

Given the concern for exclusivity, it is not surprising that ancient Near Eastern communities produced legal documents that addressed conditions that jeopardize a daughter's virginity.[27] Here, a daughter's virginity is credited to her father. Documents such as a Middle Assyrian law and a portion of the Code of Lipit-Ishtar treat situations that include the virginity of a daughter who was neither married nor betrothed. Middle Assyrian Law states that if a citizen kidnaps and rapes a virgin who is not betrothed, her father must kidnap and rape the wife of the assailant. In this instance, the assailant must pay the bride price to the father. The father

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[26] Sigmund Freud, *The Psychology of Love*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (New York: Penguin Classics, 2007), 193.

[27] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 256. For examples of Sumerian (Code of Lipit-Ishtar), Ur (Code of Ur-Namma), Babylonian (Laws of Hammurabi and Code of Eshnunna), and Assyrian laws, which take up the defloration of young girls, see Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), and Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Patriarchal Family Relationships and Near Eastern Law," *BA* (1981): 209-213.

can then keep the bride price and marry her to whomever he wishes.[28] Among the Middle

Assyrian Laws, Tablet A, §55 states, "if he (the fornicator) has no wife, the fornicator shall give

"triple" the silver as the value of the maiden to her father; her fornicator shall marry her; he shall

not reject(?) her. If the father does not desire it so, he shall receive "triple" silver for the maiden,

and he shall give his daughter in marriage to whomever he chooses."[29]   The father does not have

to give his daughter to her assailant in marriage. The Code of Lipit-Ishtar contains the following

regarding virgin daughters: If a man claims that another man's virgin daughter has had sexual

relations, but the accusation is proven false, he shall weigh and deliver 10 shekels of silver.[30]

The link between virginity and the father's social and economic standing is evinced in that, in

both cases, the father receives some sort of payment, restoring him to a respectable place in

society. In the first instance, the father suffers no financial loss and may respond to the

transgression with an equally treacherous and brutal act that diminishes the assailant's standing.

In the second example, the father receives financial recompense for the damage done to his

reputation and his commodity: the daughter's virginity. In both examples, the transgressor

compensates the father for damage done to him as the patriarch. The daughter remains in the

shadows.

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[28] Zafrira Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters in Israel and the Ancient Near East: A Social, Legal and Ideological Revolution* (Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publications, 2006), 6-8. Ben-Barak provides a helpful summation of the dowry, bride price, and gifts. The dowry was what the father gave his daughter from the family possessions on the occasion of her marriage. Given in lieu of an inheritance, it could include moveable and immovable property, but rarely included plots of land. The bride price, bridewealth, or *mohar* was paid to the bride's family by the groom's family. Oftentimes, in addition to the dowry and bride price transactions, both the bride's and groom's families gave each other gifts. For more on dowry and bride price, see Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Patriarchal Family Relationships and Near Eastern Law," *Biblical Archeologist* 44.4 (Fall 1981): 209-213, and Jack Goody, *Bridewealth and Dowry* (Cambridge: Cambridge England University Press, 1973).

[29] "The Middle Assyrian Laws (Tablet A)," trans. Martha Roth (*COS* 2.132: 359).

[30] "The Laws of Lipit-Ishtar," trans. Martha Roth (*COS* 2.154: 412).

The literature of the ancient Near East also includes material about the virginity of daughters and presents virginity as a commodity controlled by males. According to Ugaritic mythology, a betrothed woman lived in the house of her father until she was married because her father could best protect her virginity.[31] A daughter's virginity was controlled by her father and he had a vested financial interest in protecting it. A daughter's virginity did not belong to her. In the Ugaritic legend named for him, the god Baal refuses to put a window in the newly built palace because he worries that a window will give suitors access to his daughter. The presumption is that suitors will take the virginity of Baal's daughter if they have access to her through a window. This literary example points to the daughter's virginity as a commodity that the father wants to preserve until he conveys it (since he controls it) to the household of another patriarch via marriage, generally in return for a bride-price. Readers will recognize this treatment of virginity in many of the daughter narratives in the Hebrew Bible.

These examples of virginity in the Ugaritic literature, prompt questions around the daughters' agency and deployment of their sexuality. If the daughters exercised their legal rights and autonomously managed their own bodies, they engaged in consensual sex, however – this act disrupts the social order and flies in the face of the patrarichy presented in the text. If the daughters in these stories are exercising authority over their sexuality and their bodies, these stories may be examples of consensual pre-marital sex. Consensual pre-marital sex is a possibility in the case of the betrothed woman because the financial transaction between the men would have already transpired and the father would be contractually obligated to present his daughter to the groom for marriage. The father may be concerned about protecting her commoditized virginity for social appearances or because he does not trust that the groom will

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[31] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 270.

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make good on his commitment to go through with the marriage to his daughter. This concern may challenge the idea of consensual pre-marital sex but the text does not disclose the father's motive. Likewise, readers do not know why Baal is concerned about the suitors but there is no mention of any particular suitor or incident in the text. The reader is left to wonder if Baal is a pessimist or if the daughter has demonstrated a propensity to jeopardize her virginity in the past. Because the text does not provide this information, the reader must consider the context and worldview of the text. In ancient societies the patriarch controled the daughter's body. Furthermore, in this context pre-marital sex on the part of the betrothed woman or Baal's daughter would be a violation against the father because it would be his virginity that was violated. Framing this violation as a rape aligns with the ideology of the text which works to protect the father. If the act is a rape the father is violated, and father has social and economic recourse. If the act is not a rape, the father has no recourse.

Virginity in Ancient Egypt

Not all ancient societies viewed virginity similarly. The ancient Egyptian view of sex, sexuality, and virginity was distinct from that of other ancient Near Eastern societies. In ancient Egypt, sex was enjoyable and served a purpose beyond procreation.[32] Lisa Manniche proposes that, while procreation was a necessity of life in ancient Egypt, evidence of various

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[32] Virginity as presented in the Hebrew Bible is a heterosexual concern; however, same-sex interactions were also characteristic of ancient societies. For examples of how ancient texts and inscriptions also evidence homosexual activity, see Martti Nissenen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World: A Historical Perspective*, trans. Kirsi Stjerna (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998); Lise Manniche, *Sexual Life in Ancient Egypt* (London: KPI, 1987); Robert L. Brawley, ed., *Biblical Ethics and Homosexuality: Listening to Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996); Athalya Brenner, *The Intercourse of Knowledge: On Gendering Desire and 'Sexuality' in the Hebrew Bible* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997); Tom Horner, ed*., Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality in Biblical Times* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978); and Ken Stone, "Gender and Homosexuality in Judges 19: Subject-Honor, Object-Shame?," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 67 (1995): 87-107.

contraceptives suggests that reproduction was not the sole purpose of the sex act.[33] She explains

that Egyptians knew that pregnancy resulted from intercourse, or rather from the introduction of

semen into the woman's body, whether through the vagina, the anus, the mouth, or the ear.[34]

Manniche suggests that the purpose of ancient contraceptives was preventative, and designed to

avoid unwanted pregnancies. A man may control a pregnancy during a sexual encounter by

proactively spilling his semen on the ground as in Gen 38:9, while a woman may employ vaginal

suppositories to avoid an unwanted pregnancy.[35] Though Manniche makes reference to

contraception and abortion in her footnote, she does not consider it in the body of her

manuscript. Unfortunately, by doing so, she eclipses the role of women in sex acts and presents

them as passive actors in sex acts.

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[33] Contraceptives were used throughout the ancient world, including Egypt. Biggs notes the importance in Mesopotamia for women to bear children, but notes that once having produced a sufficient number of children, women usually sought measures to control pregnancies or terminate unwanted pregnancies. Biggs points to Babylonian texts including references to stones, a "plant for not getting pregnant," and other herbal remedies as popular methods of contraception in Mesopotamia. Gruber suggests references to a large number of wet nurses, which would 'dry up' the wife's mile, in Old Babylonon texts indicate an awareness of lactational infertility. Specifically, that lactation reduced the likelihood of pregnancy such that those of the preferred class would avoid breast feeding in order to induce more pregnancies. See R. D. Biggs, "Conception, Contraception, and Abortion in Ancient Mesopotamia," Pages 1-15 in *Wisdom, Gods and Literature: Studies in Assyriology in Honour of W.G. Lambert*. Edited by A. R. George and Irving L. Finkel. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000, and Mayer I. Gruber, "Breast-Feeding Practices in Biblical Israel and in Old Babylonian Mesopotamia." *The Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*. 19 (1989): 61-83.

[34] Lise Manniche, "Some Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Sexual Life," *Acta Orientalia* 38 (1977): 13. In a footnote, Manniche acknowledges that abortion was known and legally condemned in Ramessid times. Also, see Alan H. Gardiner, *Ramesside Administrative Documents* (London; Oxford University Press, 1948), 81.

[35] In addition to an ancient illustration in which an ancient Egyptian is wearing a condom, in ancient Egypt, recipes for barrier methods of birth control were buried with the dead to prevent unintended pregnancy in the afterlife as far back as 1850 B.C.E. Pessaries or vaginal suppositories were a common form of birth control in ancient Egypt. The Ebers Papyrus (1550-1500 BCE) records the use of a mixture of acacia gum, dates, an unidentified plant, other plant fiber, and honey, which formed a pessary that purportedly "stops pregnancy." Sponges were perhaps the most commonly used substances to block and absorb semen. The oldest reference to the use of sponges for contraception is from the Talmud. See Jeannette Parisot, *Johnny Come Lately: A Short History of the Condom* (London: The Journeyman, 1985); Norman E. Himes, *Medical History of Contraception* (New York: Gamut., 1963); John M. Riddle, J. Worth Estes, and Josiah C. Russell, "Ever Since Eve... Birth Control in the Ancient World," *Archaeology* 47.2 (1994): 31; Vern L. Bullough and Bonnie Bullough, *Contraception: A Guide to Birth Control Methods* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1990); John M., Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion: From the Ancient World to the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); and Beryl Suitters, *The History of Contraceptives* (London: Fanfare, 1967).

However, the literary evidence from ancient Egypt does not support this image of women as passive participants in sex acts. Rather, ancient Egyptian romance poetry points to affectionate women as active sexual subjects, meaning the women in these texts are in the subject position and not solely the object of others' sexual acts.[36] Examples include the poems from Papyrus Chester Beatty I, in which a woman uses simile to declare to her lover, "O that you came to your sister swiftly! Like a swift envoy of the king … Like a horse of the king …. Like a bounding gazelle in the wild," and later speaks of a woman's ability to entrap her lover with her beauty only to reject his advances.[37] Geraldine Pinch suggests that in New Kingdom love poetry, young people appear to mix freely, and the female lovers in these poems display as much physical passion as the men.[38] For example, Pinch points to one poem in which a girl wishes that her beloved would write to her mother to arrange a match, and in another, lovers pray to Hathor, the goddess associated with love, sex, and birth. All of these sex acts were performed beyond the spatial and relational boundaries of the household.

Although the ancient Egyptians seemed to celebrate sex and sexuality, they condemned intercourse outside of marriage. The Egyptians judged adultery harshly, especially among non-royals.[39] An example of this condemnation among ancient Egyptians includes accusations of corruption in the priesthood and administration, such as fornication with married women as

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[36] The subject position of women in ancient Egyptian text is similar to that of the female voice in Song of Songs.

[37] Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature,* Vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 186-188. See Papyrus Chester Beatty I, 1.b Three Poems and I.c A Collection.

[38] Geraldine Pinch, "Private Life in Ancient Egypt," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack M. Sasson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995), 371. For more examples of Egyptian love poetry, see Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 2006.

[39] Manniche, "Ancient Egyptian Sexual Life," 12. Manniche notes a reference to a king in the Pyramid Texts 510 that does not condemn royal adultery. See James P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, ed. Peter Der Manuelian (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005). The same holds true in the Hebrew Bible as long as sex with woman does not violate a patriarch's property.

found in the Turin Indictment Papyrus.[40] Interestingly, sexual intercourse involving a virgin was not judged as harshly as adultery. In fact, copulation with an unmarried woman had relatively neutral implications.[41] There is no textual evidence suggesting that virginity was a prerequisite for an Egyptian bride.[42]

Virginity in the Hebrew Bible

The work of Hennie Marsman, Mieke Bal, Jerrold Cooper, Gerhard von Rad, Tikva Frymer-Kensky and Joseph Fleishman exemplify extant biblical scholarship on virginity, which generally accepts בתולים as denoting sexual purity, and considers the critical role fathers play in the preservation of their daughter's virginity. A daughter's virginity is important because challenges to it disrupt patriarchal structures that ascribe prestige vis-à-vis a man's ability to preserve and enhance those things assigned to him. Hennie Marsman points to the laws of Deut 22 to demonstrate the importance of an unmarried daughter's evasion of sexual relations that compromise her as the בתולה.[43] A compromised בתולה threatens the social order of the patriarchal biblical world by challenging the standing of the father; therefore, the idea that daughters were supposed to enter marriage as virgins aligns with enhancing the social position of the male head of household.

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[40] Alan H. Gardiner, *Ramesside*, 73, 12-92, 10 and 74, 1-14. Also see Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts Translated into English* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), and Manniche, "Ancient Egyptian Sexual Life," 19-22.

[41] C. J. Eyre, "Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 70 (1984): 95.

[42] Pinch, "Private Life in Ancient Egypt," 371.

[43] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 277-278.

Mieke Bal moves beyond the notion of threats to the patriarchal order and asserts that the daughter's virginity is a male concern.[44] Bal understands Freud's definition of virginity as speaking to male ideologies of possession and dominance. Here, as this dissertation has already explained, the male is threatened by the idea that he does not have total possession of the woman's sexuality because if she is not a virgin she has the memory of another man's sexual abilities in addition to those of her husband. In Freud's system, the male does not have sole possession of the woman's sexual experience, and ostensibly this threat makes a daughter's virginity a male concern.

Bal offers a compelling application of Freud's psychological assertion of virginity as a male concern, one that plays out in both biblical narratives and legal material. For example, Lot's daughters have no part in their father's attempt to barter their virginity in exchange for the safety of his guests in Gen 19:6-8. This entire transaction occurs between men. Similarly, Dinah remains silent while males in her family seek remedy for her sexual violation in Gen 34:6-17. Additionally, Jephthah's daughter's bewailing of her virginity (Judg 11:37-38) does not improve her position. Finally, beyond the narratives, Deut 22:28-29 details legal remedy to fathers and repercussion to the male transgressors when a daughter's virginity is compromised before marriage.[45]

While virginity is a male concern, men treat virginity differently based on their class or social status. Royals deploy virginity in negotiations of empire and national safety, while non-royals leverage virginity in negotiations of land and material artifacts. For example, King Saul and King Solomon utilize their virgin daughters, Merab, Michal, Basemath and Taphath, to

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[44] Bal, "Dealing/With/Women," 323.

[45] Jerrold C. Cooper, "Virginity in Ancient Mesopotamia," 105.

strengthen the position of the kingdom in 1 Sam 18 and 1 Kgs 4.   King Saul uses the promise of

marriage to Merab as an incentive for David to fight the Phillistines on behalf of the kingdom in

1 Sam 18:17. Later, in order to preserve the safety of Israel, King Saul negotiates the exchange

of his daughter, Michal, in marriage to David for the defeat of the Phillistines in 1 Sam 18:25.

Similarly, King Solomon uses the marriages of his two daughters, Taphath and Basemath, to

safeguard his political presence throughout the kingdom. Each of King Solomon's daughters

marries one of his district administrators, Ben-abinadab of Naphath-dor and Ahimaan of

Naphtali (1 Kgs 4:11 and 15). Gerhard von Rad argues that in the case of the non-royal Dinah,

her father Jacob has a remarkably passive attitude towards her rape.[46]   Von Rad discounts the

fact that, although his daughter's virginity is compromised, Jacob meets his objective of

increasing his value position in the community. When Jacob hears that Dinah has been defiled,

he and his sons negotiate terms of a marriage contract. The elements of the contract include

Jacob's having unrestricted access to the land of Shechem, garnering a high value marriage

present (*mohar*), and costly gifts (Gen 34:10-12). It seems Jacob is no longer concerned with

Dinah's personal violation and is more focused on maintaining his status by claiming the

appropriate recourse for Shechem's transgression of boundaries associated the commodity that is

his daughter's virginity and by improving his position as a land owner.

Tikva Frymer-Kensky reads the story of Dinah and the legal codes regarding both

intercourse with an unmarried girl (Exod 22:15-16 and Deut 22:28-89) and a slandered bride

(Deut 22:13-21), and points to virginity as a mechanism by which men control women.[47] Frymer-

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[46] Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973), 332.

[47] Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Virginity in the Bible," in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Bernard M. Levinson, Victor H. Matthews, and Tikva S. Frymer-Kensky (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1998), 82.

Kensky rightly asserts that Dinah's consent does not make the sex with Shechem a permissible act because Dinah has no right to consent.[48]   In the biblical world, Dinah's commoditized virginity is the property of her father. Frymer-Kensky considers the story of Dinah and the customs found in Exod 22 and Deut 22, and offers that the basic cultural assumption present in the biblical text is that young marriageable women are virgins, that virginity is prized, and that this prize has a price.[49]

Joseph Fleishman challenges Frymer-Kensky's assertion of the father's exhaustive authority when he argues that an Israelite father did not have the authority to force his daughter into prostitution (Lev 19:29), because she enjoyed legal status as a member of her household.[50] However, Fleishman's misses the reality that in patriarchal societies the legal codes protect the concerns of the male. An unmarried woman could not give consent because she did not have the legal authority to do so, and the concerns and legal standing of an unmarried female member of an Israelite household were tenuous at best. Fleishman himself explains that the purpose of the Lev 19 law is to prevent the proliferation of prostitution and its morally degrading effects on the Israelite community. And, despite the probable intent of the law, which Fleishman says was designed to primarily protect the daughter by ensuring her future as well as her social and legal status, the law still benefited the father both socially and financially. Socially, the father avoids shame, and financially he gains the high bride price by presenting a virginal daughter for marriage. The lone benefit credited to the daughter was the avoidance of a life as a prostitute living on the cultural margins of society. Neither Frymer-Kensky nor Fleishman considers how,

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[48] Frymer-Kensky, "Virginity in the Bible," 87.

[49] Frymer-Kensky, "Virginity in the Bible," 80.

[50] Joseph Fleishman, *Father-Daughter Relations in Biblical Law* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2011), 223.

in each of these biblical examples, the daughter's virginity marks the non-royal father's status in the community.

The patriarchal household attaches value to a woman's virginity because virginity represents an economic value, and is often the subject of exchange or exploitation in male negotiations. As an example, the narrative emphasizes Rebekah's virginity because it enhances her value as an ideal marriage candidate for Abraham's son in Gen 24:16 and 22. Additionallly, high priests, who are uniquely set aside as cultic practitioners, may only marry virgins in Lev 21:13-14.

Inheritance

The control of real property was an indicator of wealth and legal authority in ancient societies. Because landed property is synonymous with authority, male control of property in the form of inheritance also marks order in the ancient world. In the ancient Near East, the patrilineal transfer of landed property preserved the בת אב, (patrimony), the integrity of which was a central concern for the community at large.[51] Subsequently, systems and institutions aligned to meet any challenge to the house of the father. To that end, daughters generally did not inherit, and in patrilineal societies, they had little economic or legal standing.[52] While most ancient Near Eastern daughters did receive land and were granted legal standing commensurate with their land holdings, not all did. Thus, the story of Zelophehad's daughters (which will be

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[51] Zafrira Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters in Israel and the Ancient Near East: A Social, Legal and Ideological Revolution.* Jaffa, Israel: Archaeological Center Publications, 2006, 3.

[52] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters*, 8-9.

discussed in detail later in this chapter) represents a disruption of social stability in the biblical world.[53]

Inheritance in Ancient Near Eastern Literature

Raymond Westbrook examines ancient Near Eastern legal texts and concludes that inheritance was a universal practice. Despite a wide variety of local customs and details based on common structures and concepts (i.e., the judicial use of the oath is the same for all societies of the region, at all periods, and the structure of inheritance is essentially the same), Westbrook argues that a common legal culture concerning land transfer also existed among various ancient societies.[54] As an example of how inheritance was a universal practice, Westbrook highlights how the whole estate of the deceased, both assets and liabilities, passed upon death directly to the legitimate heirs, who initially held the estate in common and then divided it by mutual agreement. In this instance, legitimate heirs should be understood as the sons of the man's wives.[55]

However, many daughters in the ancient Near East inherited and managed property in communities that designed inheritance customs to preserve the father's name and patrimony.

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[53] The inheritance of Zelophehad's daughters disrupts the social order because, should the daughter marry outside the immediate family, the property she inherits from her father might become part of the property of her husband and his family. In speaking of Nuzi, Katarzyna Grosz expounds on the implications of daughter inheritance and asserts that the daughter's land would be lost to the family because her children who would eventually receive it, would not belong to her patrilineage but to that of her husband's. See Katarzyna Grosz, "Some Aspects of the Position of Women in Nuzi," in *Women's Earliest Records From Ancient Egypt and Western Asia.* (ed. Barbara S. Lesko: Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 173.

[54] Raymond Westbrook, "Introduction: The Character of Ancient Near Eastern Law," in *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, ed. Raymond Westbrook (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 24, 56, 60-62. Westbrook considers the dowry and bride gifts as examples of female inheritance.

[55] Westbrook, "Introduction," 57. Westbrook explains that the deceased's legitimate sons were those born of a legitimate marriage. In cases in which a son had already died with no male heir, the grandchildren would take his share alongside their uncle (*per stirpes*) and divide it between them. Uniquely, under Egyptian law, this principle also applied to daughters, who ranked equally with sons.

Zafrira Ben-Barak establishes the challenge of daughter inheritance in the ancient Near East by noting that the absence of sons threatened the בת אב because daughters who inherited may carry the patrimony to another, exogamous household.[56] By default, sons generally inherited; however, daughter inheritance was not uncommon in ancient societies. In ancient Near Eastern households in which there were no sons to inherit, the remedies for son-less fathers often resulted in some degree of daughter inheritance. In response to the concern about the absence of sons, many fathers adopted them. In those cases, daughters shared their inherited patrimony with the men whom their fathers adopted as sons or sons-in-law. In Nuzi for example, because Gilipukur had no sons, he adopted Arimmarka as a son-in-law. He then married his daughter, Taduni, to the adopted son-in-law and Taduni shared her inheritance with her husband. Similarly, Taše-Alla-ra and Teš, the daughters of Zige, jointly inherited his patrimony with his adopted sons.[57] In other households with no adopted or biological sons, some daughters inherited patrimony as sole heirs. This was the case for the nameless daughters of Tarmiya, who declared that his daughters would inherit in the absence of sons, and for Aqaminni, whose father, Taitilla, left his patrimony to her alone.[58]

In some cases, daughters inherited in households that even contained sons. In those instances, the daughter's inheritance did not include land, but houses. For example, in Emar, Rašap-ili inherited alongside her two brothers; in Alalakh, Bittatti inherited a lesser share than

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[56] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters*, 4, 9. Ben-Barak states, "family inheritance customs protected the basic principles of the בת אב ("house of the father"), meeting the father's needs, supporting him in his lifetime, observing burial and mourning rites after his death, continuing the line of descent according to paternal blood relationships, keeping the patrimony within the family and honoring the household gods and ancestral spirits."

[57] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters*, 139, 148-149. In her list of ancient Near Eastern daughters who inherited property, Ben-Barak also includes the examples of Marsusse and Ussaya, who received land as gifts.

[58] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters*, 138, 141-142. Grosz references two wills from Nuzi in which the daughters are given the rank of son. This status made it possible for the daughters to inherit property. See Grosz, "Some Aspects of the Position of Women in Nuzi," 174.

her brother;[59] and in Elephantine, Mibtahiah was bequeathed a portion of a house[60] Specifically,

Mibtahiah's father bequeathed her property, including a portion of a house to which her first

husband had no legal claim. The contract for her third marriage shows that her vast property

holdings remained hers–regardless of marriage. In Babylon, the *nadītu* and daughters of certain

prominent families inherited. A *nadītu* received a share equal to that of a male heir, but after her

death, the inheritance reverted to her brothers. Moreover, if a *nadītu* adopted a younger *nadītu*,

she often bequeathed an inheritance to her adoptee.[61]

Inheritance in the Hebrew Bible

In agrarian societies like the one depicted in biblical Israel, landed property ownership

represents particular rights and privileges. In addition to maintaining control of the major

mechanism for economic production and the income generated from that production, those who

controlled land possessed proprietary rights to the things that were attendant to it (i.e., rents,

goods and services, and labor).[62] Inheritance is particularly important in the narrative arc of the

patriarch, Abraham. Abraham was concerned that his steward, Dammesek Eliezer, would be his

heir (Gen 15:2); his wife Sarah is threatened by the idea that Ishmael might inherit Abraham's

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[59] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters*, 172, 187.

[60] Tamara C. Eskenazi, "Out From the Shadows: Biblical Women in the Postexilic Era," *JSOT* 54 (1992): 28-29. For more information on the *nadītu*, see Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters*, 119; Bernard M. Levinson, Victor Harold Matthews, and Tikva S. Frymer-Kensky, *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998); and Jerrold S. Cooper, "Virginity in Ancient Mesopotamia," 91-112.

[61] Averil Cameron and Amélie Kuhrt, ed., *Images of Women in Antiquity.* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983), 270. A *nadītu* was allowed to adopt one or more younger *nadītus* in order to ensure she would be cared for in her old age. Often these adoptees were related to the *nadītu*. In return for her honorable treatment of the aging *nadītu*, the adoptee could expect an inheritance such as a house within the cloister.

[62] Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 216, 220, 229. In general, landownership was the major way to obtain prestige and economic security in agrarian societies.

wealth instead of Isaac (Gen 21:10); and Abraham wills all he has to Isaac instead of the children of his concubines (Gen 25:5-6).

Generally, women were prohibited from participating in these spaces; however, the receipt of their father's inheritance share ostensibly grants the daughters of Zelophehad legal authority associated with property ownership.[63] Despite the fact that, as Ben-Barak notes, while the verb, to give (נתן), is standard language used for inheritance in the biblical text, the use of the verb, to pass (עבר) in Num 26:7 suggests the unique circumstances of the biblical daughters: the daughters *receive* the inheritance.[64] The inheritance moves temporarily into the hands of the daughters.[65] Importantly, as Ben-Barak argues, the phrase, "possession of an inheritance," found in Num 27:7, emphasizes the right of the daughters to control property granted to the family originating from the time the Israelites took possession of Canaan with God's blessing.[66] When the daughters receive the landed inheritance, they receive both rights and legal authority.

Ben-Barak uses ancient Near Eastern material to construct a realistic picture of inheritances of daughters. Within the biblical corpus, she points to Achsah, Job's daughters, and

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[63] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters*, 7. As a form of female inheritance, only in Nuzi did the bride price include lands. Another way for ancient daughters to possess land was via the bride price; however, in her treatment of marriage customs, Ben-Barak acknowledges that in principle the bride price only rarely includes lands. For a discussion on bride price, see Jack Goody, *Bridewealth and Dowry*, ed. Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah (Cambridge: University Press, 1973).

[64] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters*, 20.

[65] Reading the story of Zelophehad's daughters, Tal Ilan and Katherine Sakenfeld demonstrate that women challenge the divine, contest the divine law given to Moses at Sinai, and succeed in bending the law in their favor, while Joseph Fleishman notes the daughters in his consideration that a father would not wish to sell his son because the son was his heir and bearer of his name. See Tal Ilan, "The Daughters of Zelophehad and Women's Inheritance: The Biblical Injunction and Its Outcome," in *The Feminist Companion to the Bible (Second Series)*, ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole R. Fontaine (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 178; Katherine D. Sakenfeld, "Zelophehad's Daughters," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 15 (1988), 40; and Fleishman, *Father-Daughter Relations*, 2011, 7.

[66] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters*, 19. For further discussion of the concepts of possession, possession of inheritance, and inheritance in the ancient Near East, see B. A. Levine, "Late Language in the Priestly Source: Some Literary and Historical Observations," in *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1983), 69-82.

Zelophehad's daughters as examples of daughters who receive an inheritance of real property. While Ben-Barak's general premise that daughters inherited in the biblical world is sound, she weakens her position when she includes Achsah as a daughter of inheritance because Achsah in fact does not receive an inheritance.[67] Rather, in Josh 15:19, Achsah asks for and receives a blessing or a gift.

Associated with the verb נחל, which means to get or take as a possession,[68] the noun נחלה, is a possession, a property inheritance, or a right of residence. Generally translated, inheritance or share, a נחלה, is a narrow, precise legal term that refers to a specific allotment or portion of real or moveable property. Strictly speaking, נחל refers only to an allotted portion to which one has a claim by right of inheritance.[69] In the biblical text, a נחלה is often real property. As an example, Naboth speaks of his נחלה as his family dwelling space, or right of residence (1 Kgs 21:3).[70] Inheritance is an important concept of the Hebrew Bible and land tenure and the transference of land via inheritance is an important biblical custom.[71] Additionally, while נחלה may have originated as the term for gift,[72] נחלה is not synonymous with ברכה, which translates as, gift, blessing, or present.

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[67] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters,* 77-80. Ben-Barak references Josh 15:16-19, Judg 1:12-15, and 1 Chron 2:49.

[68] *BDB*, 635.

[69] Edward Lipiński, "נחל," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* IX: 321.

[70] Other examples of a נחלה as real property include Num 18:20-- 23 in which Aaron and the Levites have no נחלה or share of land and Ezek 48:29 in which the Israelites are apportioned נחלה in family groupings. These examples are important, but fall beyond the DH which I have set as the canonical boundaries for this treatment of נחלה..

[71] Inheritance is particularly important in the narrative arc of the patriarch, Abraham. With no male offspring, Abraham is concerned that his steward, Dammesek Eliezer, will be his heir (Gen 15:2). His wife Sarah is threatened by the idea that Ishmael might inherit instead of Isaac (Gen 21:10), and Abraham wills all he has to Isaac instead of the children of his concubines (Gen 25:5-6). Furthermore, although death may precede a נחלה as in the story of Ruth's deceased husband (Ru 4:5--10), death is not a prerequisite for נחלה. For example, Job gives his daughters נחלה alongside their brothers (Job 42:15).

[72] Lipiński, "נחל": 320. The verb נחל appears 59 times in the Old Testament, the noun נחלה 220 times. Both are

In the biblical text, individuals exchange a ברכה to enhance, repair, or correct relationships. After their long-term estrangement, Jacob tries to reconcile with his brother Esau, asking him to accept his ברכה in Gen 33:11. Abigail ingratiates herself to the conquering David and his men by offering a ברכה in 1 Sam 25:27. Similarly, when David arrives in Ziklag he sends a ברכה to his friends, the elders of Judah in 1 Sam 30:26. After the prophet heals him, a thankful Naaman offers a ברכה in 2 Kgs 5:15.[73] Importantly, when her context suggests that she felt slighted by her father's presentation of arid land, Achsah requests hydrated land as a ברכה (a blessing or a gift) to ameliorate the situation in Josh 15:19 and Judg 1:15:

> ותאמר תנה-לי ברכה כי ארץ הנגב נתתני ונתתה לי גלת מים

> "And she said, "Give me a gift (ברכה) for you have placed me in the land of Negeb, give me springs of water."

Caleb gives Achsah a blessing, not an inheritance, to correct their familial relationship.[74] In effect, after the census and distribution of land in the plains of Moab (Num 26:53-56), all real property held by Israelite males is considered part of a tribal inheritance; therefore, one could argue that Achsah receives an inheritance. In principle, dowry and bride price may serve as female inheritance; however, the use of the term ברכה here particularizes Achsah's dry land as a gift or blessing. Achsah receives a gift, not an inheritance.[75]

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found in a variety of Semitic languages and are attested as Amorite loanwords as early as the Old Babylonian documents from Mari. They reflect the legal language of the Northwest Semites: the verb means that a joint heir has received his portion by succession, while the noun denotes the portion received. The use of נחלה as a term for gift may have origins in Late Hebrew and Biblical Hebrew (*BDB*, 635).

[73] Raymond Westbrook, *Property and the Family in Biblical Law* (Sheffield: JSOT (1991), 142-3, 157; and Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 95, 106.

[74] See Westbrook, "Introduction," 60, and Tikva Frymer-Kensly, "Anatolia and the Levant: Israel," in *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, ed. Raymond Westbrook (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 1007-1008.

[75] In keeping with ancient customs, Caleb may consider the land as a dowry.

The inheritance of daughters receives a substantial amount of scholarly attention because the inheritance of daughters appears counterintuitive in the patriarchal biblical world. This custom is most often depicted as patrilineal; however, the story of Zelophehad's daughters (Num 27 and 36) demonstrates that daughters can be heirs. Daughter inheritance seems counterintuitive in the patriarchal biblical world,[76] interrupts the social order, and presents daughters as possessing legal authority that comes with land tenure.

The story of Zelophehad's daughters is counterintuitive because, generally, only males inherited in the biblical text. Raymond Westbrook points out that the heirs of the first rank who inherited automatically were the deceased's legitimate sons, namely, sons born of a legitimate marriage. Where a son had already died but had left sons, the grandchildren would take his share alongside their uncle, and divide it between themselves.[77] This practice leaves little room for women. Wilda Gafney adds that "the disenfranchisement of women from inheriting land was particular to Israel in the ancient world. … they were also virtually alone in legislating women's exclusion from property law.[78] Amid stories of male inheritance, such as Abram worrying that he has no heir to receive his inheritance (Gen 15:2-3), the man willing his possessions to his sons without regard for favoritism (Deut 21:15-17), Eleazar and Joshua distributing the land as inheritance to the (male) heads of household at Shiloh (Josh 19:51), and Naboth purposing to retain his ancestral inheritance (1 Kgs 21:3-4), the story of Zelophehad's daughters is disorienting and unexpected.

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[76] John van Seters, "The Problem of Childlessness in Near Eastern Law and the Patriarchs of Israel," *JBL* 87 (1968): 403. Van Seters problematizes the notion that the void of male heirs was Abraham's overarching concern in Gen 16 by arguing that Abraham could have always secured another wife, and presumably a male heir.

[77] Westbrook, "Introduction," 57.

[78] Wilda C. Gafney, "Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah, the Daughters of Zelophehad," in *Womanist Midrash* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, forthcoming).

The story of Zelophehad's daughters challenges the social order. In her discussion of patriarchy and patrilineality, Carol Meyers recognizes this disruption when she writes, "females can inherit property, but even this breach in the normal pattern is handled in such a way as to preserve the principle of transferring the name and property to succeeding generations according to the father's line."[79] The primary concern of the social order is the retention of landed property among men within the kin group. Moreover, though she does not expound on the point, Meyers notes that the stipulation in Num 36:6 requires Zelophehad's daughters to arrange their own marriages. That the daughter, and not the father or male representative of the household, would arrange a marriage is irregular. In the ancient Near East, the heads of families, usually the fathers, would discuss the marriage agreements, and in general, biblical daughters were dependent upon their fathers with regard to their marriage and the choice of partner.[80] For example, Laban negotiates the marriage terms for Jacob to marry Rachel in Gen 19; Bethuel and Laban negotiate the terms of Rebekah's marriage to Isaac in Gen 24; Judah identifies Tamar as wife for his son, Er, in Gen 38; Jethro gives Zipporah in marriage to Moses in Exod 2; and King Saul establishes the terms with David for the hands of Merab and Michal in 1 Sam 18. Num 36:6 provides no detail on the daughters' marital selection or process; however, Num 36:10-12 record their marriages to sons of their father's brothers. The husbands (who would have retained

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[79] Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 40. While the elders of Num 36 may heighten the concern for ethnic purity, intermarriage, and opposition to mixed marriages, this is a major theme throughout the biblical text, especially in the post-exilic material. As an example, Ezra 9-10 points to the concerns of exogamy. Also see Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Family in First Temple Israel," in *Families in Ancient Israel*, ed. Joseph Blenkinsopp, Leo G. Perdue, John J. Collins, and Carol Meyers (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 48-103.

[80] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 72. For other treatments of marriage customs in ancient Israel and the biblical text, see Leo G. Perdue, Joseph Blenkinshopp, John J. Collins, and Carol Meyers, ed., *Families in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997); Naomi Steinberg, *Kinship and Marriage in Genesis: A Household Economics Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); Renita J. Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Raymond Westbrook, *Property and the Family*; and Helena Zlotnick, *Dinah's Daughters: Gender and Judaism from the Hebrew Bible to Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

the landed inheritance) have no names and are not mentioned in Josh 17:3-4 when the daughters finally receive their inheritance.

In the world of the Hebrew Bible, daughters did not have the legal authority to negotiate contracts or sanction vows. For example, King Saul negotiates the contractual details of the marriage between his daughter, Michal and David (1 Sam 18:20-27), and Sheshan initiates the marriage of his unnamed daughter to his servant (1 Chr 2:34-35). Furthermore, although a man could not annul his own vow, a father can annul a vow made by his daughter (Num 30:3-5). Even in legal situations in which daughters are the primary focus of contractual negotiations, they have no authority. It is not surprising that daughters have no legal rights to negotiate contracts because, by and large, this type of public work is done in the public square. Like most women, daughters are rarely depicted as participating in work that occurs beyond the physical confines of the home.

Spatiality

The physical position of daughter spurs another conversation in the daughter discourse: spatiality. Phyllis Trible, Meike Bal, and Karla Baumbach consider how the physical location of daughters in the biblical world determines their safety.[81] Trible argues that daughters are not safe outside. Specifically, Trible says doors and doorways represent a boundary between hospitality and hostility.[82] Women like Jephthah's daughter and the Levite's concubine meet their demise when they transgress the door(way) boundary and move from inside to outside

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[81] Trible, *Texts of Terror*; Mieke Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); and Karla Baumbach, "With Her Hands on the Threshold: Daughter and Space in the Hebrew Bible" (PhD diss., Duke University, 1996).

[82] Trible, *Texts of Terror,* 73.

space. Leon R. Kass, Tikva Frymer-Kensky, and Athalya Brenner reference Dinah's story in Gen 24 as an example of daughters being physically vulnerable in exterior spaces.[83] Importantly, these analyses advance the idea that daughters should be relegated to the home because they live under constant threat of physical harm when they venture outside.

Phyllis Trible supports Bal's claim of unsafe exteriors when she posits that daughters are only safe in interior, private spaces.[84] She asserts that, in the narratives of Jephthah's unnamed daughter as well as the unnamed concubine, found in Judg 11 and 19 respectively, the door or doorway symbolizes the boundary between hospitality and hostility, and notes that only the female crosses the boundary.[85] For Trible, it is only after crossing the doorway boundary that both the concubine and daughter encounter hostile environments. According to the ideology of the text, coming outside (יצא) signals the demise of Jephthah's daughter, and being outside occasions the assault and torture of the concubine.[86] Although Trible centers her argument on women, textual evidence demonstrates that this vulnerability is not gender-exclusive. I offer that males also encounter hostile environments when they transgress boundaries. For example, The Divine warns Cain that sin lurks at the door in Gen 4:7; Lot encounters an angry mob when he steps outside and closes the door behind him in Gen 19:6 and 9; and Moses instructs the elders to remain inside the doors of their homes lest they suffer death in Exod 12:22.

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[83] For treatments of Dinah as physically vulnerable outside her home, see Leon R. Kass, "Regarding Daughters and Sisters: The Rape of Dinah," *Commentary* 93 (1992): 29-38; Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women*; and Athalya Brenner, *I Am ...*.

[84] Trible, *Texts of Terror,* 72. Trible notes that, in Judg 19: 21, while the master is safe in the house, the woman is not.

[85] Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 73.

[86] Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 100-101.

And yet, the textual evidence does not support the claim that women and their vocational contributions are restricted to the home with any consistency. Women fulfill their vocational responsibilities in spaces beyond the interior of their households, as evidenced in the narratives of the midwives, Shiphrah and Puah (Exod 1:15), the shepherd, Rachel (Gen 29:9), the city builder, Sheerah (1 Chr 7:24), the temple rebuilders, Shallum's daughters (Neh 3:12), and the unnamed industrious woman of Prov 31, who brings her food from far away, buys fields, and plants vineyards: all fulfill their vocational responsibilities in spaces beyond their households.

However, Meike Bal counters with the assertion that houses are unsafe for biblical daughters. Bal claims that daughters are invisible when they are inside, and this invisibility threatens their safety; i.e., the house is ultimately the place where daughters meet their undoing.[87] The stories of Lot's daughters and Tamar exemplify Bal's understanding of daughters' vulnerability in interior spaces. Bal supports her claim that houses can only be safe places if they are understood as the sites of the constitution of the lineage when she points to the death by fire of Samson's wife in Judg 15. Here, killing Samson's wife in the house of her father is killing and destroying the house of her father itself.[88] Bal's position suggests that daughters could be safer in exterior spaces; however, women like the daughter of the Levite's father-in-law found in Judg 19 were still vulnerable outside the home.

Karla Bohmbach saliently observes that daughters have no place of their own in the Hebrew Bible; they are not safe anywhere, and are often liminally positioned. For Bohmbach,

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[87] Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry,* 170. For Bal, both a physical house and a tent are equally considered houses. Bal also considers "house" as one's lineage.

[88] Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 172. Bal notes that the death of Samson's Philistine wife, not only *within* the house of her father, but also *with* the house of her father, shows the intimate bond between the concrete, material space and the abstract, instructional function of the house. Other examples of the vulnerability of women and daughters in interior spaces include the stories of Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, who is vulnerable in the interior area of King David's palace (2 Sam 11:4), Jehosheba, who hides in a palace bedroom during Athaliah's attack on the royal family (2 Kgs 11:2), and the daughters of the King, who are taken captive by Ishmael (Jer 41:10).

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biblical daughters experience spatial vulnerability because they are at once everywhere and nowhere. The story of the woman left on the doorstep overnight in Judg 19 exemplifies Bohmbach's argument. Bohmbach refers to the concubine of Judg 19 as the "liminally-positioned daughter" who illumines the attendant insecurity that can be read from the uncertain positioning which puts biblical daughters 'on the edge.'[89] Nevertheless, considerations of the import of virginity, legal authority, and spatial location add dimension and texture to the prevailing image of daughters.

In her treatment of biblical daughters and spatial location, Karla Bohmbach expands on Bal's assertion and, using Dinah, Tamar, Rebekah, and the concubine-wife of Judg 19 as examples, she argues that biblical daughters are most active outside; when the action moves inside, they disappear.[90] Bohmbach also argues that, while the concubine suffers outside, the daughter of Judg 19 disappears inside her father's house. Regardless of visibility, however, the house does not always prove unsafe for the daughter.[91] For example Rebekah does not suffer

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[89] Bohmbach, "Hands on the Threshold," 115. In Judg 19:2 the concubine flees to her unnamed father's house in Bethleham. Although the biblical writer does not provide a name for the father, the concubine meets my definition of a daughter because she is readily identifiable with her parent.

[90] Bohmbach, "Hands on the Threshold," 72-73. Bohmbach employs the concept of space as a hermeneutical strategy, and examines how biblical daughters appear outside and inside the home with both positive and negative meanings associated with each locale. Bohmbach suggests that when the silent Dinah entered Shechem's house, she disappears. The narrator erases her by making no mention of her thoughts, feelings, or activities. Tamar is silently obedient as she prepares food in Amnon's house. Rebekah disappears when the narrative moves from the outdoor well into the house of her father, Bethuel. Unlike Bal, I am not convinced that Rebekah is unsafe in this indoor space. Not only is Rebekah not in any danger while in her house, she is granted a modicum of authority when she is given the choice to leave home in Gen 24:58. Finally, like Dinah, the narrator renders the Levite's concubine-wife invisible by disallowing her any dialogue.

[91] The argument could be made that, as her father's daughter, the Levite's concubine-wife is unsafe when she leaves the Levite's house. Notably, while many scholars treat Gen 24 as the betrothal of Rebekah, most spend more time on the characters of Laban and Abraham's servant, Eliezer. As an example, in "The Servant's Tale: How Rebekah Found a Spouse," Jack Sasson focuses almost exclusively on the servant.

harm when she extends hospitality outdoors in Gen 24. For Bohmbach, daughters' fates are precarious both within and outside the home space.[92]

Trible, Bal and Bohmbach reflect the divisions among some scholars relative to the spatial locus of danger for daughters. While Trible argues that outside spaces are places of danger, Bal retorts that indoor spaces are most dangerous for biblical daughters, and Bohmbach adds that daughters are vulnerable in both spaces because they are everywhere and nowhere.[93] Hennie Marsman adds support from the literature of ancient Near Eastern societies. In the Ugaritic,. "Legend of Aqhat," Daniel's daughter, Paghit, leaves the house and goes to avenge the death of her brother. In the Baal Cycle, Baal's two daughters, Pidray and Tallay, leave the house and accompany him on his journey to the underworld. Paghit, Pidray, and Tallay, are examples of daughters found in ancient Near Eastern literature who venture beyond the boundaries of the household. I offer that a daughter's safety has little to do with her physical location because power systems and instiuttions impact daughters without regard to their locale. Some daughters flourish indoors, while others meet their demise in interior spaces. As I will demonstrate, some daughters traffic unharmed in exterior spaces, while others are assaulted and victimized outdoors.

Daddy's Little Girls?

To date, the daughter discourse has not taken up these characters within conversations about systems of power. *Daddy's Little Girls?: An Examination of Daughters in the Hebrew*

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[92] Bohmbach complicates the idea of space and considers how house, city, and foreign areas operate in the portrayal of daughters in the Hebrew Bible. Bohmbach interrogates the notions of a public-private dichotomy, and uses the resulting outside-inside framework to analyze a spectrum of narrative portrayals of biblical daughters found primarily in Genesis through 2 Samuel.

[93] Bohmbach, "Hands on the Threshold," 112. For further reading in Ugaritic literature, see Simon B. Parker, ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), and Mark S. Smith, *Baal Cycle: English and Ugaritic* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994).

Bible advances the idea that biblical daughters may be read as more than foils for the males in their narratives, and argues that daughters execute particular tactics to navigate antagonistic systems of power in their worlds. This dissertation begins with a simple concept of daughter as a female member of the household who is not yet a mother, a definition that arises from a long discourse in Hebrew Bible studies and from analysis of the language in the Hebrew Bible that signifies the women identified as daughters.

Throughout, this dissertation I rely upon socio-historical methods to connect understandings of the lives of daughters in the ancient world to the ways they are represented in the biblical narrative. Moreover, the argument draws upon both philological insights and studies of daughters in the broader ancient Near Eastern world. This dissertation employs both ideological and narrative critical methods to analyze the daughters' stories.

While the major arguments have been examined in this chapter, the next chapter, "Literature Review," refracts the inquisitive view to consider daughters in the family, the relationship between daughters and their fathers, and concerns pertaining to marriage and land tenure associated with daughters. Marsman and Ben-Barak serve as the foundational conversation partners for this targeted review of the literature associated with biblical daughters.

The third chapter, "Daughter Language," explores the semantic range of daughter, and explicates the narratives of daughters with respect to daughter language. The markers or identifiers of power as they relate to daughters in the Hebrew Bible are examined in the fourth chapter, "Power and Social Stratification." The operational definition of power is informed by the work of social theorists such as Karl Marx and Max Weber. After presenting two types of power, I employ the work of Gerhard Lenski to discuss important elements of power and its deployment across various social strata depicted in the biblical text.

In the fifth chapter, "Daughters in the Torah and Deuteronomic History," I demonstrate the tactics employed by daughters as they navigate antagonistic systems and institutions. Specificallly, this project focuses on the stories of Lot's daughters, Dinah, Pharaoh's daughter, Miriam, Zelophehad's daughters, Jephthah's daughter, and Tamar. This dissertation concludes by offering a look forward that considers the possibilities for a research agenda.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

As the preceding chapter makes clear, virginity, inheritance, and spatiality are complex but important concerns for any scholarly treatment of biblical daughters. Beyond a marker of sexual activity, a marriageable daughter's virginity is a commodity. Despite patriarchal systems of power in biblical times, daughters are afforded a degree of legal authority in 'the public square' by way of inheritance and gifting of property. Finally—and despite ongoing debates concerning safety in interior and exterior spaces—a daughter's safety has little to do with her physical location. While Chapter I included a discussion of much of the scholarly literature on biblical daughters, this chapter focuses on scholarship concerning daughters' roles in the family, the relationship between fathers and daughters, and marriage and the related issue of land tenure. This chapter uses 1970 as *terminus a quo* for the literature, since this historical period signaled the emergence of a wave of feminist scholarship that acknowledged the patriarchy embedded in the biblical text. Feminist biblical scholars have a prominent place in this literature review because their work presents new thinking around women in ancient societies, challenges oppressive patriarchy in the text and its interpretation, and prompts critical questions that are relevant to the discourse on daughters in the Hebrew Bible. Their work is foundational for any in-depth examination of daughters.

Much of the historiography on ancient Israel is dependent upon archaeological research, which focuses on excavating urban settings.[94] The biblical archaeologist Carol Meyers argues that, because biblical archaeology focuses on major cities, information about the realities of the majority of people (i.e., those living in the middle and lower echelons of society), is missing.[95] Meyers also notes that, because biblical archaeology focuses on the major cities (those assumed to have been cultic and administrative centers rather than rural settlements), very little material exists that might be relevant to those interested in nonpolitical—to say nothing of nonurban— aspects of ancient life.[96] Furthermore, women are underrepresented in archaeological scholarship because archaeological research focuses on major wars and military conflicts in which women played negligible roles. Susan Ackerman adds that women's social roles were much less marginalized in rural and household-centered locales than they were in urbanized and bureaucratized settings, where economic, social, political, and religious affairs were dealt with outside the domestic sphere. Ackerman also points out that there are no texts authored by women which might provide insight regarding the nature of ancient Israelite women's lives and experiences, and the witness of male-authored texts suffers from the tendency to view women only in terms of their meaning for and significance to men.[97] Specifically, women are most

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[94] Susan Ackerman, "Digging up Deborah: Recent Hebrew Bible Scholarship on Gender and the Contribution of Archaeology," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 66, no. 4 (2003): 174.

[95] Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 17-18.

[96] Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 16-18. Meyers concludes that archaeology offered virtually nothing that could be used to reconstruct the social role of women or anyone else belonging to the nonurban, nonelite, or nonspecialist segments of the population. Beginning in the 1960s, "new archaeology" of the family offers artifacts around the domestic economy such that the mode of life of the domestic unit can be reconstructed to some degree. However, even with the advent of "new archaeology," gender remains aloof. It is only with the tools of social scientific research that Meyers claims scholars can begin to investigate the lives of Israelite women.

[97] Ackerman, "Digging up Deborah," 174.

significant as mothers because this gendered distinction helps ensure the continuance of the society.[98]

This gendered perspective is even more challenging for daughters because, as non-mothers, these female characters are viewed as far less vital. Nevertheless, Meyers, Hennie Marsman, and Esther Fuchs carefully consider the characteristics of the daughter, and conclude that daughters make important contributions to the family and household. Carol Meyers hypothesizes that, in premonarchic Israel, families were self-sufficient such that everyone contributed to the economic well-being of the household. Adult women were involved in production (horticulture and agriculture), allocation and transformation of raw materials (food preparation), and the production of sustenance crafts (weaving and pottery).[99] According to Meyers, female children learned the tasks involved in aspects of household labor from their mothers and other adult women, while the fathers taught tasks to sons.[100]

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[98] Provisionally, sex denotes humane females and males based upon biological features such as chromosomes, sex organs, hormones, and other physical features. Gender denotes men and women based on social factors, such as social roles, positions, behaviors, and identities. As such, gender is socially constructed. Feminist theorists such as Simone de Beauvoir and Gayle Rubin distinguish between sex and gender in order to counter the view that biology is destiny. Judith Butler, on the other hand, argues that there is no distinction between sex and gender. See Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex,* trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Vintage, 2011); Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review, 1975); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2008); and Mari Mikkola, "Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Stanford: Stanford University, 2012), 1-50.

[99] Meyers, "Procreation." Also see Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 146.

[100] Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 150. Using 1 Sam 8:11-13 as an example, males provide labor for military, metallurgical, and field agricultural purposes while females are a labor source for food processing and the technologically allied process of perfumery (146). For further discussion of the economic contributions of men and women in ancient societies, also see Esther Boserup, *Woman's Role in Economic Development* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1970).

Daughters in the Family

Material wealth remained within the male's household, while portable wealth, such as skills or the kinds of goods that could travel with a woman, and was often transferred from her father's household to her husband's administration. Women also performed tasks and developed skills that were transferable or mobile. Following the lead of the women around them, daughters were taught to care for localized family gardens or orchards.[101] Hennie Marsman supports the claim that daughters learned from the women in their household and were educated by their mothers.[102] She notes that, in ancient Near Eastern societies like Egypt, a mother's authority over her child was most evident in matters of education, and points to Prov 4:3 as an example of how mothers held the main responsibility for the socialization and education of children. Marsman weakens her argument when she refers to Proverbs because this text is directed towards sons, not daughters. Daughters are not mentioned in Proverbs. Furthermore, fathers also played a role in the socialization and education of their children in ancient societies. For example, the Egyptian text, "Instruction of Any" includes advice from an older man (father) to a young scribe (son) regarding religion, the importance of being honest, the treatment of women, respect for mothers, and the choice of a wife. Geraldine Pinch notes that although little is known about education in ancient Egypt, most sons probably apprenticed with their fathers in order to learn their professions at an early age.[103] Furthermore, as members of agrarian societies, Israelite

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[101] Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 146.

[102] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 202 and 237. Also see Carol Meyers, "Everyday Life: Women in the Period of the Hebrew Bible," in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol Newsom and Sharon Ringe (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 255-256.

[103] Geraldine Pinch, "Private Life in Ancient Egypt," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. (ed. Jack M. Sasson: New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995), 379. For "The Instruction of Any" see Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature Volume 2*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2006. Also see Lichtheim vol 3 for "The Instruction of Papyrus Insinger"

daughters worked alongside other members of their families, and participated in subsistence activities like terrace farming, small animal husbandry, converting raw materials into foodstuffs, sewing and weaving, and pottery production.[104] Daughters performed some tasks that were not gender-specific, and others that were based upon gendered norms.

Indeed, daughters contributed to the household by performing tasks that were not dependent upon their gender. Washing clothes, food preparation, serving others, shepherding, building, and even prostitution were tasks shared by men and women. For example, Egyptian tomb scenes depict men and women working side by side baking bread and brewing beer.[105] Similarly, biblical characters cook and prepare meals without regard for gender. Abraham instructs Sarah to make cakes while he selects a calf that his male servant prepares for the three visitors in Gen 18; Lot bakes bread for his house guests in Gen 19; Jacob prepares a stew in Gen 25; Rebekah prepares bread for Jacob to present to Isaac in Gen 27; while in prison, Joseph encounters the king of Egypt's Chief Baker in Gen 40; Samuel instructs his male cook in 1 Sam 9; the woman bakes cakes in 1 Sam 28; and Tamar bakes cakes for Amnon in 2 Sam 13.

Daughters also performed tasks that were determined along gender lines. In ancient societies, women drew water, baked bread, produced textiles (i.e., spinning and weaving), served as wet nurses, and acted as midwives exclusively.[106] Examples within the biblical texts include Hagar's drawing water for her son in Gen 21, Rebekah's drawing water and offering drink to

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[104] See Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 1996; "Procreation," 489-514; and "Recovering Objects," 654. Also see Paula McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999) for examinations of the lives of ancient Israelite women. McNutt argues that gender roles were probably more sharply defined than what Meyers argues in Iron Age 1, contending that the woman was more markedly inferior and subordinate.

[105] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 405. Additionally, in the ancient Near East, while the butchering of animals and the preparation of meat, fish, and fowl was probably considered a man's job, women generally prepared the food.

[106] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 404, 411-415, 421-422. Marsman also notes that, though rare, women functioned as scribes and messengers in the ancient Near East.

Abraham's servant in Gen 24, Saul's encountering girls coming out of the town to draw water in 1 Sam 9, and the widow of Zarephat's bringing water for Elijah in 1 Kgs 17.

Daughters are also mentioned often during discussions of prostitution in the biblical text, but the concern here is generic—not cultic—prostitution. Marsman notes that women functioned as prostitutes in ancient societies,[107] where prostitution is described as the practice of engaging in relatively indiscriminate sexual activity with individuals other than a spouse or friend in exchange for immediate payment in money or other valuables.[108] Examples of prostitutes in the biblical text include Tamar, with whom Judah had sex in Gen 38, Rahab in Josh 15, and the woman of Gaza whom Samson saw and had sex with in Judg 16:1. Marsman includes the woman who would become Jephthah's mother among daughter prostitutes; however, there is no textual evidence to support such a designation.[109] The narrator does not provide details about Jephthah's mother being in spousal relationship with the unnamed man of Gilead, or of the receipt of money or values in exchange for sexual activity, which would have supported

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[107] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit,* 497-499. Marsman aligns with Westenholz, who concludes that cultic prostitution did not exist in ancient Israel. Regarding prostitution in general, however, Marsman notes that the disapproval of this practice is expressed in the book Leviticus. This prohibition was intended to prevent any uncertainty in the parentage of priestly offspring (Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 434-435). For example, an Israelite father should not degrade his daughter by making her a prostitute (v. 29), and a priest was forbidden to marry a prostitute (Lev 21:7, 14). For treatments of sacred or cultic prostitution see, Joan Goodnick Westenholz, "Tamar, Qĕdēšā, Qadištu, and Sacred Prostitution in Mesopotamia," *Harvard Theological Review* 82.3 (1989): 245-265; Stephanie L. Budin, *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Karel van der Toorn, "Female Prostitution in Payment of Vows in Ancient Israel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108 (1989): 193-205; Grace I. Emmerson, "Women in Ancient Israel," in *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological, and Political Perspectives*, ed. R. E. Clements (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 371-394. For additional treatments of biblical prostitutes, see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Athalya Brenner, *The Israelite Woman*; Phyllis A. Bird, "The Harlot as Heroine: Narrative Art and Social Presupposition in Three Old Testament Texts," in *Women in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Alice Bach (New York: Routledge, 1999), 99-117.

[108] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 416.

[109] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 433. Marsman quotes Fewell, who states: "blurring the person Gilead with the town, the narrator suggests that Jephthah's father might be any man in the town of Gilead." This distinction suggests prostitution. See Dana Nolan Fewell, "Judges," in *Women's Bible Commentary: Expanded Edition*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 76.

Marsman's inclusion of Jephthah's mother in her list of prostitutes. Though this woman is clearly marked by the Hebrew term, זנה, however rhetorically, the anonymity of Jephthah's father has more to do with the narrator's presentation of Jephthah as a marginalized member of the community than with his mother's occupation. With no clear paternity, Jephthah exists on the edges of acceptable patriarchal society.

Missing in the presentations discussed above is the fact that, in many ways, the daughter represents a liability for the biblical family. Beyond basic household tasks, she does not uniquely increase her father's economic standing vis-a-vis the production of laborers (i.e., children who can work the land),[110] or through male offspring who can ensure the continuance of the father's name and legacy in his death. For families in ancient societies, the two major components of integrity of the בת אב were the father's name or memory, and the patrimony that was its economic, social, and legal basis.[111] It is not until this character becomes a mother that she converts into an asset for the family. This liability position complicates the relationship between fathers and daughters.

Father-Daughter Relations

Joseph Fleishman and Johanna Stiebert consider the relationships between fathers and daughters in the biblical text,[112] of which there is no definitive example; the biblical text depicts

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[110] H. Haas argues that a daughter is a profitable laborer, a financial benefit that can be sold and for whom a bride price (*mohar*) must be paid. However, Hass does not consider the fact that the labor and sales benefit he ascribes to daughters are not unique to this member of the household. Sons also fulfill laborious tasks and may be sold to satisfy family debt. Furthermore, the *mohar* is only transferred at the point of betrothals. The daughter is not uniquely profitable until she is moving toward marriage. As one who is not betrothed, a daughter is a liability. See Haas, "בת." in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament,* Vol 2, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1975), 336-337.

[111] Zafrira Ben Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters*, 3.

[112] See Joseph Fleishman, *Father-Daughter Relations,* and Johanna Stiebert, *Fathers and Daughters in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). I have already treated the father's function relative to a daughter's

varied bonds between the two groups. Although, as the male head of household, the father is

responsible for negotiating marriage contracts to transfer his daughters into the households of

other men, the stories of Lot in Gen 19, Laban in Gen 29, Reuel/Jethro in Exod 2, Zelophehad in

Num 27, and Caleb in Josh 15 demonstrate the variability in the depiction of that particular

aspect of father-daughter relationships. According to Exod 21:7-11, a father has the authority to

sell his daughter into slavery; however, Joseph Fleishman concludes that this law does not, in

fact, permit a father to sell his daughter as a female slave.[113] Fleishman argues that the father is

permitted only to hand over his daughter according to the procedure known as 'designation' (i.e.,

for formal assignment to the purchaser or his son); therefore, the daughter retains the legal status

of either a primary wife or a concubine who had the inferior status of a secondary wife.[114]

Fleishman's argument suffers from a disregard of textual evidence demonstrating these

daughters exercising rights afforded to wives and concubines. He does not point to examples of

daughters sold into slavery who exercised rights and functions as wives or concubines.

Fleishman admits that the designation of the daughter as a אמה (female slave) points to a face-

value interpretation of the law, but turns to build his argument upon the elements of the casuistic

law and the analyses of ancient Near Eastern legal documents.[115] For Fleishman, the fact that

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virginity. Here, I examine the scholarship around the legal authority ascribed to fathers of daughters in the biblical text.

[113] Fleishman, *Father-Daughter Relations*, 7, 9, 91-92. Fleishman reads the Exod 21 text through the lens of the Mehkilta (a later legal tradition), which states that a man is entitled to give his daughter to someone in marriage if he has previously sold her into slavery. Importantly, under these conditions, because the father—and not the slave master—retains the rights to his daughter's production, Fleishman argues that the full transfer of the daughter (to a husband in marriage) has not taken place, and therefore, as Fleishman reasons, the girl's legal status following the sale is not identical to that of a slave-girl, but is similar to that of a betrothed woman.

[114] Fleishman, *Father-Daughter Relations*, 16.

[115] Fleishman, *Father-Daughter Relations*, 16-17. Fleishman says the conditional clause of the biblical passage (Exod 21:7a) defines the act as a sale for the purpose of slavery, but the regulations as a whole (21:7b-11) establish the daughter's status as one of a free person, not a slave girl. For Fleishman, this law should be categorized as one that limits a father's authority over his daughter. He supports this claim with examples from early Jewish law that

daughter is marked by the term for a female slave does not mean she is indeed a slave. He

reasons that, because these transactions took place during periods of national or personal-family

crisis (particularly economic hardship), the laws may not be legitimate. One of the pillars of

Fleishman's argument is the idea that, because the daughter did not lose her status as a free

person, she is not legitimately sold into slavery.

When Fleishman takes the Hebrew term, אמה, to mean, 'slave girl,' he is using its very

early meaning of "a woman who is not free despite the fact that this term is most often used to

describe a maid or concubine.[116] Furthermore, the weight of Fleishman's argument around

legality balances on the fulcrum of situational circumstance and situational circumstance can not

support the idea that the validity of a law is dependent upon the *circumstance* (in this case,

financial well-being) of those operating under that law. There are no stipulations in the contract

law that negate the consequence of non-compliance based upon financial crisis. The legitimacy

of a law has little to do with the financial state of those acting under it. I was able to find no

codicils that describe about how the seller and buyer must be in good financial standing in order

to enter into this agreement.

Although Meyers challenges the androcentric elements of the biblical text, the prevailing

image presented in the text is that of fathers who are fully in control of all aspects of the

daughter's life, such that he constricts or controls her physical, economic, and legal fates.[117]

Douglas A. Knight, Athalya Brenner, Zafrira Ben-Barak, and Raymond Westbrook each speak of

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attest to important qualifiers of the Exod 21 reference, such as the means of acquisition and the purchaser's
intentions.

[116] "אמה," *BDB*, 51 and "אמ," HALOT, 1:61. Also see, A. Jepsen, "Amah und Schiphchah." *Vetus Testamentum* 8,
no. 1 (1958): 293-297.

[117] Carol Meyers, "The Family in Early Israel," in *Families in Ancient Israel*, ed. Leo G. Perdue, Joseph
Blenkinsopp, John J. Collins, and Carol Meyers (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 33.

the father as the ultimate authority in the household. [118] While Knight points to Henry S.

Maine's view that the patriarch ruled the family,[119] Brenner likens the biblical father to the

Roman *paterfamilias,* and describes him as the alpha male who leads and makes decisions for

and on behalf of his group.[120] Zafrira Ben-Barak asserts that the *paterfamilias* was the center

and sole authority in charge of the direction, economy, integrity, legal framework, and life-style

of the *bēt 'āb*. Ben-Barak understands the male head of household as having ultimate authority:

he makes every decision, and determines the fate of each member of the household.[121]

According to her, the father is the leader and sole authority in charge of the direction, economy,

integrity, legal framework, and life-style of the family household. Finally, Westbrook

acknowledges the familial leadership role of the father, but suggests that the father's social status

may impact his breadth of influence.[122]

Fleishman challenges the notion of a father's absolute authority over his daughter. In his

treatment of Exod 21, he cites four biblical cases and ancient Near Eastern legal trends to argue

that, although a father could sell a daughter into slavery, the daughter retained some personal

freedoms.[123] Fleishman also argues that, although it was an acceptable practice in other

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[118] Douglas A Knight, *Law, Power, and Justice in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011); Athalya Brenner, "Alternative Families: From the Hebrew Bible to Early Judaisms," *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 21.2 (2010): 39-50; Zafrira Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters;* and Raymond Westbrook, ed., *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

[119] Knight, *Law, Power and Justice*, 46.

[120] Brenner, "Alternative Families," 4.

[121] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters*, 2.

[122] Westbrook, *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, 36. For other treatments of the father's role, see David J. Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2001), and Ignace J. Gelb, "Household and Family in Early Mesopotamia," in *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Edward Lipinski (Leuven: Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1979), 1-97.

[123] Fleishman, *Father-Daughter Relations, 58,* 60-62, In the first case, Exod 21:8, the man nullifies the agreement with the father because the daughter displeases him, and the daughter is redeemed by one who cannot sell her. In the second case, Exod 21:9, the man intends to designate the daughter for his son, who is expected to treat her justly

Mesopotamian societies, Lev 19 prohibits an Israelite father from causing a daughter to become

a prostitute.[124] Fleishman considers six legal documents from Nippur and Nuzi in which the girl

is handed over to prostitution, and concludes that the daughter often did not lose her legal status

as a daughter; she was still marriageable, and her brideprice was equal to that of a virgin. In only

one of these instances, the girl is handed over to a temple to engage in secular prostitution.[125]

Fleishman nuances the use of the term "prostitution," and considers whether the documents

pertain to both secular and cultic forms. Importantly, Fleishman links authority to legal standing,

and argues that daughters have legal rights in the world of the biblical text. With legal standing

comes autonomy, such that fathers do not have full authority over daughters.

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as (most probably) either a primary wife or a concubine. Either of these roles entitled the daughter to the rights derived by being a free bride. The third case, Exod 21:10, provides remedy for the daughter should the man consider downgrading her status in favor of another woman (i.e., in a polygamous household with another wife or concubine). This case ensures that the daughter would not lose her status and retails rights as long as she is under the purchaser's authority. The fourth case, Exod 21:11, considers the failure of the purchaser to fulfill his obligations to the daughter. Whether this case refers to formal divorce or some other form of release, the daughter has the right to leave, but she goes with no compensation. Also, see Raymond Westbrook, "The Female Slave," in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Victor Harold Matthews, Bernard M. Levinson, and Tikva S. Frymer-Kensky (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 214-238.

[124] Fleishman, *Father Daughter Relations,"* 100, 119. Two adoption contracts from Nippur (BE 6/2, 4 and BE 14, 40) and four documents from Nuzi (AASOR 16, 23; AASOR 16, 51; HSS 5, 11; and SMN 1670) present the prostitution of a daughter in Mesopotamia. Fleishman also examines law codes such as those from the Laws of Lipit-Ishtar and literary texts such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh* to assess the social status of a prostitute and concludes that, legally, the woman acted independently as a free person (136). Also See Wilfred G. Lambert, "Prostitution," *Xenia* 32: 127-157; Westbrook, *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law;* Jerrold S. Cooper, "Prostitution," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie*, ed. Erich Ebeling and Bruno Meissner (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2006), 12-22; and I. M. Diakonoff, "Women in Old Babylonia Not Under Patriarchal Authority," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 29.3 (1986): 225-238.

[125] Although much is made of the idea of sacred or cultic prostitution, Budin, Westenholz, and Fisher argue convincingly for the absence of this institution. See Budin, *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity*, 2008; Westenholz, "Tamar," and Eugene J. Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution in the Ancient Near East: A Reassessment," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 6.2-3 (1976): 225-236. Also see, Julia Assante, "From Whores to Hierodules: The Historiographic Invention of Mesopotamian Female Sex Professionals," in *Ancient Art and Its Historiography*, ed. A. A. Donohue and M. D. Fullerton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 13-27; Robert A. Oden, Jr., "Religious Identity and the Sacred Prostitution Accusation," in *The Bible Without Theology: The Theological Tradition and Alternatives to It*, ed. Robert A. Oden (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 131-153; Edward Lipiński, "Cult Prostitution in Ancient Israel?," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 40.1 (2014): 48-56; and Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Cultic Prostitution: a Case Study in Cultural Diffusion," in *Orient and Occident: Essays Presented to Cyrus H. Gordon on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Harry A Hoffner, Jr. (NeuKirchen-Vluyn: Verlag Butzon & Bercker Kevelaer, 1973), 213-222.

Unfortunately, however, the biblical text itself contradicts Fleishman. That daughters may make vows, but their fathers may ratify or annul them demonstrates that, in legal matters, fathers have full authority. That daughters do not identify marriage partners and coordinate elements of their marriage contract, but their parents—usually the father—negotiate for them portrays fathers as having full authority. Finally, that fathers can sell their daughters into slavery suggests that fathers—and not their daughters—have full authority (Exod 21:7-11).[126]

Fleishman's argument is a bold one, but the textual evidence is much more nuanced in that he proffers that because the daughter's legal status is different from that of a slave-girl after the sale, the daughter does not become a slave. Fleishman's argument presupposes the daughter possesses legal authority. While Fleishman might lead readers to believe daughters were endowed with full legal authority akin to an adult male, such was not the case. However, daughters were not without legal rights; they simply had very few of them. Had daughters possessed an abundance of legal rights in the world of the Hebrew Bible, there should be more examples of their exercising these rights, or of others being punished for withholding these rights from them. As it stands, however, daughters could make vows that may be annulled by their fathers, and daughters inherited real property only under unique circumstances (and even then, such came with stipulations). These conditions suggest that there are precious few instances in which daughters exercised full legal rights.

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[126] Fleishman establishes the practice of selling children into slavery within ancient Mesopotamia and then concludes that the law in Exod 21:7-11 was designed to delegitimize the act of a father selling his daughter into slavery and therefore does not permit a father to sell his daughter as a female slave. Flieshman's claim does not comport with a plain reading of the biblical text. Fleishman attempts to delegitimize the sale of sons and daughters into slavery by suggesting that it only occurred during perios of crisis. The circumstances under which a child is sold however, does not negate the fact that the father, has the ability to execute such a transaction. Furthermore, Fleishman nuances the fact that after the sale, the daughter's legal status is different from that of a slave-girl and points to these differences as proof that the daughter does not become a slave. See Fleishman, *Father Daughter Relations*, 91-92.

Nevertheless, Fleishman argues that the daughter enjoyed legal status as a member of her household.[127] Again, the degree of status associated with legal authority is a concern. In the world of the text, the daughter's social status (or class) is dictated by her gender and her father's power and prestige (wealth) in the community. Chapter IV treats the status of royals and non-royals; here the examples of Pharaoh's daughter's blatant disregard for her father's decree to drown Hebrew boys and Rahab's covert response to the king's inquiry about the location of Israelite spies serve as examples of the varied amounts of legal authority exercised by royal and non-royal daughters. Importantly, the hierarchical position of the Pharaoh's daughter and Rahab within their respective communities takes precedence over their foreign, non-Israelite, designation for my discussion. And even within the group, royals have much more legal authority. Legal standing implies that one has juridical recourse when wronged, which specifically results in make-better for the plaintiff. Within the biblical text, however, there are no examples of daughters being recompensed for legal transgressions. When they are violated, any remuneration is credited to the father and not to the daughter. For example, in the case of Dinah, her father, Jacob, benefits from the negotiations with Shechem.[128]

<center>Marriage and Land Tenure</center>

In the story of Zelophehad's daughters, Martin Noth stresses the impact on male members of the family when he points out that the inherited property of the daughters would pass, in the event of their marriage, into the possession of the husband and his tribe.[129] Carol Meyers claims

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[127] Fleishman, *Father Daughter Relations*, 223.

[128] Also see the examples in Leviticus 21, in which the father receives financial restitution when another violates his daughter.

[129] Martin Noth, *Numbers: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 257.

that the continuity of land tenure was important for the patrilineal ancient Israelites who

transferred land, with all of its agricultural peculiarities, from father to son. In discussing the

nuances of soil types, terrain, climate, tool types, crop choices, and livestock management,

Meyers states: "virtually every family's holdings had a unique configuration of ecological factors

to which an assortment of technologies and strategies were applied," such that the importance of

older males passing down information about the land increases the possibility of a family's

ability to maximize the land's productive potential.[130] This dynamic impacted Israelite kinship

customs such that men stayed with the land while women relocated to be with those men.[131]

While a husband cultivated land that was his part of his family's holdings, wives moved into the

households of their husbands. In this system, the household contributions of women had to be

mobile and transferable.

Specifically, the woman could complete her work tasks that contributed to the household

anywhere.   She was not tethered to a particular geographic location. I examined the inheritance

of daughters in Chapter 1; therefore, the focus here lies in the aspects of important discourse on

the function of marriage in the daughter narratives, especially the marriage stipulation in Num

36.[132] After the deity instructs Moses to transfer their father's inheritance to Zelophehad's

daughters, the elders of the community press for an addendum, which stipulates that the

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[130] Meyers, "The Family in Early Israel," 30. Production efficiencies result in generations caring for the same plots of land. Also see Mark R. Rosenzweig and Kenneth Wolpin, "Specific Experience, Household Structure and Intergenerational Transfers: Farm Family Arrangements in Developing Countries," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 100.3 (1985): 961-987.

[131] Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 183.

[132] Kenneth G. Hoglund, "Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine and the Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah" (PhD diss., Duke University, 1992), 436-437. Concerning the objections to intermarriage of post-exilic Judah as depicted in Ezra 9-10, Hoglund argues that one dimension of marriage is to serve as a means of transferring property and social status from one group to another. By circumscribing the options available in marriage through prohibition of marriage outside the group, all property, kinship-related rights, and status remain within a closed group.

daughters must marry within their kin group. In the social world of the biblical text, marriage is

an exchange between males. The institution of marriage transfers the responsibility for and

control of the female from one male to another.[133] In the case of Zelophehad's daughters, their

spouses receive the power and prestige attendant to their land ownership. As such, the required

marriages serve to advance the concerns of the males in the community (represented by the

region's elders) because land ownership is synonymous with wealth. Furthermore, because

marriage is a trade made among males, the power structure is such that the daughters of

Zelophehad have no options but to comply.

Inheritance is significant because of the importance of land tenure in agri-centered,

patrilineal societies like those of the ancient Near East and ancient Israel. Land tenure is

important because it is a major form of wealth in an agrarian society, where land tenure

represents the legal claim to access to or control over property. In agrarian societies like the ones

of the biblical text, property consists of rights, not of things—and particularly rights to things

which are in short supply.[134] Access to or control over property is an indicator of wealth.

Furthermore, an individual's amount of control over economic supply directly correlates with

their degree of power and privilege. Along a distributive continuum, those of the ruling and

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[133] This aspect of marriage applies to royals and non-royals alike. King Saul negotiates with David to transfer the responsibility and prestige that are his daughters, Merab and Michal in 1 Sam 18:17 and 1 Sam 18:20-22, respectively. Similarly, Mordecai brokers a transaction between himself and King Ahasuerus when he presents Esther as a candidate to become the new Queen of Persia in Esther 2:7-8. Bethuel transfers his daughter, Rebekah, into the control of Isaac in Gen 24:50, and in return for years of service, Laban exchanges his daughters, Leah and Rachel, with Jacob in Gen 29:15-19 and 26-28.

[134] Garhard Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 216. With respect to property, Lenski asserts that in hunting and gathering societies, land is almost always the common property of the local community. As a society evolves into a horticultural one, land becomes the property of clans or family groups. In horticultural societies, it is generally accepted that an individual has special rights to a piece of land he is cultivating (182). As advances in technology brought increased economic surplus and created greater stratification among the members of a society (classes), the state increased in population and geography (193-194).

governing classes control more property than those of the peasant class. Therefore, the ruling

and governing classes are afforded more power and privilege than those of the peasant class.

Katherine D. Sakenfeld, Ankie Sterring, and Sarah Shectman each treats the motives of

the elders in Num 36. Sakenfeld redeems the men in the narrative when she argues that

Zelophehad's male relatives are unhappy with the possibility that marriages of his daughters may

lead to land being transferred out of their own tribe.[135] By not challenging the marriage

requirement in Num 36, Sakenfeld absolves the elders of any responsibility for misrepresenting

The Divine's original directive, which did not include a stipulation about the daughters needing to

marry in order to receive their father's portion. Sakenfeld's argument redeems the men because it

positions them as merely acting on behalf of The Divine. This threat of land transferring to

another tribe is valid only if the opportunity exists for the daughters to marry outside of their

tribe—perhaps into a more powerful group. The marriage stipulation, therefore, is a mechanism

for the elders to regain economic control for their clan and, by extension, their tribe.[136]

Sakenfeld supports her claim that economic control is the goal of men by noting that the

restriction of marriage emphasizes that no woman who "possesses an inheritance" can do what

she pleases with property.[137] What Sakenfeld does not consider is how, while the marriages

expand the wealth position of the tribe, they also constrict the potential wealth position of the

daughters. The marriage stipulation limits the marriage partners when perhaps the daughters

could secure more stable futures by marrying into more wealthy families. Sakenfeld admits that

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[135] Sakenfeld, "Zelophehad's Daughters," 37.

[136] Eskenazi, "Out From the Shadows," 35. Eskenazi concludes that the post-exilic fear of mixed marriages as demonstrated in Ezra-Nehemiah, with its concomitant loss of property to the community, makes most sense when women can, in fact, inherit. Such a loss would not be possible when women did not have legal rights to their husbands' or fathers' land.

[137] Sakenfeld, "Zelophehad's Daughters," 42. Sakenfeld goes on to state that the property is not hers "in her own right" in the popular modern sense of the phrase.

the land would make a woman a desirable marriage prospect,[138] but she does not extend her

argument to consider how the elders may have parlayed the wealth of the daughters' land into

more profitable marriages. Instead of restricting the daughters' marriage partners to members of

the small clan, the elders might have negotiated marriages with larger, more influential families

within the larger tribe. For example, Rebekah marries one of her father's kinsmen but not an

immediate relative when she marries the son of the landed Abraham (Gen 24:67). In another

example, Ruth improves her social position when she marries Boaz, the wealthy distant relative of

her ex-husband (Ruth 4:10); and in yet another example, Esther transitions from commoner to

royalty when she marries King Ahasuerus (Esth 2:17). For Zelophehad's daughters, an

interesting relationship exists between the land and the marriages. The land enhances the power

of the clansmen, and the marriages render the daughters powerless.

Ankie Sterring interprets the chieftains' response in Num 36 as the men's attempt to

minimize damages resulting from the daughters' act of rebellion that threatens their safety and

undermines their authority. Sterring's designation of the daughters' request as a "rebellious act"

and her description of the damages as "imagined" is unsupported.[139] There is no textual

evidence to suggest that a "rebellious act" threatened the elders, particularly since, elsewhere in

the biblical text, rebellion is met with far sterner consequences. Here, the elders in essence pre-

arrange marriages for women whose father is unable to do so.[140] Sterring also fails to support

her claim that the damages were imagined, other than to suggest that "whenever menfolk feel

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[138] Sakenfeld, "Zelophehad's Daughters," 43.

[139] Ankie Sterring, "The Will of the Daughters," in *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 90, 94.

[140] Earlier in the story of the Israelites, the rebellious act of Miriam results in a physical condition that warrants her removal from the community (Num 12), and according to Num 27, the rebellious act of those following Korah results in death.

threatened and fear that their safety is undermined one way or the other, they try to minimize the imagined damage as much as they can by way of instituting countermeasures."[141] In the case of Zelophehad's daughters, the countermeasure was a gentlemen's agreement stipulating an aspect of the marriage transaction. Furthermore, signifying upon the daughters as rebellious invites readers to sympathize with the males in the text, and suggesting that the damages they caused are imaginary forecloses on the reader's ability to interpret the daughters as powerful or effective. In essence, Sterring redeems the men in the text.

Finally, Sarah Shectman argues that the marriage stipulation in Num 36 effectively positions the daughters as hereditary placeholders and temporary inheritors.[142] Shectman explains that Zelophehad's daughters only hold their father's inheritance temporarily; their male offspring would, in fact, carry on the name of their father and not their grandfather, Zelophehad.[143] Once married, the daughters' holdings would become the husbands' holdings, and the husbands'—not the grandfather's—male offspring would ultimately inherit the property. In essence, the marriage stipulation is in service to retaining male holdings with the proper male lineage.

Shectman overlooks the fact that the daughters are not even temporary stewards of their father's property. By the time Joshua actually gives the daughters the inheritance, the daughters are already married and, as married women, their holdings fall to their husbands. [144]

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[141] Sterring, "The Will of the Daughters," 94.

[142] Sarah Shectman, *Women in the Pentateuch: A Feminist and Source-Critical Analysis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009), 163.

[143] Shectman, *Women in the Pentateuch*, 164. Shectman also highlights the similarities between the stipulations made in the story of Zelophehad's daughters and the law of the levirate (Deut 25:5-10), which both stipulate the continuance of the male lineage where there is no direct male heir.

[144] Although Moses is commanded to pass Zelophehad's allotment to his daughters (Num 27:s) and the daughters marry kinsmen in Num 36: 11, the daughters do not receive the inheritance until Josh 17:4.

Additionally, Zelophehad's kinsmen are not at all concerned about Zelophehad. The males want to retain the rights to the land as a collective unit, not necessarily as a particular household. In this respect, everyone—not just the daughters—is a placeholder. The fact that the daughters' husbands go unnamed bolsters the claim that, in this instance, even the males are interchangeable.

Though the temporary steward's argument is intriguing, it elides a significant aspect of the daughters' story relative to the function of marriage. Shectman does not consider why the males are concerned about land rights. In an agrarian society like the one depicted in the pre-monarchical biblical world, land and other key resources sometimes come to be the property of clans or, in a few instances, of individuals' families such that an individual has special rights in the piece of land he is currently cultivating.[145] Furthermore, in alignment with the ideology of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomist, biblical land holdings may be interpreted as the right to claim special relationship with God. To that end, Patrick D. Miller, Jr. argues that Deuteronomy presents a theological framework in which God, land, and people are interrelated.[146] The themes of YHWH giving and promising the land to the Israelites permeate Deuteronomy. For example, Deut 1:21 states, "See, the LORD your God has *given* the land to you; go up, take possession, as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has *promised* you; do not fear or be dismayed" (emphasis mine). In Deut 2:9, Joshua is told, "Do not harass Moab or engage them in battle, for I will not *give* you any of its *land* as a possession, since I have *given* Ar as a possession to the descendants

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[145] Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 182. In hunting and gathering societies, the land and its resources are almost always the common property of the local community. The shift to an understanding of private property occurs as groups evolve into horticultural societies. In agrarian societies, like the one depicted in pre-monarchic biblical world, property ownership is about rights (not things) and in industrial societies.

[146] Patrick D. Miller, Jr., "The Gift of God: The Deuteronomic Theology of the Land," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 23.4 (1969): 453. Deuteronomy proclaims that Israel's acquisition and possession of the land came only by the desire of YHWH's desire to give it and YHWH's willing faithfulness to keep promises. Also see Gerhard von Rad*, The Problem of the Hexateuch, and Other Essays*, trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), and Leonard J. Weber, *Theology of the Land* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1987).

of Lot" (emphasis mine). Finally, in Deut 6:10, the Israelites are reminded, "When the LORD your God has brought you into the *land* that he swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to *give* you—a *land* with fine, large cities that you did not build." In the worldview of the writer, one of the evidences of the chosen-ness of the Israelites is the fact that The Divine grants them land. In the story of Zelophehad's daughters, the marriages signify male control of land, which represents male rights, including the right to claim relationship with God. The marriages deny the daughters the rights that come with land ownership, and the daughters have no claim to chosen-ness through land rights—in much the same way Israelite women have no claim to a chosen status through circumcision.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

Scholarly debates continue around the figure of the biblical daughter, her relationship with her father, and her role in the family. The daughter is a complicated character. She is expected to contribute to the household, but is not at all rewarded or celebrated for her efforts. She lives under the authority of her father, but has very few legal rights and does not enjoy the benefits ascribed to mothers. Furthermore, just as there is variance in the treatment of daughters in the text, there are numerous terms used to denote this character. Within the narratives, they are referred to variously as *daughter*, *girl*, *virgin*, and, in some instances, *sister*. Each of these linguistic differences has meaning. In the next chapter, I consider the semantic range of the term *daughter,* and revisits the conceptual definition of *daughter* based on an analysis of Hebrew terms used to define and describe this character.

CHAPTER III

DAUGHTER LANGUAGE

Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to establish a typology of daughter in the Hebrew Bible. This

dissertation has already treated the major elements of the ongoing daughter discourse in Chapters

I and II, so the major concern here is how the biblical writers use six Hebrew words to refer to

daughters. Six Hebrew terms: בת, נערה, בתולה, עלמה, ילדה, and אחות describe the female member

of the household who is not a mother.[147] These six terms signal different aspects of this

character, and throughout the canon, biblical writers employ these semantic variants. After

presenting an analysis of the terms, this chapter will attend to the narratives of daughters in

canonical order with respect to each. The canonical review examines elements of specific

daughter narratives with attention to how the different Hebrew terms may inform the reader's

interpretation.

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[147] Two other words, אמה and שפחה, are used to describe a slave-girl, maid, servant, or maidservant in examples that
do not tie the subject to a specific parent. These terms describe women who, may be considered daughters in the
most generic sense, but do not fully meet the qualifications of daughter as I have defined the term for this project.
For example, we do not know who the father of the אמה, who brings Pharaoh's daughter a basket in Exod 2. Neither
are the parents of the ubiquitous female slaves or maidens (אמהת) identified in Gen 20, Gen 31, or 2 Sam 6. As a
sign of deference, Abigail refers to herself as "your servant" when speaking with David in 1 Sam 25 as does the
wise woman when speaking to Joab in 2 Sam 20, and Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, in her conversation with
David in 1 Kgs 1. Similarly, we do not know, who the father is of the שפחה in Exod 11:5, or 2 Sam 17 and Hannah
refers to herself as a שפחה as a show of deference in the first chapter of 1 Sam. Importantly, many of women
described as שפחה are mothers and thereby fall beyond the descriptive bounds of my definition of daughter. For
example, Sarai refers to Ishmael's mother, Hagar, as her שפחה in Gen 16. Additionally, in Gen 30 Rachel refers
Bilhah, the mother of Dan and Naphtali, as a שפחה, as does Leah refer to Zilpah, the mother of Gad and Asher.
Finally, the widow whose children help her gather vessels at Elisha's command in 2 Kgs 4 refers to herself as a
שפחה.

Hebrew Terms that Describe Daughters

בת is the Hebrew word that means daughter. Like all familial words, it is relational term. A woman is designated a בת because she is in a descendant relationship with a parent, usually a father. Although none of them actually means daughter within the biblical text, five other words may also describe this character. For example, Shechem loves the girl (נערה), Dinah, in Gen 34:3; Israelite soldiers take four hundred virgins (בתולות) in the enemy camp at Shiloh in Judg 21:12;[148] the girl (עלמה), Miriam, calls a wet nurse in Exod 2.8; girls (ילדות) play in the streets in Zech 8:5; and Jacob's sons respond to the treatment of their sister (אחות), Dinah in Gen 34:27.[149]

בת as Daughter

בת is the only term among the ones in this analysis that actually means daughter. בת and its plural, בנות, are the most common Hebrew words for daughter. The early Semitic form behind the Hebrew word, בת, is *bant* or *bint,* and various forms of this word are attested in Ugaritic, Aramaic, Syriac, Akkadian, and Arabic.[150] As the feminine form of בן (son), this Hebrew term is generally interpreted as *daughter*, which may be considered inferior because בן occurs ten times

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[148] Judg 21:12 includes the singular, בתולה; however, the textual reference to four hundred individuals requires a translation of בתולה in its plural form.

[149] Although raeaders will learn of Miriam's parentage in Num 26:59 I list her here because Exod 2:4 suggests that she is the daughter of Moses' mother. Quantitatively, בת, and its plural, בנות represent the largest share of semantic markers for daughters, as these words occur over five hundred and twenty-six times in the Hebrew Bible. This number does not include references to animals, building materials, units of measurement, villages, proper names, or uses as part of the formula for age. Comparatively, נערה occurs sixty-three times, בתולה occurs fifty times, and the words, עלמה and ילדה occur seven and three times, respectively. Cumulatively, the four alternate markers for daughter are twenty-three percent of the בנות/בת citations, or less than a fourth of the number of בנות/בת. While five words mark daughter in the Hebrew Bible, בנות/בת is the most popular among the five.

[150] Haas, "בת," 332-333. Also see Hans Bauer, "בת " in *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testamentes*, ed. Pontus Leander and Paul Kahle (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1922), 618, and John C. Trever, "Identification of the Aramaic Fourth Scroll from 'Ain Feshkha," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 115 (1949): 9.

more often in the canon.[151] Ancient Near Eastern texts and the Hebrew Bible demonstrate that,

although daughters were welcome in ancient families, sons were preferred.[152] Additionally,

daughters were sold first when parents had to surrender a child in order to settle a debt. This use

of daughters supports the claim that the ancients believed daughters were inferior to sons.[153]

Evidence also supports the claim that the ancients believed that the blessing of complete

godliness must result in a greater number of sons than daughters.[154] Within the biblical text, a

pattern exists in which fathers generally have more sons than daughters. For example, Amram

has two sons, Aaron and Moses, and one daughter, Miriam (Num 26:59). Job has seven sons and

only three daughters in both Job 1:2 and Job 42:13. Shimei has sixteen sons and six daughters in

1 Chr 4:27, Heman has fourteen sons and three daughters in 1 Chr 25:5, and Abijah has twenty-

two sons and sixteen daughters in 2 Chr 13:21. However, with sixty daughters and only twenty-

eight sons, King Rehoboam does not follow this pattern (2 Chr 11:21). If a greater number of

sons than daughters indicates a blessing, the inverse must reflect some sort of punishment. To

that end, the Chronicler depicts Rehoboam as without the blessing of more sons than daughters

because it is under his leadership that the northern tribes secede from the monarchy and elect

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[151] Hass, "בת," 333. Hass references *HALOT* in which *ben*, "son," occurs about 4850 times and *bat*, "daughter," about 585 times. Also see Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 263.

[152] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 231-234, 253. See also William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr., eds., COS 1: 334, 344, and Gen 15:3. In COS 1, Kirta pleas for sons in "The Kirta Epic" and Dani'ilu petitions the gods in hopes of a son in "The Legend of Aquat"; in Gen 15:3 Abram laments the fact that he has no biological heirs. Also see Erich Ebeling, "Familie," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie*, ed. Erich Ebeling and Bruno Meissner (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2006), 12.

[153] Phyllis A. Bird, "Poor Man or Poor Woman?: Gendering the Poor in Prophetic Texts," in *On Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender-Specific and Related Studies in Memory of Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes*, ed. Bob Becking and Meindert Dijkstra (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 45-46.

[154] Hass, "בת," 336.

Jeroboam as their king.[155]   Rhetorically, the biblical writer's exclusion of Rehoboam from the blessing of godliness reflects his disappointing legacy as the successor to Solomon's throne who failed to maintain a unified kingdom.

בת in the Torah

In the Torah, there are numerous references to groups of daughters that employ the plural, בנות, within Gen 1-11, especially in the genealogical material.[156]   The first canonical instance of בת that meets the conceptual definition described here is found in Gen 6, where בנות describes female characters who are members of the human class as distinct from the godlike characters who take them as wives. It is this mixing of humanity and godlike characters that pre-stages The Flood narrative.[157] Gen 19 refers to Lot's daughters (בנות) eight times, either in construct or in the possessive form with their father as the possessive determiner. The next canonical instance of בת used to refer to a daughter is in the story of Rebekah. Beginning in Gen 24:23, בת marks Bethuel's daughter, Rebekah, six times (once each in Gen 24:23, 24, and 48, as well as in 25:20, and twice in 24:47). Daughter language occurs in Gen 28:2 when Isaac tells Jacob to take one of

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[155] See 1 Kgs 11:9-13 and 2 Chr 10:15. Reading with the ideology of the text, God punishes Israel for Solomon's religious unfaithfulness by dividing the kingdom during Rehoboam's reign.

[156] In addition to the mythical material in the primeval texts, the Torah also contains mentions of daughters who are not connected to a parent or who are referenced as part of general, legal material. These uses of בת and בנות fall beyond the scope of this project because they are not qualitatively significant, refer to characters who are not identified with a parent, or denote characters who are mothers. For example, בנות appears in the genealogical information for Adam (Gen 5:4), Seth (Gen 5:7), Enush (Gen 5:10), Kenan (Gen 5:13), Mahalalel (Gen 5:16), Jared (Gen 5:19), Enoch (Gen 5:22), Methuselah (Gen 5:26), and Lamech (Gen 5:30), who have sons and daughters. The sons of the gods impregnate בנות האדם, the daughters of mankind, in the preamble to The Flood (Gen 6:1, 2 and 4), and after the Tower of Babel incident, when the people are scattered across the face of the earth, בנות appears in the genealogical information for Shem (Gen 11:11), Arpachshad (Gen 11:13), Shelah (Gen 11:15), Eber (Gen 11:17), Peleg (Gen 11:19), Reu (Gen 11:21), Serug (Gen 11:23), and Nahor (Gen 11:25), who have sons and daughters.

[157] בת marks the wife, Milcah (Gen 11:29), and is used in the idiom to denote a female's age (Gen 17:17). These uses fall beyond the conscription of daughter.

the בנות of Laban (Leah or Rachel), as a wife.[158] The term בת is used in the birth announcement

of Jacob's daughter, Dinah: "Afterwards she bore a daughter, and named her Dinah" (Gen 30:21).

בת also marks Dinah throughout her narrative (see Gen 34:1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 17, and 19). Exodus and

Numbers contain references to Pharaoh's daughter, Jethro's seven daughters, and Zur's daughter,

Cozbi, who are each marked by either בת or בנות.[159] The story of Zelophehad's daughters contains

the final occurrences of daughter language in the Torah. Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and

Tirzah are first mentioned in Num 26:33.[160]

בת in the Deuteronomistic History

In the Deuteronomistic History (DH), there are numerous references to individual

daughters and groups of daughters. Caleb promises his daughter, Achsah, in marriage to

whomever successfully attacks Kiriath-sepher;[161] Jephthah and the Levite's Ephraimite host

bargain with the lives of their daughters;[162] and Saul entices David with the prospect of marrying

his daughters, Merab and Michal.[163] References to Saul's concubine-wife, Rizpah, the daughter

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[158] Although Leah and Rachel are marked by בת and בנות throughout their narrative (Gen 28:2; 29: 10, 16, 23, 24, and 28; Gen 31:26, 28, 31, 41, 43, and 50; and Gen 32:1), only the Gen 28:2; 29: 10, 16, and 23 references fall within my concept of daughter because at this stage in their narrative, Leah and Rachel are still unmarried and have not become mothers. Leah and Rachel quickly become wives and mothers in their narrative.

[159] Pharaoh's daughter (Exod 2:5, 7, 8, 9, 10), Jethro's daughters (Exod 2:20) and Cozbi (Num 25:15 and 18).

[160] The daughters of Zelophehad are also marked by בנות in Num 27:1 and 7, and 36:2, 10, and 11. Additionally, Asenath, mother of King Ahaziah (Gen 41:45) is a queen mother and therefore beyond my definition of daughter.
[161] Achsah is marked by בת in Josh 15:16, and 17, and Judg 1:12 and 13. Zelophehad's daughters are also mentioned in Josh 17:3 and 6.

[162] Jephthah's daughter is marked by בת in Judg 11:12, 13, 34, 35, and 40. The daughter of the Levite's Ephraimite host is mentioned in Judg 19:24.

[163] Merab and Michal are marked as daughters in 1 Sam 18:17, 19, 20, 27, and 28. Beginning in 1 Sam 25:44, and 2 Sam 3:13, 6:16, 20, and 23, Michal is married to David and therefore falls beyond the scope of my project.

of Aiah;[164] Absalom's daughter, Tamar (2 Sam 14:27); and King Jotham's daughter, Jehosheba (2 Kgs 11:2) round out the uses of daughter language in the DH.[165]

בת in the Prophets and the Writings

There are few references to daughters in the Prophets and the Writings that fall within the scope of this project. Aside from the uses of בת to personify a city, the Prophets include two brief references where בת refers to daughters: the King's daughters who are left at Mizpah (Jer 41:10), and Hosea's daughter, Lo-ruhamah (Hos 1:6). The term בת also identifies Esther, the daughter of Abihail;[166] Sheshan's unnamed daughter; Ephraim's daughter, Sheerah; the unnamed daughters of Job; and the daughters of Shallum and Barzillai.[167]

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[164] Rizpah is also marked as a daughter in 2 Sam 21:8, 10, and 11.

[165] Maacah, the mother of King Absalom (2 Sam 3:1); Bathsheba, the mother of King Solomon (2 Sam 11:3); Naamah, the mother of Rehoboam (1 Kgs 14:21, 31); Maacah, mother of Abijam/h (1 Kgs 15:2, 10); Jezebel, mother of King Athaliah (1 Kgs 16:31); Jedidah, mother of King Josiah (1 Kgs 22:1); Azubah, mother of King Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs 22:42); Jerusha, mother of King Jotham (2 Kgs 15:33); Hamutal, mother of King Jehoaha and King Zedekiah (2 Kgs 22:31, 34:18); Nehushta, mother of King Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24:8); Meshullemeth, mother of King Amon (2 Kgs 21:19); and Zebidah, mother of King Jehoaiakim (2 Kgs 23:36) are queen mothers, and therefore beyond my definition of daughter.

[166] Esth 2:7 and 15, and 9:29. Beginning in Ruth 2:2, Ruth is marked by בת, but as a married woman, she falls beyond the scope of my project.

[167] Sheshan's daughter (1 Chr 2:34) marries one of her father's slaves; and Ephraim's daughter (or perhaps, Beriah's daughter—the text is unclear), Sheerah, built the Lower and Upper Beth-horon (1 Chr 7:24). See also Job's two sets of daughters (Job 1:2, 13, and 18, and 42:13 and 15) as well as Shallum's (Neh 3:12) and Barzillai's daughters (Neh 7:63). Similar to the use of daughters in the genealogical material of the Law, Shimei's daughters, David's daughters, and Heman's daughters present in formulaic references to son and daughter language in 1 Chr 4:27, 14:3, and 25:5. Additionally, Maacah, mother of King Abijah (2 Chr 11:20---22), and Maacah, mother of King Asa (2 Chr 15:16) are queen mothers, and are therefore beyond my definition.

נערה *as Daughter*

The story of Rebekah (Gen 24:14) is the first canonical use of נערה to refer to a daughter who meets the definition conscribed for this project.[168] The second use of נערה as a character who is readily identified with a parent is in the story of Dinah (Gen 34).[169] The third canonical instance of נערה that meets my definition occurs in Esth 2.[170]

Although many lexicons define term נערה (the feminine of נער) as a damsel, girl, or young unmarried girl,[171] a close examination of the deployment of the term indicates that this designation marks an individual who functions in an subordinate role. In essence, these terms reflect the leader's gaze upon a subordinate such that the narrator deploys the terms to refer to the character's materialist labor or functional activity in service to the leader. A נער or נערה is, indeed, a subordinate to others.[172] My nuance of נער or נערה however, goes further to distinguish between the individual's subordinate role. In my schema, the identity of a נער or נערה is tied to their function as a helper. An individual in a subordinate position exists in a dependent relationship with or as subject to the authority of a superior. In the patri-centered world of the biblical text, a *bat* or *ben* exists in a subordinate relationship to their patriarch. The patriarch's

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[168] In Gen 24, נערה is used to refer to Rebekah five times.

[169] In Gen 34:3 and 12, נערה is used to refer to Dinah three times.

[170] In Esth 2:7 and 9, נערה is used to refer to Esther twice. Because her father, Abihail (Esth 2:15) has died, Esther is under the paternal authority of her cousin, Mordecai (Esth 2:7). Additionally, although Ruth (Ruth 2:5 and 6; 4:12), and the Levite's wife (Judg 19:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9) are both married, and Abishag (1 Kgs 1:4) is only mentioned briefly, each are described as a נערה, and fall beyond the conscription of *daughter* I have chosen for my project. נערה also marks various non-descript servants, such as Rebekah's, Pharaoh's daughter's, and Abigail's attendants (Gen 24: 61; Exod 2:5; and 1 Sam 25:42); generic young women (Deut 22:15, 16, 19-21, and 23-29); girls (1 Sam 9:11; Esth 2:2 ,3, and 8; Job 40:29; Prov 9:3, 27:27 and 31:15; and Amos 2:7); field hands (Ruth 2:8, 22, 23, and 3:2); and maids (Esth 2:9, 4:4 and 16).

[171] "נערה," *BDB*, 655 and "נער" "נערה," *HALOT*, 2:707.

[172] F. H. Fuhs, "נער," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 9: 474-485. Fuhs acknowledges that the etymology of נער is uncertain, but points to uses of the term in various ancient Near Eastern documents. Also see John Macdonald, "The Status and Role of the Na'ar in Israelite Society," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 35.3 (1976): 147-170.

נער or נערה however, performs functions that assist the patriarch or other superior in their work as a subordinate. Based on attestations in Egyptian, Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Akkadian documents, F. H. Fuhs suggests that a נער (and the feminine נערה) is a servant in a dependent relationship with their master or *paterfamilias*. As an example, this character may be a free person who enters by choice into a servile relationship such as that of a maid of a lady of the court.[173] Fuhs points to the Ramesside period, the Karnak Inscription of Merneptah (1224-1204), the Papyrus Anastasi I, and the Onomasticon of Amenope as examples of Egyptian use of the word *n'rn* (a Canaanite loanword denoting a military unit) or *n'ryn* as examples of a specialized or experienced military unit that supports the larger work of an army.[174] In addition to the military usage of the term, *n'r*, the Ugarit *n'rm* may refer to a servant who holds a position of responsibility in the household, as is the case in KTU 4.360.5 and 4.367.7; *n'r* may also simply mean child or youth as in KTU 2.33.29.[175] Phoenician inscriptions also use the term *n'rm* to refer to temple personnel who received payments. Finally, while Akkadian texts employ a different term (ṣuḫār(t)u) to denote a servant dependent upon his master, a *naʿarah* is a young woman in a servile position.[176] These ancient Near Eastern references support the interpretation of the Hebrew, נער and נערה, as one who supports another in some hierarchal system.

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[173] Fuhs, "נער," 480, 483.

[174] Fuhs, "נער," 476-477.

[175] Fuhs, "נער," 477. Also see Manfried Dietrich, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places: KTU,* 2nd enlarged edition, ed. Oswald Loretz and Joaquín Sanmartín (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995), 348, 350, 175.

[176] Fuhs "נער," 478-479. A Phoenician tablet contains a reference to *n'rm*, believed to be temple personnel, who received payments. See Herbert Donner, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften,* ed. Wolfgang Röllig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966), 37. An Akkadian list names a series of occupations and the rations assigned to them; in each case, the suharu are listed last and their rations are less than those of the others. Birot deduces that the suharu are apprentices in training. See M. Birot, *Archives Royales de Mari,* Romanized ed. (Paris: Impr. Nationale, 1950), IX, 357.

John Macdonald considers personal attendants, military personnel, overseers, and messengers as found in the Mari correspondence as examples of *ṣuḫārum,* men of rank engaged in a variety of duties who serve kings, governors, and other individuals.[177] Specifically, Macdonald points to the *ṣuḫār* Qarni-Lim in the Mari archives. Macdonald also references military personnel who join the army leaders and an individual whom Tarim-Sakim summons to supervise and protect workers as examples of *ṣuḫārum.* Additionally, an envoy dispatched by a governor named Yabbi-Daggan is listed among these men of rank.[178] Macdonald compares these individuals to biblical characters such as Abraham's *na'ar* in Gen 22:3, Joseph the *na'ar*-knight in Gen 41:12 and 38-44, the unnamed overseer responsible for Boaz's property in Ru 2:5, and the *na'arim* who accompanied David on numerous campaigns in 1 Sam 21. In each of these cases, the *suḫārū* and *na'ar* perform an subordinate role and support others who hold a higher or more prestigious position in the community. On the basis of comparative analysis, Macdonald concludes that the role of the *suḫārū* in Mari is similar to that of the Hebrew term, *na'ar*.[179]

The biblical writer deploys נער or נערה to refer to activity (domestic, agrarian, or sexual) done in service to a more important other. Examples of the subordinate aspect of נער and נערה include the נער of Moses, who prepares a meal in Gen 18, and the נער who presents offerings on behalf of the community in Exod 24.[180] The נערה, Rebekah, gathers water for her household and

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[177] John Macdonald, "The Role and Status of Ṣuḫārū in the Mari Correspondence," *Journal of American Oriental Society* 96.1 (1976): 65.

[178] See *ARM*, 2 79:24, 28, Jørgen Læssøe, *The Shemshāra Tablets: A Preliminary Report* (København: Kommission hos Munksgaard, 1959), 812:50-51, *ARM* 5 30:11ff, and *ARM* 3 52:11-14.

[179] Macdonald, "The Role and Status of Ṣuḫārū," 57. Macdonald found that the *suḫārū* of the Mesopotamian collections were of the same functionary and professional class as the *ne'arim* of the Israelite text, the *n'rm* of the Uagritic texts, and the *n'rn* of the Egyptian texts. Also see, John Macdonald, "The Status and Role of the Na'ar in Israelite Society," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 35.3 (1976): 147-170.

[180] Interestingly, the male נער often acts in an apprentice role with older men. The נער, Joseph, follows his older brothers when they perform their shepherd duties (Gen 37:2); the נער, Joshua, is Moses' successor (Exod 3:11);

then serves the stranger and his camels in Gen 24. The נערה, Ruth, provides for her mother-in-law by working in Boaz's fields in Ruth 2. As נערות, Esther and Abishag sexually please kings in their subordinate roles to King Ahasuerus and King David respectively in Esth 2 and 1 Kgs 2. Notably, some women act as נערה to other women. Rebekah (Gen 24:61), Pharaoh's daughter (Exod 2:5), and Abigail (1 Sam 25:42) each have נערות who serve them.

In addition to fulfilling a subordinate role, a נערה is often the object of male desire. An interesting three-part pattern emerges in the text, in which a male sees a נערה, a reference is made to her appearance (seeing), and the male acts in such a way as to gain possession or control of the נערה. First, Abraham's servant (Isaac's proxy) sees the נערה, Rebekah. Second, the narrator comments that she is beautiful הנער טבת מראה מאד (Gen 24:16). Finally, the servant secures her as the bride for his master at the end of Gen 24. In Gen 34, Shechem sees Dinah before he loves her (Gen 34:2-3), he is drawn to her (perhaps because she is beautiful), and he negotiates for her to become his wife. In the Book of Esther, the נערה, Esther, competes alongside all the beautiful (טובת מראה) women and is chosen to receive beauty treatments under the direction of the king's herem-keeper, Hegai (Esth 2:3). Esther finds favor with all who see her (Esth 2:15), pleases the king's herem-keeper, and is given whatever she needs to present herself favorably before the king. True to the pattern, in the third move, the king makes Esther his queen.

בתולה *as Daughter*

The Hebrew term בתולה signals a life stage, and is best understood as denoting a young girl who is entering marriage. However, in the same way בתולים (nubility) is not solely an identifier of sexual chastity, בתולה (virgin) does not exclusively designate a woman who has not

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Purah travels as Gideon's assistant (Judg 7:11); and a נער carries Abimelech's armor (Judg 9:54). This training element is not found in the depictions of the נערה, who is rarely presented in a learner role with older women.

experienced sexual intercourse; in fact, the term בתולה is often qualified with the phrase "who had not known a man."[181] This modifier suggests that בתולה alone does not denote sexual intercourse. If בתולה always meant one who was sexually chaste, the phrase would be redundant. To that end, the idea that בתולה is restricted to those who are sexually inactive is challenged by the writer of Joel 1:8. In this text, the term refers to a woman who has already married and therefore sexually active.

Etymologically, בתולה is cognate Ugaritic (*btlt*), Aramaic (*btwlh, btwlt*), Akkadian (*batultu)*, and Arabic (*batūl*) terms that are usually translated as "virgin."[182] Within Mesopotamian contexts, the Akkadian term denotes an age group and primarily means a young, marriageable woman.[183] Martha Roth agrees that in Neo-Babylonian marriage contracts, *batultu* is an age group designation and not an explicit reference to virginity or sexual chastity.[184] Roth understands a *batultu* as an unmarried teenaged girl living in the household of her father or her brother. Specifically, for Roth, *batultu* is the status of a girl who is about to become a wife.[185]

The first canonical attestation of בתולה occurs in Gen 24:16, and a group of בתולים are first mentioned in Exod 22:16. Within the Deuteronomistic History, the unnamed daughter of the Levite's father-in-law (Judg 19:24), miscellaneous young women at Shiloh (Judg 21:12), Tamar

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[181] Gen 24:16 and Judg 21.12. Jephthah's daughter weeps over her בתולים (nubility) in Judg 11:37, but is not marked as a בתולה.

[182] Matitiahu Tsevat, "בתולה," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament 2:* 340.

[183] Tsevat, "בתולה," 339. Also see *The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago (CAD)*, II 174.

[184] Martha T. Roth, "Age at Marriage and the Household: A Study of Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian Forms," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29.4 (1987): 715-747. Roth reads with *CAD* before nuancing her understanding of *batulu*.

[185] Roth, "Age at Marriage," 746. For other treatments of *betulah,* see Tom Wadsworth, "Is There a Hebrew Word for Virgin: Betulah in the Old Testament," *Restoration Quarterly* 23.3 (1980): 161-171; Gordan J. Wenham, "Betulah A Girl of Marriageable Age," *Vetus Testamentum* 22. 3 (1972): 326-348; and Matitiahu Tsevat, "בתולה," 338-343.

(2 Sam 13:2), and Abishag (1 Kgs 1:2) are described as a בתולה or בתולים.[186] Finally, the term is

used to personify cities such as Zion, Babylon, Israel, and Egypt in the prophets' writings.[187]

Furthermore, as these examples demonstrate, in many passages the referent for בתולה is not

sexual at all. To be a בתולה is one stage in life. For this reason, this term often describes

daughters who are part of a betrothal narrative.

The betrothal of Rebekah, for example, is instructive. Throughout Gen 24, the narrator

and other characters say and do things to reinforce the idea that the בתולה, Rebekah, is the ideal

marriage candidate for Isaac because she exhibits three important traits: she is from the

appropriate family, she is beautiful, and she is not married.[188] Additionally, as an ideal marriage

candidate, Rebekah may increase the social standing and economic position of her father's

household. As it relates to family connection, because she is the great-granddaughter of Terah,

Rebekah was born into the preferred kinship group. Rebekah's paternal grandfather, Nahor, is

the brother of Isaac's father, Abraham. Additionally, Rebekah demonstrates her usefulness when

she not only gives the stranger water, but extends industrious hospitality by watering his camels

(Gen 24:20). Finally, the בתולה is pleasing to the male gaze. The narrator describes Rebekah as

beautiful or "very fair to look upon" in Gen 24:16. By marking Rebekah as a בתולה, the narrator

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[186] Interestingly, there are no old בתולת. The term, בתולת modifies נערה in Deut 22:23 and 22:28, Judg 21:12, 1 Kgs 1:2, and Esth 2:2 and 3, but I found no uses of בתולה being modified by זקן (old).

[187] Many of these בתולה daughters fall beyond the scope of close examination for this project because they are either female characters who are not members of specific households readily identified with a parent, or they are only briefly mentioned in the text.

[188] I acknowledge that the perspective of the biblical writer constricts Rebekah by telling her story through a patriarchal lens that privileges male characters. For treatments of beauty in the Hebrew Bible, see Richard J. Bautch and Jean-Francois Racine, *Beauty and the Bible: Toward a Hermeneutics of Biblical Aesthetics* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013); Yossi Feintuch, "Beauty in the Bible," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 31.4 (2003): 249-251; Franci Landy, *Beauty and the Enigma and Other Essays on the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 2001); Stuart Macwilliam, "Ideologies of Male Beauty and the Hebrew Bible," *Biblical Interpretation* 17.3 (2009): 265-287; David Penchansky, "Beauty, Power, and Attraction: Aesthetics and the Hebrew Babe," in *Beauty and the Bible*, ed. Richard J. and Jean-Francois Racine Bautch (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 47-65; and Claus Westermann, "Beauty in the Hebrew Bible," in *Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 584-602.

reinscribes the betrothal trope and helps the reader anticipate Rebekah's life stage progression from unmarried to married. It is not surprising then, that Rebekah becomes Isaac's wife at the end of the chapter. Finally, just as a daughter's בתולים is a commodity marketed by her father, so too does a בתולה represent potential economic gain for her household. Rebekah's marriage benefits Bethuel financially because he receives expensive gifts from Abraham, who the servant describes as wealthy and blessed by the Lord in Gen 24:35. [189]

Beyond the general term, בת, biblical writers employ different terms when describing daughters. Some terms indicate action that will occur. The word, בתולה signals a betrothal or transition into marriage. Tamar is a בתולה in 2 Sam 13 and Esther and the other בתולות compete to become the next queen of Persia in Esth 2. While בתולה prepares the reader to anticipate a particular act (i.e., a betrothal), another term, עלמה signals a potential plot twist.

עלמה *as Daughter*

The term, עלמה occurs seven times to describe a female character, and it is usually translated as "woman" or "maiden."[190] Although the term does not appear often, an עלמה is a character whose role is not fixed. It is often unclear how an עלמה connects to the protagonist in the text, and her presence often heightens intrigue within the narrative by introducing dramatic irony. The first canonical instance of עלמה occurs in Gen 24:43. Rebekah is an עלמה before Abraham's servant learns that she has the correct family pedigree to wed Isaac. This use of עלמה heightens the narrative tension in Isaac's betrothal story by calling into question whether the עלמה

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[189] Bethuel also benefits socially because the marriage results in a legal connection to the prosperous and respected Abraham.

[190] Ps 46:1 and 1 Chr 15:20 contain references to the proper noun, עלמות, or Alamoth. This use of the term falls beyond the scope of this project because the character is not identified as a female family member and is not directly connected to a parent.

is the proper one to help him fulfill the covenantal promise by birthing prodigy. Readers

understand that the fulfillment of the covenantal promise rests on Isaac's producing legitimate

heirs, and he can only do that with a woman from among Abraham's kin group. The narrative

tension builds as the readers are left with unanswered questions about Isaac, the עלמה, Rebekah,

and the fulfillment of the covenantal promise.

The second use of עלמה describes Miriam in Exod 2:8 in such a way that her role is

unclear. Here, at the direction of Pharaoh's daughter, the girl goes to secure a Hebrew wet nurse

for an infant Hebrew boy child.[191] At this point in Miriam's story, the reader knows the עלמה is

related to the Hebrew boy and the wet nurse, but Pharaoh's daughter does not. The connection

between the עלמה and the Hebrew boy is still a mystery to Pharaoh's daughter, and this intrigue

heightens the plot tension in the birth narrative of the hero, Moses. [192]   It is unclear if Miriam

will reveal her connection and what the consequences of that revelation might be. The Egyptian

princess has given the עלמה an order, but as one under the rule of Pharaoh, Miriam may drown

the child in the Nile River in order to gain favor with the palace. As the daughter of her Hebrew

mother, Miriam may choose someone other than the boy's mother to serve as his wet nurse. The

עלמה may choose another in order to spare her mother further trauma when, at the end of the time

for weaning, the boy must be taken from her again. As the drama of Exod 2 unfolds, readers

learn of the irony that the עלמה connects the very mother who sought to save the boy's life by

placing him safely on the Nile River in defiance of the Pharaoh and the Egyptian princess who

will raise him in the Pharaoh's palace as her own.

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[191] Miriam is the daughter of Amram (1 Chr 5:29) and Jochebed (Num 26:59).

[192] Beyond the scope of my concept of daughter, עלמה also marks various young women and girls who are not
identified with a specific parent (Ps 68:26, Prov 30:19, Song 1:3 and 6:8, and Isa 7:14).

The third attestation of the term exemplifies the uncertainty of עלמה. In Isa 7:14, עלמה could refer to the wife of Ahaz, the wife of Isaiah, the prophetess, an anonymous lady of the court, or even a female hierodule.[193] This term could also simply mark a woman in general.[194] The fourth use of עלמה is equally enigmatic. Christoph Dohmen and Wilhelm Gesenius do not agree on its use in Prov 30:19. Here, עלמה is either "woman" or "darkness," such that the phrase דרך גבר בעלמה refers to the "way of a man in the dark."[195] In the remaining portions of the canon, the biblical writers use the plural form, עלמות. Here, the term presents in Ps 68:26, Song 1:3, and Song 6:8, where the default translation "maidens" suffices.

Dohmen argues that there is no satisfactory etymology for עלמה.[196] According to him, the uncertainty is especially clear when studies focusing on Hebrew cite Ugaritic *ǵlm* in support of the meaning "young woman," while studies focusing on Ugaritic cite Hebrew *'almâ* in support of the same meaning.[197] Ugaritic, which has the earliest occurrences of the term, offers a range

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[193] Dohmen "עלמה,"in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. Helmer Ringgren, G. Johannes Botterweck, and Heinz-Josef Fabry (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1974, 161. Dohmen uses the term, hierodule, as a possible translation of עלמה in Isa 7:14. This translation option is problematic because a hierodule is a slave or prostitute associated with a temple. Stephanie Budin and E. Fisher each challenge the notion of cult, cultic prostitution in the biblical world. The designation of the עלמה as a hierodule is inaccurate. Additionally, in this text Isaiah gives Ahaz a word of encouragement from the Lord. Specifically, Isaiah promises that the sign will be that an עלמה will birth a child named Immanuel whose birth will signal the imminent devastation of Ahaz's enemies. Because LXX translates παρθένος as 'virgin,' this text is misinterpreted as foreshadowing the virgin birth of Jesus Christ because it aligns with Matt 1:22-23. See Stephanie Lynn Budin, *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008 and Eugene J. Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution in the Ancient Near East: A Reassessment." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 6, no. 2-3 (1976): 225-236.

[194] Dohmen "עלמה,",158. For other treatments of עלמה as "young woman" or "maiden" in Is 7:14, see Michael E. W. Thompson, "Isaiah's Sign of Immanuel," *Expository Times* 95.3 (1983): 67-71; John H. Walton, "Isa 7:14: What's in a Name?," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 30.3 (1987): 289-306; Alfred von Rohr Sauer, "The 'Almah Translation in Isa 7:14," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 24.8 (1953): 551-559; Charles Lee Feinberg, "The Virgin Birth and Isaiah 7:14," *Master's Seminary Journal* 22.1 (2011): 11-17; and George D. Smith, Jr., "Isaiah Updated," *Dialogue* 16.2 (1983): 37-51.

[195] Dohmen "עלמה," 162. Also see Wilhelm Gesenius, *Thesaurus Philologicus Criticus Linguae Hebraeae et Chaldaeae Veteris Testamenti* vol. II, ed. Emil Röediger (Lipsiae: Lipsiae, 1829), 1032, who says that the term refers to clandestine thefts.

[196] Dohmen, "עלמה," 154-163.

[197] Dohmen, "עלמה," 158.

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of meanings of the masculine form, *ǵlm*, and the feminine form, *ǵlmt*. The feminine, *ǵlmt*, can refer to a goddess, messengers or a woman of alien ethnicity.[198]   For example, the Ugaritic goddesses, Anat, is referred to as a *btlt* in The Baal Cycle, and *btlt* is used as a popular epithet for 'Anartu and Aṯtartu.[199] Therefore, readers can expect the unexpected when a daughter is described as an עלמה.

ילדה *as Daughter*

The term ילדה is the feminine singular form of ילד, and appears infrequently in comparison to the other words used to mark daughters. It simply describes a female child. Etymologically, ילד occurs most often as a verb, and is often seen in the genealogies of Genesis and Chronicles. The verb ילד is variously translated as "beget," or "bear," and means to bring forth (as in children).[200] The noun occurs three times in the feminine form. Shechem refers to Dinah as a ילדה in Gen 34:4, the ילדה is sold for wine in Joel 4:3, and boys and girls (ילדות) play in the streets in Zech 8:5.[201]

BDB and *HALOT* define ילדה as "marriageable girl," but this translation is misleading. Although the only instance of ילדה that meets my definition occurs in Gen 34, when Shechem negotiates elements of a marriage agreement, the betrothal context should not wholly inform the understanding of the word. Three different terms describe Dinah at the beginning of Gen 34. By

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[198] Dohmen, "עלמה," 157.

[199] See Simon B. Parker, ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997 and Aicha Rahmouni, *Divine Epithets in the Ugaritic Alphabetic Texts* ed. W. H. van Soldt; Leiden: BRILL, 2007.

[200] Josef Schreiner, "ילד," in vol. VI of *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. Helmer Ringgren, G. Johannes Botterweck, and Heinz-Josef Fabry (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1990), 76-81. Shreiner notes that the "bear" translation is reserved for women subjects (77).

[201] The last two examples fall beyond the definitional boundaries of my conscription of daughter because they are not readily identified with a parent.

introducing her as a בת in the first verse, the writer locates Dinah in Jacob's family. This familial relationship makes the Shechem/Shechemite encounter integral to the narrative arc of the Patriarchs in Genesis. If Dinah were not related to a patriarch, her story would not make a difference. The narrator and Shechem each identify Dinah as a נערה (Gen 34:3 and 12). As previously established, the term נערה indicates this character's subordinate function. Within the ancient family, the daughter would have helped with household activities, some of which such as sourcing water for cooking would have required that she leave the house. Interestingly, though the writer uses multiple words to describe Dinah, she is not described as a בתולה, the one word which often signals a betrothal. Instead, Dinah is a ילדה, which simply classifies her as a girl or a young female. Rhetorically, the absence of בתולה may foreshadow the fact that Dinah does not marry at all.

Martha Roth supports this rejection of ילדה as "marriageable girl" when she argues that, in ancient worlds, the age of marriage eligibility for a female was indistinguishable from adolescence. Roth offers that to be a girl in the ancient world *was* the equivalent of being eligible for marriage because girls married in their mid to late teens.[202] Therefore, to burden the term ילדה with the weight of marriageability is inaccurate. Readers should note that ילד, the masculine counterpart for ילדה, carries no connotation regarding betrothal or marriage. A ילד is a male youth and the term is variously translated as "male child," "son," or "boy." Similarly, a ילדה is simply a female child, daughter, or girl.

When compared to other terms employed to identify daughters such as בתולה and נערה, the two terms, עלמה and ילדה appear interchangeable. It is easy to see why many translators offer similar renderings for these two terms as 'maiden,' or 'girl.' A close examination of their

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[202] Martha T Roth, "Age at Marriage and the Household: A Study of Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian Forms," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29 (1987): 747.

semantic connections and contextual usage however demonstrates subtle differences. The use of the term עלמה signals dramatic irony, while the term ילדה simply describes a female child. In much the same way בתולה and נערה signal a particular turn of events in the plot, so does the term, אחות.

אחות *as Daughter*

Derived from a root word that signifies one's blood brother,[203] the Hebrew term אחות (sister) is used throughout the canon to describe characters examined in this dissertation. The first canonical use of אחות describes Sarah in Gen 12:19. Other named אחות include Leah and Rachel, Cozbi, Abigail (2 Sam 17:25), and Jerosheba (2 Kgs 11:2). Leviticus contains numerous references to unspecified sisters, and Jeremiah and Ezekiel include metaphorical references to sisters Judah, Samaria, and Sodom. The last canonical use of the term, אחות, to describe a daughter figure refers to Ruhamah and occurs in Hos 2:1.

Like its masculine counterpart, אח (brother), the term אחות is relational, and identifies sisters related by paternal blood as in the case of Rebekah and Laban, Leah, Rachel and their brothers, and Miriam and her brothers, Aaron and Moses. Dinah and her twelve brothers along with Tamar and her brothers, Amnon and Absalom, enjoy similar relationships because they share the same father. The term אחות also describes a distant kinswoman. Abraham explains that Sarah is his אחות in Gen 20:12, and the Lord identifies Cozbi as an אחות of the Midianites in Num 25:18. Finally, the word is used metaphorically to refer to closely related nations and cities. Israel is Judah's אחות in Jer 3:7, and Jerusalem is the sister of Samaria in Ezek 16:46.

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[203] Helmer Ringgren, "אח," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Williams B. Eerdmans, 1974), 188-193.

Notably, in those narratives in which a daughter is described as an אחות, her father often

plays a minimal role. In these stories, her brother(s) completes many of the tasks generally

assigned to the father. Specifically, the brother stands in as the male head of household, takes

lead in marriage negotiations, exercises legal authority over the daughter, and directs her actions.

In Rebekah's story, her brother, Laban, proactively invites the stranger to the home, affirms the

marriage proposal, and receives tokens that may serve as the bride price (Gen 24:53). The

father, Bethuel, only speaks in unison with Laban. Dinah's brothers negotiate the marriage terms

with and later rescue her from Shechem in Gen 34. Moses and Aaron figure prominently

throughout Miriam's narrative, while her father, Amram, is only mentioned in Num 26:59.

Although the father, David, summons Tamar to her brother's home in 2 Sam 13, his role is

minimal. Her brother, Amnon, seizes control when he rapes her, and her other brother, Absalom,

exercises paternal privilege when he directs her to remain silent (2 Sam 13:20).

My observation that fathers play minimal roles challenges long-standing interpretations

that redeem or commend biblical fathers. For example, rabbinic interpreters redeem Jacob's

inaction when confronted with the news that his daughter had been violated by emphasizing his

deathbed condemnation of Simeon and Levi (Gen 49:5-7) and their role in the destruction of

Shechem.[204] When the rabbis do not attend to the implications of Jacob's passive response to the

news of Dinah's violation but instead expound upon his willfull stance with respect to the

precarious position the sons' destruction of Shechem places him with the leaders of the

surrounding communities (Gen 34:30), the rabbis fail to acknowledge the Jacob's diminished role

as Dinah's father. Similarly, George Rideout reminds readers that, in an effort to emphasize the

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[204] See Jeffrey K. Salkin, "Dinah, the Torah's Forgotten Woman," *Judaism* 35.3 (1986): 284-289. Salkin offers that the rabbis do not read against the text, but redeem Jacob when they expound upon his deathbed condemnation of Simeon and Levi in Gen 49:5. In Gen 49, Jacob punishes Simeon and Levi by cursing their descendants with poverty and dependence upon other tribes for support, respectively.

theme of family dysfunction that runs throughout David's story, the narrator portrays David as an unwitting accomplice in the rape of Tamar by Amnon and the murder of Amnon by Absalom.[205] Family dysfunction overshadows the role of the father in the story of the sister, Tamar.

In his drive to redeem the father, Rideout does not consider the deployment of the term אחות in Dinah's narrative. As the stories of Rebekah, Dinah, Miriam, and Tamar demonstrate, אחות signals a physical absence or minimal role of the father. In light of the aforementioned discussion of the many terms used to identify biblical daughters, it is important to consider uses of the term בת in its broader context. The word בת does not always describe a female member of a household. An examination of other uses of בת follows.

Uses of בת Other Than as a Daughter

Although English translators render the Hebrew word בת as *daughter*, the term does not always describe a female member of the household. The term בת is also used in unique phrases to describe cities, towns, and their inhabitants.

בת *to Describe Cities, Towns, and Their Inhabitants*

The terms בת and בנות take on different meanings when attached to the names of cities; in such cases, בת identifies the inhabitants of that city, and although בת is feminine, its use to designate a city includes all its people, both male and female. For example, Isa 1:8 uses בת-ציון to

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[205] George Rideout, "The Rape of Tamar," in *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, ed. Jared J. Jackson and Martin Kessle (Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1974), 77. MT records David's hearing of the matter and becoming angry in 2 Sam 13:21, but LXX adds, "but he did not grieve the spirit of his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his first-born." Many English translations of 2 Sam 13:21 include the clause from LXX, which works to explain David's lack of response to the news that his daughter, Tamar, had been violated.

refer to the people of Zion and refers to both the women and men of Zion. Zion, which is often

used as a synonym for Jerusalem and its environs, is an ancient name for the various parts of

Jerusalem. Therefore, the writer of Micah admonishes the entire community of Zion when he

writes of their groaning like a woman in travail (וגחי בת-ציון כיולדה), and warns of their exilic

experience in Babylon (Mic 4:10). There would be no need to include the simile "like a woman"

if the referents were all women. Similarly, the phrases, בת-ירושלם (Mic 4:8 and Zeph 3:14) and

בת-בבל (Zech 2:11) represent the people of Jerusalem and Babylon, respectively.

When the plural בנות is connected to the name of a city, however, the term designates only

the female members of that community. In Isa 3:16-17, בנות ציון refers to the women of Zion, not

the city's entire population. Other examples of בנות being connected to a city name include the

Hittite women in Gen 27:46, the Canaanite women in Gen 28:1, 28:6, 28:8, and 36:2, and the

Israelite women in Deut 23:18 (also see Judg 11:40, 2 Sam 1:24 and 84, and Isa 16:2).[206]

Finally, the term בנות may also identifies villages or small towns. Examples include

Heshbon and all its villages that are captured by Israel in Num 21:25, Ekron and its villages that

are listed among the inheritance of the tribe of Judah in Josh 15:45, the towns of Judah that are

encouraged to rejoice by the psalmist in Ps 48:12, and the daughter-towns of Tyre who will

become plunder for the nations in Ezek 26:6.[207] Importantly, these villages, towns, or daughter-

towns are smaller than the cities of Heshbon, Ekron, Judah, and Tyre. These daughter-towns are

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[206] Also see the native women or women of the land in Gen 27:46 and 34:1.

[207] Interestingly, בנות is used alongside חצר (a settled abode, settlement, or village) in four of these verses that reinforce the immense reach of inheritance and settlement of the Israelites. The noun חצר occurs 34 times in the Hebrew Bible. Each of these citations is plural. The majority of these citations are in Joshua, but four are also present in Nehemiah and 1 Chronicles.

in dependent relationships with the larger cities in the same ways daughters are in dependent

relationships with fathers in the patriarchal world of the Hebrew Bible.[208]

בת *in Unique Phrases*

Throughout the canon, the biblical writers employ בת in unique phrases and idioms. The

term בת is part of the formula used to denote a female's age, to a represent song or music, and as a

term of endearment.[209] For example, in Ps 17, the endearing phrase, בנות עין (trans.: "apple of

your eye") reflects the psalmist's desire to elicit the deity's protection.[210] בת is also used in

partitive constructions that denote component parts of a larger entity or constituent group. As an

example, the term בת is used in the phrase בת היענה to denote a member of a class of ostriches,[211]

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[208] I have already highlighted how biblical daughters are dependent on their fathers with regard to marriage, the choice of marriage partner. Daughters also depended upon their fathers to represent them in legal matters such that the father entered into legal contracts on behalf the daughter and had the legal authority to annul a daughter's vow (Num 30:3-5). Furthermore, Haag points to this dependence of daughters upon fathers when he discusses of the father's ability to dispose of the daughter as labor for financial benefit, in a such a way that the daughter is dependent upon her father for the x of her future. See Haas, "בת," (336- 337).

[209] Gen 17:17, Lev 14:10, Num 6:14 and 15:27, Eccl 12:4, Lam 2:18, and Ps 17:8. Eccl 12:4 uses the phrase השיר בנות to reference music or songs. While there is no consensus on the meaning of this phrase, with interpretations ranging from "birds" to "female singers" to "songs" and beyond, what is clear is the writer's use of poetic language to speak about the effects of aging in the first part of Chapter 12. Beginning with verse 2, the writer alludes to decreased eyesight, trembling hands and stooped posture, loss of hearing, slow movements and graying hair, loss of bladder control, heart failure, and eventually, death. Given this context, I understand בנות השיר as "songs" and not necessarily "female singers."

[210] Although עין (eye) presents with no suffix, the 2ms suffix is implied. The convention of parallel structure calls for eye to take a 2ms suffix because כנף (wing) has a 2ms suffix in the second portion of the phrase בצל כנפיך תסתירני. (hide me in the shadow of your wing). Additionally, a similar use of עין (eye) in Lam 2:16 includes the suffix. In Ps 17:8, after establishing personal innocence and a sinless character in Ps 17:3-5, the psalmist is concerned with maintaining a positive relationship with God. See Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 181. The emotive language of "apple of your eye" images the supplicant psalmist as the well-loved, whom the deity treasures and wants to protect.

[211] Lev 11:16; Deut 14:15; Job 30:29; Isa 13:21, 34:13, and 43:20; Jer 49:2 and 50:39; and Mic 1:8. In the biblical world, ostriches were known to live in the desert, feed on dead animals, and emit piercing night cries. In addition to being listed among the unclean animals in the group of laws concerning daily holiness in the Law, the prophetic writers employ ostrich to signal the desolation associated with the destruction of Babylon. As an example, when referring to Babylon, Isa 34:13 states, "Thorns shall grow over its strongholds, nettles and thistles in its fortresses. It shall be the haunt of jackals, an abode for ostriches." The prophet Micah employs בנות יענה in a lament, and Job decries his state of extreme depression by suggesting he is a companion of ostriches (Isa 13:21, 34:13, and 43:30; Jer 50:29; Mic 1:8; and Job 30:29). Additionally, within the Writings, ostrich imagery connotes negative attributes,

the phrase בת-אשרים describes a type of building material,[212] and בת-גדוד specifies a military

division. Additionally, בנות is used to signify branches, which are component parts of a tree,[213]

and בת describes a measurement. Employing etymological data and archaeological evidence,

Robert Scott explains that this use of בת evolved from the tradition of daughters carrying well

water for their households.[214] בת and its semantic parallel בתים then refer to the amount of wine

provisions or a portion of a homer, or a capacity, as in the volume of a basin or the yield of a

vineyard.[215]

As this brief excursion demonstrates, daughter language is not limited to daughter

characters who are members of specified family units. Particularly within the Prophets, the

Hebrew term בת often designates geographic areas and groups of people. In these instances, the

groups are not always exclusively female. Furthermore, phrases and idioms often employ בת and

בנות in ways that are not always predictable or logical. Despite these distinctive uses of daughter

language, throughout the canon the five Hebrew terms generally identify females who are not yet

mothers. We now turn to the canon to consider how daughter language may inform

interpretations of the stories of daughters.

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characteristics, or actions. The writer of Job 30:29 uses בנות יענה to mark a creature that flaps its wings wildly with no control, leaves its eggs, neglects its young, and has no God-given understanding. Likewise, the writer of Lam 4:3 uses ענים and suggests that, like wild ostriches, the people are worse than jackals.

[212] Ezekiel 27:6 includes the phrase בת-אשרים (daughter of boxwood) to refer to the boxwood or pine used to build portions of Tyre.

[213] Gen 49:22. The עין בנות phrase is a *hapax legomenon,* as it is only found in this verse. As a *hapax legomenon*, this meaning is questionable; however, this conceptualization of בת as dependent aligns with the use of בת to mark villages or smaller territories that are dependent on larger cities.

[214] Robert B. Y. Scott, "Weights and Measures in the Bible*,*" *BA* (1959): 29-30. Scholars debate the exact measurement capacity of the bath. The figure ranges anywhere from Josephus' conservative estimate of 10 gallons, to W. F. Albright's moderate 5 gallons, to Inge's aggressive calculation of upwards of 45 gallons.

[215] Examples include Gen 24:15, 1 Kgs 7:26 and 38, Isa 5:10, Ezek 45:10-14, and 2 Chr 2:9 and 4:5.

A Canonical Review of Daughters

This portion of the chapter provides the reader with a foundational landscape of daughter stories in the text. While Chapter V will examine how biblical daughters navigate systems of power, this chapter highlights important elements of each story, highlights implications for daughter language, and considers the major debates associated with select daughters. Moving canonically, I begin with the stories of Lot's daughters, Rebekah, Dinah, Pharaoh's daughter, Miriam, and Zelophehad's daughters. The stories of Jephthah's daughter and Tamar, which are found in the historical books, are taken up before Esther in the Writings. The brief mentions of the king's daughter at Mizpah in Jer 41 and of Hosea's daughter, Lo-ruhamah, in Hos 1 in the Prophets conclude this chapter.

Daughters in the Torah

Perhaps because it contains the stories of the patriarchs and their families, the Torah includes many daughter narratives. These narratives highlight the diversity among biblical daughters as they include royals, non-royals, daughters with sisters, daughters with brothers, daughters whose mothers are identified, and daughters whose mothers remain unknown to the reader. Some of these daughters become mothers, while others do not.

Lot's Daughters

After meeting two visitors (who readers know are angels) near the Sodom city gate, Abraham's nephew, Lot, invites them to spend the night at his house in Gen 18. The men of the city—and indeed all the people—surround the house and inquire about the visiting men inside. In an attempt to negotiate for the safety of his guests, Lot offers his daughters

to the group. In the midst of negotiations with the townspeople about the visitors, Lot mentions

he has two daughters, stating: "I have two daughters who have not known a man; let me bring

them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come

under the shelter of my roof" (Gen 19:8). After blinding the antagonistic mob, the strangers

explain to Lot that they are about to destroy Sodom. The visitors direct Lot to gather his

family in anticipation of the destruction, and Lot encourages his sons-in-law,[216] who were

supposed to marry his daughters, to leave the city. Led by the angels, Lot's daughters and their

parents also flee Sodom. When the family leaves Sodom, Lot's wife looks back and dies.

After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the daughters take refuge with their father in

Zoar. Later, their father relocates them to a cave in the hills outside the city (Gen 19:30),.

After a time in the cave with their aging father and no prospects of husbands, Lot's daughters

decide to have sex with their father in order to "preserve life" through their paternal line (Gen

19:32). The daughters reason that there is no man on earth to impregnate them, so on two

consecutive nights they inebriate their father and have sexual intercourse with him (Gen

19: 33-36). The story of Lot's daughters closes on the births of Moab and Ben-ammi, whom the

writer claims are the ancestors of the Moabites and the Ammonites, respectively. Born to the

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[216] Gen 19:14. NRSV translates the Hebrew word חתניו as "his sons-in-law." According to *HALOT*, the Hebrew חתן
(an in-law related person) has etymological ties to the Ugaritic *hótn* (son-in-law), and Middle Hebrew חתנא (son-in-
law, bridegroom, child to be circumcised). The term has roots in חתן, which probably means "circumcise." Hence,
in the Israelite community, a חתן is the one who undergoes circumcision, or a bridegroom. That Lot has sons-in-law
to whom his daughters are betrothed complicates this narrative even further. In a patrilocal society like the one
depicted in the biblical narrative, a daughter establishes residency in the household of her husband's family. In the
case of Lot's daughters, the husbands live with their wives' family. This matrilocal portrayal complicates the story
set in a patrilocal community. Furthermore, as husbands, the two sons-in-law are responsible for Lot's daughters.
However, the sons-in-law evade their responsibilities when they follow Lot's instructions and leave the city.
Because there is no further mention of the sons-in-law after Lot's directive, I reason that they leave their wives
before the destruction of Sodom. With no husbands in place to serve as their economic, social, and legal authority,
Lot's daughters are vulnerable because they are left under the authority of a father who would barter with their lives.
See Claude F. A. Shaeffer, *Enkomi-Alasia: Nouvelles Missions en Chypre, 1946-1950* (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1952),
3:233, and Charles F. Jean, *Dictionnaire des Inscriptions Sémitiques de l'Ouest* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960-1965), 98.

incestuous unions of Lot and his daughters, Moab and Ben-ammi are the progenitors of two communities that grow to have conflict with the Israelites.

The story of Lot's daughters presents many concerns for an exploration of daughters in the Hebrew Bible. In what follows, I attend to the ambiguity surrounding the number of daughters, the motives of the daughters, and the desire of the father. At minimum, two sets of daughters complicates Lot's offer to the crowd in Gen 19:8. The motives of the daughters in the cave bring up concerns of autonomy and agency. Here, I am particularly critical of the narrator's indictment of the daughters as the instigators of the sex act. As Randall Bailey might ask, who benefits when the daughters' children are considered nothing more than incestuous bastards?[217] Finally, how does the priviledging of Lot's male gaze shape the interpretation of the narrative? Each of these concerns warrants investigation especially in light of the interpretive implications of the different Hebrew terms used to describe the daughters.

The Number of Lot's Daughters - In Gen 19:8, Lot mentions having two daughters, but in Gen 19:14, Lot speaks with his sons-in-law who are to marry his daughters. If the sons-in-law referenced Gen 19:14 are married to Lot's daughters, how can Lot claim his daughters have not known a man? Does Lot have one set of two nameless daughters who have not known a man and another set of two nameless daughters who are married? The anonymity of Lot's daughters complicates their narrative, and the textual evidence does not clarify the confusion. As IlonRashkow points out, Lot's offer of sexual intercourse with daughters who are already betrothed amounts to a crime punishable by death (see Deut 22:23-27).[218] If Lot is offering a

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[217] Randall C. Bailey, "They're Nothing but Incestuous Bastards: The Polemical Use of Sex and Sexuality in Hebrew Canon Narratives," 131.

[218] Rashkow, "Invisible Spirit," 99. Rashkow, in the interest of applying a psychoanalytic lens to present the father as not blameless in Gen 19 seems to conflate biblical law with ancient Israelite law and therefore accept the law as governing the biblical characters. She presupposes that the laws embedded in the literary corpus undergird the actions of the characters in the text. This hermeneutic is not uncommon because, as Douglas Knight notes, because of the religious and theological authority and legitimacy ascribed the biblical text (i.e., Moses "the law giver"

different set of daughters, he may have at least two sets of two daughters. Rashkow, Ken Stone, and Lyn Bechtel claim Lot has one set of two daughters. Rashkow claims the story of Lot and his two daughters is one of the most oft-discussed incestuous relationships in the Hebrew Bible. Stone claims one set of two daughters for Lot, and Bechtel lists Lot and his two daughters.[219]

David Marcus, on the other hand, offers a dissenting voice, and argues for two sets of daughters: one married and one single.[220] For Marcus, although Lot does not have sons, he has grandchildren born of the union of his first set of daughters and their husbands. These daughters married men of Sodom, and their children (Lot's grandchildren) are those sons the messengers speak of in Gen 19:12: "Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city—bring them out of the place." Marcus adds that the presence of these grandchildren/sons explains why the angels mention the adult male sons-in-law before they mention children (sons and daughters) in this verse.[221] Male offspring precede

mediates the community's covenantal relationship with The Divine at Sinai) many interpreters' understand the the law (law codes and other legal material) in the biblical world as governing the actions of the characters in the text. In these instances, interpreters have not distinguished between biblical law (part of the structured literary corpus which control behavior, recount the national history, attest to divine revelation, and regulate power relations, and legitimate certain cultic concerns) and Israelite law (i.e., the legal systems intended to control and correct human behavior during the course of ancient Israel's history). Knight points out that the biblical law ppurports to present the reader with rules and regulaitons governing Israel but that does not necessarily (his emphasis) reproduce the laws that actually functioned as the binding rules of action affecting the people's conduct in their social and political life contexts. Knight cautions that readers should distinguish the law and its function in ancient Israel and in the biblical world. Because readers find the law embedded in the literary corpus, it is easy to accept the law as governing the actions of the characters presented in the liturature. See Douglas A. Knight, *Law, Power, and Justice in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011) 10-11, 14.

[219] Ilona Rashkow, "'Invisible Spirit of Wine'," in *Genesis: A Feminist Companion to the Bible*, Second Series, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 98-99; Ken Stone, "Daughters of Lot," in *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*, ed. Carol Meyers, Tony Craven, and Russ Shepard Kramer (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001), 179; and Lyn M. Bechtel, "A Feminist Reading of Genesis 19:1-11," in *Genesis: The Feminist Companion to the Bible,* Second Series, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 114.

[220] David Marcus, "How Many Daughters Did Lot Have?," in *Or Le-Mayer: Studies in Bible, Semitic Languages, Rabbinic Literature and Ancient Civilizations*, ed. S. Yona (Negev: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press), 2010.

[221] Marcus, "How Many Daughters," 116.

female offspring in a patri-centered listing that privileges males. Marcus strengthens his argument for two sets of daughters by translating the phrase לקחי בנתיו (Gen 19:14) as, "takers of his daughters." For Marcus, the sons-in-law took (married) Lot's first set of daughters at a certain point of time prior to the action depicted in Gen 19.[222] Lot's first set of daughters is married with children, while the second set is not. It is this second set which Lot offers to the people of the city in Gen 19:8. This interpretation does not consider the fate of the first set of daughters, who may have perished with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

A good portion of Marcus' interpretation relies on an understanding of Lot having no sons. The core of the Marcus interpretation of the messengers' statement "Have you anyone else here? *Sons-in-law, sons* [emphasis mine], daughters, or anyone you have in the city—bring them out of the place" in Gen 19:12 hinges on the presence of grandchildren born to Lot's first set of daughters. I disagree with Marcus based upon biblical precedent. The biblical writers regularly establish the absence of sons in the household with some variation of the phrase לא-חיו לו בנים: "he had no sons," or אין-לי בן: "I have no son." For example, Absalom erects a pillar in his name as an act of remembrance because he has no sons (2 Sam 18:18), Sheshan has no sons, only daughters, in 1 Chr 2:34, and Eleazar dies with no sons, only daughters, in 1 Chron 23:22. If, like Zelophehad in Num 26:33 or Jephthah in Judg 11:34, Lot had no sons, the biblical writer would employ some variation of the no-son phrase.[223] As such, Lot does not have any grandsons born to a first set of daughters and their husbands. Lot only has one set of daughters, and the sons-in-law are men betrothed to those daughters. In response to the Marcus claim that Gen 19:12 references sons-in-law of the first set of daughters, I posit that the males mentioned in the text are

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[222] Marcus, "How Many Daughters," 118.
[223] Other examples of fathers with no sons include Absalom (2 Sam 18:18), Ahaziah (2 Kgs 1:17), Sheshan (1 Chr 2:34), and Eleazar (1 Chr 23:22).

miscellaneous male servants living under Lot's roof who, in a male-centric society, are recorded before the female daughters in the list of possible inhabitants of Lot's house. All males (even male servants) precede female household members because of their gendered privilege. Lot has one set of daughters who were betrothed to be married, but never marry because their presumed grooms either leave them behind when they flee the city, or perish in Sodom's destruction.

The Motives and Character of Lot's Daughters - In the biblical world in which women have little control over their bodies or their sexuality, what would motivate these daughters to initiate a sexual act with their father? According to the text, the daughters are motivated to "preserve life" by having children by their father. The phrase, "preserve life," is ambiguous in that it does not clarify whether the daughters want to ensure the continuance of the entire human race or if they are more narrowly concerned with sustaining their father's genealogical line. The 1st century historian Josephus represents those who support the claim that Lot's daughters sought to preserve all humanity. Josephus states: "his [Lot's] daughters, thinking that all mankind were destroyed, approached to their father, though taking care not to be perceived. This they did, that humankind might not utterly fail."[224] Josephus presupposes a particular interpretation of ארץ in the phrase איש אין בארץ לבוא עלינו (Gen 19:31). Josephus translates the Hebrew ארץ as the whole earth, but the word could simply refer to land, territory, or region. In the preceding verse, Lot settles in a cave in the hills because he is afraid to dwell in Zoar. It is doubtful that Lot was threatened in a city populated solely by women, therefore, his daughters most probably knew there were men in Zoar. Furthermore, Lot's daughters witnessed the destruction of Sodom, not the destruction of Zoar. Gordon Wenham finds the idea that there were no men available incredulous, and states, "presumably there were at least eligible husbands no further away than

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[224] Flavious Josephus, "Antiquities of the Jews," in *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged Works,* New Updated ed., trans. William Whiston (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 1.205.

Zoar."[225] Michael Avioz points out that Josephus defends Lot's daughters because the historian is interested in redeeming Lot. By deflecting any negative attention away from Lot, his daughters, and their incestuous offspring, Josephus also downplays David's potentially negative connection to the Moabites.[226]

Katherine B. Low argues that Lot's daughters are concerned with continuing their father's bloodline.[227] However, Low nuances her claim by suggesting that beyond producing progeny for their father, the daughters were most motivated to possess a phallus, and the act of becoming mothers facilitated their desire. Reading through the lense of the Oedipus cycle schema, Low argues that women attempt to recapture their tie to their mothers through heterosexual relationships and when they do so they quickly realize the power of the phallus.[228] In the case of Lot's daughters, when they experience Lot's dismissal of their sexual identities and offering of their bodies to the mob in Sodom, they let go of their attachment to their mother because they share her sexual identity; an identity that is powerless because it does not possess a phallus. For Low, after they lose their connection to their mother in Gen 19:26, Lot's daughters shift their love tie from their mother to their father.[229] Because they cannot possess the power that comes with

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[225] Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 61.

[226] Michael Avioz, "Josephus's Portrayal of Lot and His Family," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 16.1 (2006): 11. King David is connected to the Moabites because he is a descendant of the Moabite, Ruth. 22 *{Ant.* 6.247)* ignores the fact that David chose to leave his parents with the King of Moab (1 Sam. 22.3).

[227] Katherine B. Low, "The Sexual Abuse of Lot's Daughters: Reconceptualized Kinship for the Sake of Our Daughters," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 26.2 (2010): 37-54. Low juxtaposes the story of Lot's daughters with that of her mother (a survivor of incest), who claims that Low's birth was God'x way of helping her create new kinship ties and relationships that were redemptive (44). Also see Benno Jacob, *The First Book of the Bible: Genesis*, trans. Ernest I. Jacob and Walter Jacob (New York: Ktav Pub. House, 1974), and Athalya Brenner-Idan, *The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015) for similar treatments of Lot's daughters' family lineage motive.

[228] Low, "Sexual Abuse," 47.

[229] Low introduces Freudian psychoanalytic theory to interpret the daughters' experiences in Gen 19. Low reasons that the daughters understand their mother as powerless because, unlike their father, she does not have the power which comes with possessing a phallus. The phallus stands as a symbol of what women desire but lack, and is most

having a phallus, Low reasons, Lot's daughters are compelled to preserve their father's seed through his progeny.[230] In short, having Lot's offspring is the next best thing to having his powerful phallus. While Low buttresses her discussion of the biblical text with references from Exum, Bechtel, Gale A. Yee, Naomi A. Steinberg, Esther Fuchs, Randall C. Bailey, and Stone, these biblical scholars do not echo her phallic power assertion.[231] Furthermore, Low misses a very important point found in the text. As a result of their sexual encounter with their father, Lot's daughters become the matriarchs of two powerful groups: the Moabites and the Ammonites. As matriarchs of nations, Lot's daughters undoubtedly benefit from power and prestige ascribed to powerful families in their respective communities in the ancient world. Thus, Low's appropriation of psychoanalytic theory, particularly the Oedipus cycle, is unsupported, but her

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associated with the concept of power (Rashkow, 104). For treatments of Freudian theory and phallic power in the story of Lot's daughters, see, Ilona N. Rashkow, *Taboo or Not Taboo: Sexuality and Family in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000); Nancy Chodorow, "The Psychodynamics of the Family," in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, ed. Linda Nicholson (New York: Routledge, 1007), 181-197; Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on The 'Political Economy' Of Sex," in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, ed. Linda Nicholson (New York: Routledge, 1007), 27-62.

[230] Low, "Sexual Abuse," 47.

[231] Low leverages Exum when she points to how the cave may represent how males may live out incestuous fantasies through the literary production of the texts. See Cheryl Exum, "Desire Distorted and Exhibited: Lot and His Daughters in Psychoanalysis, Painting, and Film," in *A Wise and Discerning Mind: Essays in Honor of Burke O. Long*, ed. Saul M. Olyan and Robert C. Culley (Providence: Brown University Press, 2000), 83-109. Low also uses Bechtel in her discussion of Lot's offering his daughters to the mob; see Lyn M. Bechtel, "A Feminist Reading of Genesis 19:1-11," in *Genesis: The Feminist Companion to the Bible,* Second Series, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 108-128. In her treatment of the role of Lot's wife in father-daughter abuse, Low suggests that the dismissal of the wife in the story possibly results from a sexist—or, as Yee would offer, androcentric or patriarchal—context. See Gale A. Yee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Woman as Evil in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003). In her discussion of familial relationships and kinship, Low references Steinberg, and in her treatment of the ideology of motherhood, she references Fuchs. See Naomi A. Steinberg, *Kinship and Marriage in Genesis: A Household Economics Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) and Esther Fuchs, *Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman* (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 2003). Finally, in her examination of boundaries, boundary anxiety, and boundary crossing in the text, Low examines Bailey and Stone. See Randall C. Bailey, "They're Nothing but Incestuous Bastards: The Polemical Use of Sex and Sexuality in Hebrew Canon Narratives," in *Reading from this Place,* vol 1, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Talbert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 121-138; and Ken Stone, *Practicing Safer Texts: Food, Sex and Bible in Queer Perspective* (London: T & T Clark International, 2005).

claim of the daughter's motivation to preserve Lot's lineage (and perhaps gain a form of progenitive power usually ascribed only to men) has merit.

Similarly, Jonathan Grossman argues that the daughters sought to carry on the family line.[232] Grossman examines the phrasing and associative meaning of specific words in the narrative, and concludes the that subtle differences in the wording of the actions over the two nights in the cave shed a negative light on the portrayal of the older daughter. For example, according to the narrator, the older daughter refers to the father differently on the first night than she does on the second night. On the first night, she refers to him with the plural possessive: "Our father is old, … Let us make our father drink wine," while on the second night she refers to him in the singular possessive: "my father."[233] Additionally, Grossman notes that the narrator employs different verbs to describe the actions of the daughters on each night. On the first night, the verb בוא (come) describes the action of the older daughter. The verb קום (rise) describes the action of the younger daughter on the second night.

According to Grossman, the verb choice portrays the older daughter as sexually aggressive compared to her sister. However, as Grossman notes, the verb בוא is often used in the Bible to describe sexual relations.[234] Thus, Grossman's assessment that the ambivalence of the younger daughter is evidenced in her rising in order to lay with her father is not substantiated. Grossman states that she seems to be acting against her better judgment and against her instincts, but there is

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[232] Jonathan Grossman, "Associative Meanings in the Character Evaluation of Lot's Daughters." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 76.1 (2014): 40-57. Grossman sides with Hermann Gunkel when he likens their concern for continuing the family line to the stories of Tamar and Judah (Gen 38) and the Greek myth about the birth of Adonis, the offspring of Myrrha and her father, Zeus (41).

[233] Grossman, "Associative Meanings," 51.

[234] Grossman, "Associative Meanings," 51. Other examples of the verb בוא to describe sexual relations include Samson and a prostitute in Gaza (Judg 16:1), the sons of God and the daughters of man (Gen 6:4), Sarai instructing Abram regarding Hagar (Gen 16:2), Judah telling Onan to go in to Tamar (Gen 38:8), and Potiphar's wife accusing Joseph of sexual impropriety (Gen 39:14). I am grateful to Jack M. Sasson for pointing out בוא describes sexual relations only when followed by the preposition, אל, as in בא אל.

no textual evidence to support this broad claim. As such, Grossman romanticizes the text and reads into it ethical claims that are not discernable from the narrative. The younger daughter does not verbally protest when the elder daughter speaks to her, nor does she physically refuse to have sex with her father. In fact, the actions of the younger daughter on the second night mimic those of the older daughter on the first night. Furthermore, Grossman suggests that by using the word את to describe the older daughter's sexual encounter, and the word עם to reference the younger daughter's encounter, the narrator subtly sets the two daughters' characters apart.[235]   On the first night, the older daughter תשכב את-אביה (Gen 19:33), while the younger daughter תשכב עמו on the second night (Gen 19:35).

Grossman's assertion that these subtle word differences carry associated meanings that impact the reader's understanding of the daughters must be challenged. Word choice is important, but the word choice impacts not only the individual actor's character, but the readers' evaluation of the *act* and, by extension, the actor herself. Grossman claims that the narrative is concerned with characterization of the individuals in a favorable manner, but if the overarching concern of the narrator is individual character, why not name the individuals?[236] The narrator names the products of the acts—Moab and Ben-Ammi—but not the daughter actors. The sons are named because the writers want to make an ideological claim about the character of the Israelite combatants. Conversely, the anonymity of the daughters supports the idea that their actions—not the actors or their character—are the concern of the narrator. Grossman is correct however, when

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[235] Grossman, "Associative Meanings," 53. Grossman admits that this semantic distinction is difficult to prove, but points to the use of the phrase שכב את in various texts such as Gen 26:10 and Gen 34:2 to represent a forced sexual act in which the partners are unequal, while שכב עם represents a mutual sexual act as in Ge 30:15-16 and 2 Sam 13:11. For more on this distinction, see Hilary B, Lipka, *Sexual Transgression in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2006); Harry M. Orlinsky, "The Hebrew Root SKB," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 63 (1944): 19-44; Eve Levavi Feinstein, "Sexual Pollution in the Hebrew Bible," in *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. S. Tamar Kamoinkowski and Wonil Kim (New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 114-145.

[236] Grossman, "Associative Meanings," 54.

he argues that despite the different evaluative portrayals of the two daughters, the two each work towards the desired outcome of preserving the family line by bearing a child.[237] When the text is read etiologically, the daughters choose names that include references to their father (מואב, which means "from my father," and בן-עמי, meaning "son of my kin") and suggests that they were concerned with extending the family heritage, not necessarily reviving the human race.[238]

Fuchs, Bailey, and Tammi Schneider offer varying options as to the motives of the daughters.[239] Fuchs understands the daughters as wanting to help re-populate the world after the destruction of Sodom.[240] Fuchs adds that the characterization of Lot's daughters revolves around the notion of deception. Fuchs argues that the presentation of women as characters who hide the truth reveals not only the extent of the Bible's androcentric bias, but also the manner in which the biblical narrative suppresses the truth about women's subjugation within the patriarchal framework. For Fuchs, women deceive because they are powerless. Despite the fact that the motive of the daughters' deception is defensible in that they want to help re-populate the world after the destruction of Sodom, their very act produces an ambivalent effect that is bound to compromise their characters as a whole.

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[237] Grossman, "Associative Meanings," 51.

[238] For general treatments of the narrative as etiological, see Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis: Translates and Interpreted*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997), and Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36: A Continental Commentary*, trans. J. J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

[239] Esther Fuchs, "Who is Hiding the Truth?," *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship*, ed. by Adela Yarbro (Collins: Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985); Randall C. Bailey, "They're Nothing but Incestuous Bastards: The Polemical Use of Sex and Sexuality in Hebrew Canon Narratives," 121-138; and Tammi Schneider, *Mothers of Promise: Women in the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 186, 191.

[240] Fuchs, "Who is Hiding," 137.

Schneider argues that the overarching goal of the daughters is simply to procreate,[241] and that they did not know there were other males available in proximity to the hills of Zoar to impregnate them. I disagree with Schneider's argument (which works to relieve the daughters of the stigma of incest), based on the textual evidence. In Gen 19:32, the firstborn daughter is interested in maintaining her family line when she states: "so that we may preserve offspring through our father." The availability of other males has little to do with the daughters' decision because offspring in general is not the concern. Offspring via a kinsman is the concern.

By portraying the daughters as the instigators of the sex act, the narrator absolves the male, Lot, of any wrongdoing, and instead indicts the daughters. Fuchs and Bailey each attend to such characterization. Bailey points out that the narrator's sexual framing of the daughters grants recipients of the story permission to dislike their offspring, the Ammonites and Moabites. Bailey adds that, through the use of repetition in the narrative in Gen 19 to depict the planning and carrying out of Lot's seduction by his daughters over two consecutive nights, the narrator emphasizes the notion of incest. Lot is exonerated for his participation by the repetition of the phrase ולא־ידע (and he did not know or was not aware of who was sleeping with him) in Gen 19: 33b and 35b. As Bailey states, "The direct link to Abraham is not tarnished. It was Lot's daughters, children of the disobedient wife, who plotted."[242] To further ensure this interpretation, which denigrates the moral character of the daughters, the narrator has the women give the children names that unashamedly announce the incestuous circumstances of their conception.

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[241] Schneider, *Mothers of Promise*, 186, 191. Similarly, Esther Fuchs offers that Lot's daughters act in accordance with their foremost duty within the framework of biblical patriarchy: they seek to become mothers. See Fuchs, "Who is Hiding," 141.

[242] Bailey, "Incestuous Bastards," 131. Bailey disagrees with Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 315. Westermann points to a positive view of the relationship between the Israelites, Moabites, and Ammonites in Deut 2, and argues that the enmity between them found in Deut 23 is misunderstood.

However, the problem for Lot's daughters is not the absence of males to impregnate them as Schneider suggests. The problem is that, in the foreign community, the sisters require male relatives to impregnate them and thereby maintain their paternal family lineage. Fuchs is correct: the daughter's motives were reasonable; however, I challenge Fuchs' assertion that the daughters were deceptive because they understood themselves to be powerless. The daughters demonstrate their power and autonomy as they exercise control over their bodies and the body of their father when they initiate sexual intercourse. Furthermore, the androcentric ideology of the text moves to vindicate the male Israelite at all cost. This is why, as Bailey suggests, the writer absolves Lot of any responsibility by presenting him as the unwitting victim of the daughters' actions.[243] Lot is exonerated for his incestuous activity because "he did not know" (Gen 19:33 and 35). What Bailey does not consider, however, is the basic objective of any sexual act in the biblical world: reproduction. The objective of the daughters is the production of progeny for Lot. With no other familial options readily available in the cave, becoming pregnant by their father is the only way for Lot's daughters to preserve their paternal line.

The Desire of the Father - In *Taboo or not Taboo*, Rashkow reads the Gen 19 narrative alongside psychoanalytic theory, specifically Freud's Oedipal construct, and concludes that the narrative is similar to clinical reports of father-daughter incestuous relationships, including the disintegrated family, the father who has lost his patriarchal role, the abuse of alcohol, the mother who looks away, and the involvement of more than one daughter.[244] Like many before her,

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[243] Bailey, "Incestuous Bastards," 129-131. Bailey claims that the daughters feared extinction.

[244] Ilona N. Rashkow, *Taboo or Not Taboo: Sexuality and Family in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 93. Based upon Sophocles' play, Freud posits that the child has an unconscious, erotic affection for the parent of the opposite sex and, as a result, a jealous aversion to the same-sex parent. Freud claims that parents unintentionally encourage their children in this Oedipal relationship, and the father-daughter relationship is rarely presented from the point of view of the child, but mainly from the father's perspective. Oftentimes, the father, having had an incestuous relationship with his daughter, condemns the offspring (95). For more on Freud and the Oedipal Complex, see Sigmund Freud, "On Infantile Sexual Theories," in *Collected Lesser Writings on Neurosis,*

Rashkow is sympathetic to Lot and his actions in Gen 19:4-9.[245] By referring to the narrative as

Lot's story and using the term *parent-child incest*, Raskhow reads the tale as one that privileges a

powerful patriarch-turned-abuser (Lot), and minimizes the roles and effects upon the victims (the

daughters or the children). In service to psychoanalytic theory, Rashkow presents Lot as a

powerful father when she speaks of his engaging the men of the town "as though they were

comrades" in Gen 19:7, but Lot is not at all powerful. He is an outsider of Sodom of whom the

townspeople are most probably suspicious.[246] Rashkow also argues that Lot acts upon repressed

desire to have sex with his daughters. For Rashkow, Lot's offer of his virgin daughters to the

townspeople may be a precursor to the incest he unconsciously desires.[247] Rashkow concludes

that, like Noah, Lot commits incest with his children and remains unpunished while the children

and grandchildren involved are damned forever.[248] Interestingly, Rashkow does not link the fact

that both Noah and Lot each have children who are same-sex siblings. Noah has sons. Lot has

daughters. Following her own appropriation of psychoanalytic literary theory, Rashkow misses

the opportunity to consider the implications of there being no daughters for Noah to desire

vol 2 of *The Standard Works of Sigmund Freud* (1909); *Totem and Taboo,* vol 13 of *The Standard Works of Sigmund Freud* (1913); *Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays,* vol 23 of *The Standard Works of Sigmund Freud* (1939).

[245] Rashkow, *Taboo*, 106. See John H. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1930). For other treatments that redeem Lot, see Nahum Sarna, *Genesis: The Jewish Publication Society (JPS) Torah Commentary* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1989); Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in Bereshit (Genesis) in the Context of Ancient and Modern Jewish Bible Commentary*, trans. Aryeh Newman (Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, Department for Torah Education and Culture, 1981); and Susan Niditch, "The 'Sodomite' Theme in Judges 19-20: Family, Community, and Social Disintegration," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44.3 (1982): 365-378. Skinner lauds Lot for his commitment to the obligations of hospitality (307) while Sarna says: "Lot is true to his code of honor" (135), Leibowitz suggests that Lot prioritizes the safety of the visitors "at the risk to his life" (176), and Niditch ignores the threat of sexual brutality to the daughters.

[246] See Bechtel's treatment of Gen 19, in which she argues that the people of Sodom sought to know whether the visitors posed a physical threat to the community (123).

[247] Rashkow, *Taboo*, 107.

[248] Rashkow, *Taboo*, 113.

heterosexually, and no sons about whom Lot may fantasize or possibly initiate a homosexual relationship. The reader is left to wonder if, in his obligation of hospitality, Lot would offer his sons to a Sodomite mob.

Rebekah

Although she is most often remembered as the wife of the patriarch, Isaac, and the mother of the patriarch, Jacob, Rebekah's story appears towards the end of Abraham's narrative arc. Abraham charges his servant to find a wife for his son, Isaac, from among his kinsmen. When the servant arrives in the city of Abraham's kin, a pretty girl appears among the women who have come to draw water, and she is the answer to the servant's prayers. Rebekah introduces herself as the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Abraham's relative Milcah, offers to water the visitor's camels, and extends an offer of hospitality to the servant.[249] Once home, Rebekah's brother and father affirm the visitor's story and agree to let her marry his master. The servant gifts the family members, Rebekah receives a blessing, and the two (along with Rebekah's attendants) depart to meet her groom. After Rebekah encounters Abraham's son, Isaac, he takes her into his mother's tent, she becomes his wife, and quickly the mother of his two sons.

Uniquely, the biblical writer uses all five of the Hebrew terms to describe Rebekah. Dramatic irony heightens as the stranger is unsure if the עלמה will fulfill all of his prayers for a suitable mate for Isaac, and the brother, Laban, eclipses the father, Bethuel, throughout the narrative of Rebekah, the אחות. Additionally, readers anticipate the בתולה transitioning into marriage, and are not surprised with the נערה helps her household and the stranger by drawing

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[249] Gen 24:24-25. In this way, Lot's daughters are not unlike the mother, Rebekah, Potiphar's wife, or Queen Jezebel, because Fuchs views deception as a motif for women in the biblical text. Notably, Rebekah includes her grandmother in her genealogy.

water. Robert Alter and Esther Fuchs consider how Rebekah's narrative functions as a betrothal type-scene, and Tikva Frymer-Kensky and Jack Sasson examine connections between Rebekah in Gen 24 and Abraham in Gen 18.

Gen 24 as a Betrothal Type-Scene - Alter sets the interpretive stage and maps the elements of a conventional betrothal type-scene onto the Gen 24 narrative. As Alter explains, "the scene must take place with the future bridegroom, or his surrogate, having journeyed to a foreign land. There he encounters a girl—the term, נערה, invariably occurs unless the maiden is identified as so-and-so's daughter—or girls at a well. Someone, either the man or the girl, then draws water from the well; afterward, the girl or girls rush to bring home the news of the stranger's arrival (the verbs 'hurry' and 'run' are given recurrent emphasis at this juncture of the type-scene); finally, a betrothal is concluded between the stranger and the girl, in the majority of instances, only after he has been invited to a meal."[250] Reading Gen 24 through Alter's lense highlights the meeting between the future groom and bride at a well, the identification of the girl as the ideal partner for the groom, and the physicality of the future bride as important features of the betrothal type-scene.[251] Abraham's servant, the surrogate of the future bridegroom, journeys to a foreign land and encounters a girl at a well. Alter points out that most often in the betrothal type-scene the girl is described as a נערה, and this is the case in the story of Rebekah. The servant prays for a נערה (Gen 24:14) and before he finishes setting up his test, Rebekah appears. Per the type-scene convention, someone then draws water at the well. After the dispensing of well water, this same נערה runs and tells her mother's household about the arrival of the stranger. After a

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[250] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 62.

[251] Alter, *Biblical Narrative*. In a betrothal type-scene, the potential groom is immediately drawn to the potential bride; the potential bride is a member of the right family group, and she says or does something to confirm that she's the one for the job.

meal, the betrothal concludes between the stranger and the girl. Alter cautions that in Gen 24 the roles played by the bridegroom and the bride deviate from the betrothal type-scene convention. Specifically, Isaac is conspicuously absent from the scene, and it is Rebekah (not the groom's surrogate) who draws the water from the well.

Esther Fuchs reads Rebekah's story through the betrothal type-scene lens and highlights how the narrator presents Rebekah as the ideal wife for Isaac.[252] In addition to meeting the kin group requirement articulated by Abraham, Rebekah exceeds the prayer requests of the servant when she goes beyond expectations of hospitality. Not only does Rebekah offer the stranger water, she also waters his camels. Fuchs points to the use of the repetition Rebekah's of offering water to the servant and of her watering his camels as indicators of her generous and kind character. Fuchs alludes to the providential element in the servant's encounter with her,[253] but close readers may anticipate Rebekah's largess and the fortuitous encounter based upon the use of נערה and עלמה.

Since they read Gen 24 as a betrothal type-scene that prefigures marriage, Alter and Fuchs disregard unique aspects of Rebekah's narrative, which have little to do with her as a future bride. For example, Rebekah traces her lineage by way of her grandmother and not her grandfather. When asked, "Tell me whose daughter you are?," instead of referencing Nahor, who is Abraham's brother, Rebekah cites Nahor's wife, Milcah, in her response. This matrilineal designation is unique within the biblical world's patriarchal context, in which most characters

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[252] Esther Fuchs, *Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman* (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 91. Fuchs establishes her concern as that of the treatment of wives in betrothal type-scenes over and against mothers in annunciation type-scenes, and argues that, within successive biblical narratives and betrothal type-scenes, wives lose status, integrity, and impact compared to their male counterparts.

[253] Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 93.

trace their heritage by way of their male ancestors.[254] Abraham gave his servant explicit

instructions to find a bride for Isaac from among his kin group. This reference to Milcah is

cumbersome because it only indirectly connects Rebekah to Abraham. The more direct route to

Abraham is through Nahor (Abraham's brother), not Milcah (Abraham's brother's wife).

     Connections with Abraham - Tikva Frymer-Kensky makes an intertextual connection

between Rebekah and Abraham who both "hurry" and "run" in demonstrations of hospitality

towards strangers.[255] Unlike comparisons made by Fuchs, who considers the quick succession of

the verbs, "hurry," "hasten," and "run," and compares Rebekah to her brother, Laban, Frymer-

Kensky examines the shared elements of hospitality found in Rebekah's encounter with the

stranger at the well and Abraham's encounter with the strangers at Mamre. Frymer-Kensky

highlights how the verbs focus the reader's attention on the immediacy of their actions, and how

similar acts of generosity connect these two biblical characters intertextually.[256] Jack Sasson also

acknowledges that biblical writers often render characters as properly displaying eagerness and

politeness by running to meet someone. Abraham runs to greet the visitors at Mamre; Laban

runs out to greet the visitor at the spring; Laban also runs to meet his sister's son, Jacob; and

Esau runs to meet his estranged brother Jacob in Gen 18:2, 24:29, 29:13, and 33:4, respectively.

In addition to Rebekah's "running" and "hurrying," Rachel runs to tell her family about the

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[254] Formal biblical genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 center upon male family members. Females are generally mentioned merely as wives or mothers of important male figures, as in the case of Azubah, King Jehoshaphat's mother (I Kgs 22:42); Abi, King Hezekiah's mother (2 Kgs 18:2); and Jedidah, King Josiah's mother (2 Kgs 22:1). Sparingly, females are mentioned as sisters of important males, as in the case of Dinah, who is the sister of the progenitors of the Tribes of Israel; Miriam, who is the sister of Moses and Aaron; and Tamar, who is the sister of Amnon and Absalom.

[255] Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible* (New York: Schocken Books, 2002), 14. For these scholars, the shared performances of Abraham and Rebekah point to their shared role in the fulfillment of God's promise of progeny. The birth of Rebekah's son, Jacob, extends Abraham's line and fulfills the promise of "many nations."

[256] Fuchs, *Sexual Politics,* 95. For Fuchs, Rebekah's energetic activity does not anticipate any reward, while those of Laban are laden with ulterior motives.

strange visitor, and Samson's mother runs to tell her husband about her encounter with the angel of God.[257]

I am disinclined to support the intertextual connection between Abraham and Rebekah because the hospitality comparison eventually breaks down. Unlike Abraham, Rebekah does not make good on the promise of hospitality by providing or producing food for her guest. It is Laban, not Rebekah, who unloads and feeds the stranger's camels, provides water for the stranger to wash his feet, and then presumably sets food before the stranger for him to eat (Gen 24:33). While Abraham directs Sarah to prepare cakes, slaughters a calf and gives it to his servant to cook, and sets all of the food before the strangers in Gen 18:6-8, there is no mention of Rebekah participating in any of these acts of hospitality once the stranger arrives at the home in Gen 24. The Abraham-Rebekah hospitality comparison falls apart.

Furthermore, the scholarly treatments of running and hospitality in the stories of Abraham and Rebekah do not fully attend to the fact that these two characters are not the only ones who run in these narratives. Abraham and Rebekah are not the only ones who run in their narratives and those who run are not always engaging in acts of hospitality. While it is true that Abraham runs in Gen 18, and Rebekah runs in Gen 24, so does Laban run in Gen 24. Moreover, these scholars do not consider is the fact that Abraham's servant also runs. In Gen 24:17 the servant runs to meet Rebekah, and in this context, the runner is not extending hospitality. The servant is dutifully completing an assignment given to him by the patriarch.

Frymer-Kensky does not attend to the designation of Rebekah as a נערה, which I argued earlier performs a supportive role. Rebekah's act of drawing water positions her in a support

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[257] Gen 29:12 and Judg 13:10. See Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women*; and Jack Sasson, "The Servant's Tale: How Rebekah Found a Spouse," *JNES* 65 (2006), 255. Sasson offers a close read of Gen 24, which is focused on the servant and marriage traditions in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near East. Sasson's concern is not so much Rebekah, as he speaks of "Isaac's marriage," and refers to the text as "a servant's tale."

function in the biblical world. She is also identified as an אחות (Gen 24:30) which, based on my analysis, foreshadows the diminished role of her father. Indeed, Bethuel performs a minimal role in Rebekah's narrative, and is virtually silent.

Dinah

At the end of Gen 33, Jacob purchases a piece of land and settles with his family near the Canaanite city of Shechem. Gen 34 begins as Jacob's daughter, Dinah, sets out to visit the women of the area and is assaulted by Shechem, the prince of the region. Shechem, the prince of the region, sees her, he seizes her and lays with her by force (Gen 34:1-2). Shechem loves Dinah and asks his father, Hamor, to secure her as his wife. Hearing that Shechem has defiled Dinah, Jacob waits for his sons to return from the field, and together they negotiate terms with Hamor and Shechem. In exchange for Dinah's becoming Shechem's wife, Hamor invites Jacob and his family to marry among the Shechemites, to live and to trade freely among them, and to acquire land (Gen 34:9-10). Shechem offers to pay whatever price Jacob sets for Dinah, and Jacob's sons (who are angry at Shechem for defiling their sister) add the circumcision of all the men of Shechem as a condition of the marriage. Shechem agrees to the mass circumcision, and while the newly circumcised men of Shechem are recovering, Dinah's brothers raid the city and kill all of the male Shechemites. Dinah's brothers—Simeon and Levi—retrieve her from Shechem's house while the rest of the brothers plunder the city (Gen 34:25-27). Dinah never speaks.

Although the biblical writer does not provide the reader with more information about Dinah's activity once she leaves her home, by describing her as a נערה, the writer signals readers to deduce that her trip to visit with the women of the region may have included some subordinate, supportive function such as gathering water for her household. This function assists

in the parents' maintenance of the household. Furthermore, the use of the term, אחות, to identify

Dinah signals the primary role her brothers will assume in her narrative. It is not surprising

therefore, that the brothers - and not the father - are troubled and take action when they learn of

Shechem's transgression. Various interpretations of Gen 34 complicate whether Shechem rapes

Dinah, the two characters equally consent to sexual intercourse, or if Dinah suffers from some

sort of social lowering.[258]

 Rape, Consent, or Debasement - Although Gen 34 is often referred to as The Rape of

Dinah, there is no consensus among scholars as to the nature of the action in the text. Nahum

Sarna, Meir Sternberg, Dana Nolan Fewell, and David Gunn argue that Shechem rapes Dinah in

Gen 34:2. Frymer-Kensky asserts that Dinah consents to sexual intercourse with Shechem, and

Ellen van Wolde challenges the rape interpretation with the idea that Dinah was not raped, but

debased.[259] For Sarna, Shechem begins by taking (לקח) Dinah, then moves to sleeping with her

(שכב), which culminates with him raping (ענה) her.[260] Sternberg accepts the notion that Dinah

was raped, but offers an unconventional interpretation of the story: that Gen 34 is not a story

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[258] Leon Kass and Yael Shemesh represents those scholars who argue that Dinah was raped. Kass states, "He [Shechem] had complete power over here, andhe exercised it. … The brute foact is all we ared to see: Dinah was raped." Lyn Bechtel suggests that "Dinah and Shechem actively engage one another and bond sexually." Ellen van Wolde aregues that Dinah was not raped, but was brought low or debased. See Leon R. Kass, "Regarding Daughters and Sisters: The Rape of Dinah." *Commentary* 93, no. 4 (1992): 32, Yael Shemesh, "Rape is Rape: The Story of Dinah and Shechem (Genesis 34)." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 119, no. 1 (2007): 2-21, Lyn M. Bechtel, "What if Dinah is Not Raped? (Genesis 34)." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 62 (1994): 35, and Ellen van Wolde, "Does Inna Denote Rape? A Semantic Analysis of a Controversial Word." *Vetus Testamentum* 52, no. 4 (2002`): 528-544.

[259] Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1989); Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Dana Nolan Fewell and David Gunn, "Tipping the Balance: Sternberg's Reader and the Rape of Dinah," *JBL* 110 (1991); and Ellen van Wolde, "Does '*Innâ* Denote Rape? A Semantic Analysis of a Controversial Word," *VT* 52 (2002): 528-544.

[260] Sarna, *Genesis*, 233. For other treatments of the rape of Dinah, see Athalya Brenner, *The Intercourse of Knowledge: On Gender Desire and "Sexuality" in the Hebrew Bible* (London: Brill Academic, 1997); Yaira Amit, *Hidden Polemics in Biblical Narrative,* Biblical Interpretation Series 25 (Leiden: Brill Academic, 1998); and Tammi J. Schneider, *Mothers of Promise: Women in the Book of Genesis*" (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006).

about Dinah, but one about her brothers and their honor. In Sternberg's interpretation, the text is designed to elicit sympathy for the brothers. For Sternberg, the brothers' anger stems from the reckless act against Israel, not necessarily the sexual transgression against their sister, Dinah. For Sternberg, the rape of Dinah simply models the social affront to the brothers. Sternberg offers that there is not even a hint that the mass slaughter came as revenge.[261]

Fewell and Gunn are less concerned with redeeming the brothers. In response to Sternberg, both argue that the male characters are not heroes in the least, but are complex characters that make the best out of a flawed world. Instead, Fewell and Gunn focus on the brothers' relationship with their father, Jacob. According to Fewell and Gunn, the brothers neglect their responsibility to their father when they slaughter the Shechemites, and thereby alienate Jacob from the leaders of the larger community. It is Jacob who must face the consequences of the brothers' violent actions. Jacob is the *paterfamilias,* and has to deal with the threat to the family's very existence—a threat that the brothers' actions have exacerbated beyond measure.[262]

I align with those scholars who interpret Gen 34 as a story of rape because it is not unreasonable that, as a the prince or chief of the region, Shechem may have acted upon desire and exercised royal privilege to take what he wanted when he saw Dinah. In this case, what he wanted was Dinah. The fact that the men of Shechem agree to the circumcision at the direction of Shechem and his father, Hamor, without delay reflects the degree of hierarchical power Shechem wields (Gen 34:24).[263] In contrast however, in her treatment of Gen 34, Frymer-

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[261] Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative,* 472.

[262] Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance," 208. Fewell and Gunn argue that the brothers acted without responsibility, and the ideological underpinnings of Meir Sternberg's androcentric treatment of Gen 34, in which he attempts to strike a balance between the crime (rape of Dinah) and the punishment (revenge of Dinah's brothers).

[263] That Shechem was the prince or chief of the region may help explain why Jacob did not immediately respond

Kensky challenges the notion that Shechem raped Dinah at all. For Frymer-Kensky, textual ambiguities leave room for an understanding that Dinah was not raped, but consented to have sexual relations with Shechem.[264] Frymer-Kensky interprets Dinah's story as one that involves the intricate connection between the relationship of a girl to her birth family and the relationship of that family to the outside—in other words, as one between the relationships of individual families to each other and the destiny of the nation as a whole.[265] The story of Dinah's rape is told from the viewpoint of the family and the society from which Dinah went out, and from Frymer-Kensky's perspective, Dinah consents. I disagree. Dinah exercised a degree of agency when she goes out to visit with the women of the region, however as an unmarried daughter, Dinah has few legal rights, and she lacks the legal authority to consent to the use of her body in a sexual act. Dinah's father maintains control over her body. Dinah's position is further complicated by the fact that her father is a non-royal.[266] As the daughter of a non-royal, Dinah and her father have very little direct recourse in matters oncerning royals because they are not social equals. Dinah's is not a story of consent.

Harold C. Washington argues that the construct of gender in the Hebrew Bible informs the notion of sexual violence against women. Washington identifies the ability to exert violence in warfare an important element in the definition of 'manhood' and therefore, a woman is 'one who succumbs to violence; hence men who are defeated in combat are reckoned as women.'[267]

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when he learned Shechem defiled his daughter. As a foreign, non-royal in the community, Jacob did not have the social capital to demand recompense from the prince and his father.

[264] Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women*, 183.

[265] Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women*, 179.

[266] I discuss the hierarchical power dynamics between royals and non-royals in Chapter 4.

[267] Washington, Harold C. "Violence and the Construction of Gender in the Hebrew Bible: A New Historicist Approach." *Biblical Interpretation* 5 (1997): 330.

Concerning violence against women, Washington concludes that the Deuteromonic laws do not prohibit sexual violence, but "stipulate the terms under which a man may commit rape, provided he pays reparation to the offended male party."[268] As long as males are compensated, rape is permissible. Lyn Bechtel says Dinah may not have been raped because the text does not refer to the use of force.[269] In response to these scholars, Cheryl Anderson points out that consent for Dinah is a moot point because under Deuteronomic Law, which prevailed during the time represented in Dinah's narrative, any injury is against the father or brothers (not the daughter), whose right to the daughter's sexuality was violated.[270] I agree with Anderson who challenges Bechtel on the basis of the latter's misappropriation of contemporary definitions of rape. These modern understandings of rape require the demonstration of force and lack of consent.[271] Within the biblical world where the Deuteronomic Law prevails, the transgression against the male who controls the female body is unlawful and the daughter does not have the authority to consent. Furthermore, in the case of Dinah and Shechem, his royal status in the biblical world renders any concern for the use of force moot.

Van Wolde offers a controversial reading of Gen 34 when she argues that the use of the verb *'inna* in Gen 34 does not refer to rape or sexual abuse at all, but signals a downward movement in social and juridical standing. Van Wolde bases her conclusion on the treatment of

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[268] Washington, "Violence and the Construction of Gender," 354. Washington reads the Dinah story through the lens of Deut 22:22-29.

[269] Bechtel, Lyn M. "What if Dinah is Not Raped? (Genesis 34)." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 62 (1994): 19-36.

[270] Anderson, Cheryl B., *Women, Ideology, and Violence: Critical Theory and the Construction of Gender in the Book of the Covenant and the Deuteronomic Law.* (New York: T and T Clark International, 2004), 86-87. Anderson notes that only male experience is encoded in the Deuteronomic Law and that there is no difference between consensual and forced intercourse.

[271] Anderson, *Women, Ideology, and Violence*, 87.

the verb in a wide variety of biblical contexts, ranging from narratives including hierarchal relationships (Sarai and Hagar), to gendered relationships (Amnon and Tamar), to those of nameless imprisoned women and legal ordinances.[272] For van Wolde, Shechem debases Dinah, or brings her low. Van Wolde concedes that, although ענה is often used in the context of sexual intercourse, it does not exclusively function in such a context; therefore "the hypothesis can be formulated that the word started in an everyday usage to designate a causative action of a spatial movement downwards in a social context, and that it later developed by metaphorical extension to be used exclusively in the specific social context of marriage."[273]

Van Wolde begins her semantic analysis with an examination of the collocations of ענה in the Hebrew Bible. She singles out the fifty-seven times the verb appears in the Piel stem (as in Gen 34:2), and narrows her scope to the thirteen instances involving a woman as the direct object of ענה in the Piel. Based on these citations, which are in the Torah and Deuteronomistic History, van Wolde concludes that *innâ* refers to a causative action of a spatial character denoting a movement downwards.[274] She does not consider the forty-four instances (78%) in which the Piel stem does not have a woman as an object. Within this larger sample, ענה does not always describe movement downwards. For example, in Exod 1:11 and 12, taskmasters are placed over the slaves to afflict or oppress (ענה) them with forced labor. Here, slaves are already situated at the bottom of the socio-juridical hierarchy. There is no further downward spatial movement for them. Similarly, in the admonition against oppressing others in Exod 22:22, slaves, widows, and orphans cannot move any farther down the social ladder in Exod 22:21 and 22.

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[272] See Lynne Bechtel, "What if Dinah is Not Raped? (Genesis xxxiv)," *JSOT* 62 (1994) for a treatment of ענה. Betchel concludes that Shechem had sexual intercourse with Dinah, but he did not rape her.

[273] van Wolde, "*Innâ*," 542.

[274] van Wolde, "*Innâ*," 531.

After examining her targeted texts, van Wolde argues that verb word order is an indicator that ענה is not a sexual but a social debasement. In the third step in her semantic analysis, she asserts that the verb describing the act of "seizing" or "taking hold of" is in the first position, the verb describing the sexual deed is in the second position, the verb describing the consequence of the previous two actions is in the third position, and a verbless clause evaluating the previous actions (i.e., "such a thing is intolerable in Israel") is in the fourth position.[275] In the Dinah narrative, however, the verb ראה (to see) precedes the "seizing" verb, לקח (to take). This verb introduces an element of desire on Shechem's part. The man sees something he desires and acts upon his desire. Coupled with the evaluative phrase in Gen 34:3 that states that Shechem was drawn to Dinah, here ענה is not about social debasement, but is indeed about a sexual act. van Wolde is correct to argue that ענה may not always denote rape; however, there is strong evidence to support the claim that this term may very well mean rape in Gen 34.

Dinah does not occupy the subject position in her own story, nor does she control the action in it. In the beginning of the narrative, Dinah goes out (יצא) to see (ראה), and thus ends her active role in her own story. From then on, others control the rest of the activity. Shechem rapes her; Shechem, Hamor, Jacob, and her brothers negotiate marriage agreements that include her; Simeon and Levi kill the men of Shechem ostensibly because of her; and these two brothers take (לקח) her out of Shechem's house while the rest of Dinah's brothers plunder the city. After Dinah proactively goes out, she spends the rest of her story in the shadows.

Pharaoh's Daughter and Miriam

The second chapter of Exodus introduces two daughters who participate in the project of securing the future of a Hebrew boy. After her father orders all Egyptians to drown newborn

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[275] van Wolde, "*Innâ*," 541.

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Hebrew boys in the Nile River, Pharaoh's unnamed daughter retrieves an infant from the river. The infant is in the river because, after Pharaoh issued the command to throw newborn Hebrew boys into the Nile, Miriam's mother placed her infant brother in a plastered papyrus basket and puts it among the reeds on the bank of the river. In Exod 2:4, young Miriam stands at a distance to see what will happen to her brother as he floats down the river. The royal daughter spies a basket among the reeds and sends one of her attendants to retrieve it. Upon examination, Pharaoh's daughter identifies the crying baby as "one of the Hebrews' children" (Exod 2:6 When Pharaoh's daughter discovers her brother in the basket, Miriam asks the princess if she should go and get a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for her. The princess agrees, and Miriam returns her brother to her mother who acts as his wet nurse. The Egyptian princess employs a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for her. Hebrew woman returns the boy to Pharaoh's daughter. In Exod 2:10, Pharaoh's daughter names him and thereby establishes herself as his mother.[276]

Years later, after he leads the Hebrews out of Egypt and across the sea, Moses and the Israelites sing a song to the Lord detailing the Lord's triumph on behalf of the Israelites. In Exod 15:20-21, Miriam takes a tambourine and all the women follow her with dancing while she sings a song to the community celebrating the triumph of the Lord.[277] Finally, after the Israelites settle at Hazeroth, Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses, saying: "Has the LORD spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" (Num 12:2). Miriam and her brother,

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[276] Brevard Childs, "The Birth of Moses," *JBL* 84 (1965): 111-112. Childs argues that the sequence of events within Exod 2 is almost identical to the pattern found in some Sumerian-Akkadian legal texts, which deal with the adoption of an abandoned infant. Childes concludes that it is highly probable that Exod 2 reflects a common Near Eastern tradition of adoption despite some problems with the comparison related to genre and transference. Similarly, Exum notes that the pharaoh's daughter's naming of the infant to be some form of adoption, but cautions that speaking of the adoption in a strict sense is questionable, as no laws pertaining to adoption appear in the biblical legal corpus. See J. Cheryl Exum, "Second Thoughts about Secondary Characters: Women in Exodus 1:8-2:10," in *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 75-87.

[277] Exod 15:21 reads ותען להם. The preposition has a 3mp suffix. Although the women follow her in music-making and dancing, Miriam sings to a group that is not exclusively female.

Aaron, challenge Moses' singular leadership. The Lord hears them, and asks that all three of the

siblings come to the tent of meeting where the Lord admonishes Aaron and Miriam against

speaking ill of Moses. Angry, the Lord departs, leaving Miriam with a skin disease. Although

both Aaron and Miriam pose the question, the Lord singles Miriam out for punishment. The

Lord strikes her with a skin disease, and this affliction requires the community to quarantine her

outside of the camp for seven days. Miriam is shut out of the camp for seven days, and the

people do not move until she is brought in again (Num 12:15). After Miriam returns to the

camp, the people leave Hazeroth and continue their wilderness journey. A succinct death notice

which explains that Miriam is buried at Kadesh concludes Miriam's story (Num 20:1)

The only daughter language used to identify Pharaoh's daughter is בת, however Miriam is

described as a בת, נערה, עלמה, and אחות. I have already alluded to the implications of the use of

these four terms however, the Exod 2 narrative calls for an examination of the position of women

in the Hebrew Bible. As J. Cheryl Exum, Jopie Siebert-Hommes, Phyllis Trible, and Irmtraud

Fischer discuss, women in general, and daughters in particular, rarely occupy the subject position

in their narrative.

The Position of the Women - Along with three other women, Pharaoh's daughter and

Miriam act in service to the male, Moses, who occupies the subject position in the first two

chapters of Exodus. Exum speaks of Exod 1:8–2:10 as the story of five women and a baby boy,

but reminds her readers that the subject of the women's activity is the boy, Moses.[278] Exum

interrogates the ancient male authors' view of women that permeates the Exodus narrative, and

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[278] Exum, "Secondary Thoughts," 80. Exum interrogates the ancient male authors' view of women that permeates the Exodus narrative. Exum suggests that, in order to maintain and perpetuate itself, patriarchy depends on women's complicity, and the tools of force, threat, and fear help keep women in their place. Rewarding women for their complicity is one of patriarchy's most useful strategies, and this understanding of rewards helps illumine why the heroic Shiphrah and Puah receive houses of their own, Pharaoh's defiant daughter becomes a mother in her own right, brave Jochebed's son survives, and clever Miriam lives to celebrate the Exodus.

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Among the five female characters, Miriam is the only one whose narrative continues beyond the Exodus story, as her story uniquely depicts her in multiple life stages. Readers are introduced to young Miriam as she stands and watches her infant brother travel down the Nile River in a basket, ensures his return to his mother's home, and then presumably watches from a

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[279] Jopie Siebert-Hommes, "But If She Be a Daughter … She May Live!: 'Daughters' and 'Sons' in Exodus 1-2," in *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 62-74.

distance while Pharaoh's daughter raises him as her own in the Egyptian palace.[280] Miriam

stands in the margins of the story undetected until the opportunity presents itself for her to

intercede on her brother's behalf. Pharaoh's daughter leverages her royal privilege when she

defies her father, while young Miriam exploits her social invisibility when, as a young Hebrew

girl, she maneuvers in and out of spaces. By virtue of her age, race, class, and gender, Miriam is

virtually invisible in an Egyptian society that privileges elite Egyptian males. Pharaoh's

daughter leverages her royal privilege when she defies her father, while young Miriam exploits

her social invisibility when, as a young Hebrew girl, she successfully navigates various spaces.

Miriam moves out of the margins and takes center stage on the other side of the Sea when

she sings of the Lord's victory, and again when she and Aaron challenge Moses' exclusive

leadership. Trible argues that the song Miriam chants is repeated with variations in the first

stanza of the long poem attributed to Moses (Exod 15:1-18), and this repetition suggests that her

contribution is derivative of his original, and that her performance seems deficient.[281] Trible

argues, however, that Miriam was such a powerful character that later editors could not eliminate

her. Thus the entire antiphonal Song of the Sea, not just the first stanza, was ascribed to Miriam

and the women of Israel, and only later did redactors take the song out of Miriam's mouth and

place it in Moses'.

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[280] Siebert-Hommes, "Be a Daughter," 70-71. Siebert-Hommes points to the hithpael form of the verb יצב in Exod 2:4 as well as its use in Numbers and Deuteronomy (Num 11:16, 23:3, and 15, and Deut 31:14), in which the verb's meaning is linked with taking up a position in order to observe how YHWH will intervene. Siebert-Hommes also argues that it is legitimate to infer that the author intends to suggest that Moses' sister stood there in order to see how God would deal with the matter.

[281] Phyllis Trible, "Bringing Miriam Out of the Shadows," in *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 171-172; and Phyllis Silverman Kramer, "Miriam," in *Exodus to Deuteronomy: A Feminist Companion to the Bible,* Second Series, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 110. Kramer examines the treatment of Miriam in the Midrashim and offers that it was posited that Miriam began the song of praise to God and the women joined her: "Later Rashi said Moses sang his song to the men who then answered him; and Miriam sang the song to the women."

In much the same way the narrator jettisons Miriam's song in Exod 15, the Lord sets her outside the Israelite camp in Num 12. The scholarship agrees that, although both Aaron and Miriam challenge Moses' exclusive leadership, only Miriam is punished because, as a woman, she poses a threat to a system of all-male leadership. Irmtraud Fischer concludes that the male, Aaron, escapes any kind of punishment because he acknowledges Moses as his lord (Num 12:11).[282] This writer, however, reads this passage differently. Aaron maintains his priestly position and does not upset the power structure, but when Miriam usurps the leadership role normally ascribed to males, she suffers. As it seems, it is dangerous business for daughters to assume the subject position when that position challenges the role of a male.

Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah (Zelophehad's Daughters)

As Moses and the community leaders distribute land to the survivors of the wilderness journey, Zelophehad's five daughters approach the tent of meeting to petition for their father's allotment. In Num 27, Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah (the daughters of Zelophehad) come before Moses, Eleazar, the priests, the leaders, and the rest of the community. Zelophehad's daughters have no brothers, and they appeal to this group for their father's inheritance. The daughters present the case that convention should not remove their father's

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[282] Irmtraud Fischer, "The Authority of Miriam: A Feminist Reading of Numbers 12 Prompted by Jewish Interpretation," in *Exodus to Deuteronomy: A Feminist Companion to the Bible*, Second Series, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 169; and Bird, *Missing Persons*, 91. Phyllis Bird offers that Miriam assumed leadership roles as evidenced by her leading the Israelites in a song of victory at the sea, claiming leadership equality with Moses as one through whom the Lord had also spoken, and ranking alongside Aaron and Moses as leaders of the people. For additional treatments of Miriam in Num 12, also see Naomi Graetz, "Did Miriam Talk Too Much?," in *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, ed. Athalya Brenner: Sheffield (Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 231-242; and Katherine Doob Sakenfeld, "Numbers," in *Women's Bible Commentary: Expanded Edition*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon Ringe (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 49-56.

name simply because he had no sons.[283] To preserve the integrity of their father's legacy therefore, the daughters ask for his allotment. Moses brings the daughters' case before the Lord and the Lord instructs him to give them the property of their father's inheritance. The Lord also instructs Moses to tell the Israelites that daughters are to receive inheritances if, like Zelophehad, a man dies with no sons.

Later, in Num 36:3-4, the elders of the community approach Moses and share their concern about the control of Zelophehad's inherited land should his daughters marry outside the kin group. In response, Moses tells the Israelites that the Lord commands for the daughters to marry within the kin group of their father: every daughter who inherits land in any Israelite tribe must marry someone in her father's tribal clan, so that every Israelite will possess the inheritance of his fathers. No inheritance may pass from tribe to tribe, for each Israelite tribe is to keep the land it inherits (Num 36: 8-9). Moses amends the original command. Zelophehad's daughters comply and marry within their kin group. Finally, after the Israelites enter Canaan, the five daughters of Zelophehad approach Joshua, the priest, Eleazar, and the other leaders to appeal for their inheritance. In Josh 17:4, after the death of Moses, the daughters finally receive their inheritance from Joshua.

Interestingly, the biblical writers only describe Zelophehad's daughters as בנות. Despite being sisters and speaking in unison, the writers never use the term אחות to indicate the relationship between the five daughters. This omission is peculiar because in his death their father plays a minimal role and the elders assume the paternal role when they require endogamous marriages. Conversely, because the father and his allotment are central to the

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[283] Zafrira Ben-Barak, *The Inheritance of Daughters n Israel and the Ancient Near East: A Social, Legal and Ideological Revolution* (Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publications, 2006), 3-4. Ben-Barak explains that inheritance practices were designed to preserve two components of the integrity of the בת אב: the father's name and memory, and the patrimony. As a vital component of the בת אב, the patrimony (which might include patrimonial land and fields, vineyards, orchards, and gardens as well as flocks and herds) was the economic, social, and legal bases of a family unit. The patrimony signifies the estate.

narrative, Zelophehad is not wholly absent. Even in death, Zelophehad looms large. In what follows, I join Zafrira Ben-Barak, N. H. Snaith, Katherine Sakenfeld, and Wilda Gafney in considering aspects of the marriage requirement.

The Marriage Requirement - Ben-Barak offers a four-part model of inheritance by daughters in Israel as outlined in the narrative of Zelophehad's daughters. First, trauma ensues when a בת אב has no male heir. Second, if there are no sons, a daughter is appointed as heir. Third, another trauma presents if the inheriting daughter marries. And finally, inheriting daughters are made to marry within their father's kin group. Ben-Barak concludes that the story of Zelophehad's daughters reflects an early reality, which evolved into a law.[284]

Limiting the marriage of the inheriting daughter averted the danger of inheritances moving from one tribe to another. N. H. Snaith approaches the concern of the marriage requirement by arguing that the story is about land tenure for the tribe of Manasseh.[285] Katherine Sakenfeld disagrees with the idea that the narrative is about Manassite land tenure, and offers instead that the preservation of the father's name by way of inheritance is the overarching concern of this narrative.[286] Sakenfeld acknowledges that the elders are unhappy with the possibility that, without endogamous restrictions, the marriages may lead to land transference out of their own tribe, but views the focus as the preservation of Zelophehad's legacy.[287] Wil Gafney frames the concern thusly: "The objection of the men was that the daughters of

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[284] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance*, 32. Ben-Barak argues for the authenticity of the daughter inheritance tradition and offers that reality produced the precedent from which the law developed.

[285] N. H. Snaith, "The Daughters of Zelophehad," *Vetus Testamentum* 16 (1966): 127. Snaith suggests that Num 37 explains the tribe's settlement west of the Jordan River. The action of Numbers aligns with inheritance laws, which were later amended to adhere to the rule that the land must stay in the tribe.

[286] Katherine D. Sakenfeld, "Zelophehad's Daughters," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 15 (1988): 46.

[287] Sakenfeld, "Zelophehad's Daughters," 37.

Zelophehad might marry outside of their father's tribe and one tribe would get more land than another and then everybody would go around marrying fatherless daughters to get their land."[288] Considering the Israelite custom of levirate marriage as a way to preserve a man's name, Sakenfeld adds that the narrative considers how a name can be preserved when a levir cannot be invoked.[289]

Interestingly, these scholars do not challenge the fact that Moses disregards the Lord's directive. The fact that he never transfers the inheritance to the daughters is disconcerting.[290] I have always been suspicious of the elders' seemingly impulsive move to amend the divine decree, but the delay in the transference of the inheritance until Joshua is in charge is cause to revisit earlier suspicions. As Levites, Moses and his family do not receive any land, so he has little concern for or personal investment in ensuring that land allotments are finalized. Joshua, a non-Levite whose military experiences endowed him with a sensibility for bestowing the spoils of war to the victor, has concern for ensuring that land is distributed properly. It is not until the daughters appeal to Moses' successor, Joshua, that they are given the land that YHWH commanded they receive. It is clear that the elders are not concerned about protecting the name of their brother, Zelophehad. Had Zelophehad's name been the issue, the daughters would not have needed to argue past the point of his eligibility or good standing within the community in order to secure the divine decree. There is something important about the kin group that motivates and worries the community elders. Indeed, there is something at stake for the elders of the community if the daughters never marry or never marry within their kin group.

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[288] Wilda C. Gafney, *Womanist Midrash* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, forthcoming).

[289] Sakenfeld, "Zelophehad's Daughters," 41. Sakenfeld reasons that the father's brothers are dead and, therefore, the marriage options are second generation.

[290] Gafney, *Womanist Midrash*. Gafney introduces this issue in her treatment of Zelophehad's daughters, but does not investigate Moses' actions.

That there are few eligible Manassite kinsmen for the daughters to wed seems unlikely.[291] Zelophehad had five uncles who each had four sons who probably also had sons.[292] The tribe of Manasseh extends broadly to include the descendants of all of Manasseh's children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and all of their descendants. As fifth-generation Manassites, the daughters of Zelophehad undoubtedly had many cousins whom they could wed. It is not reasonable to believe that the daughters had no kinsmen in the area to marry.

Ensuring the endogamous marriages of Zelophehad's daughters was the overarching concern for the elders because they feared their land holdings' falling to the Canaanites, and the encroachment of foreigners in Manassite territory threatens the Israelite elders. In the pre-monarchic period depicted in Joshua and Judges, the territory of Manasseh contains the Canaanite towns of Beth-shean, Ibleam, Dor En-dor, Taanach, and the Megiddo in Josh 17:11-12 and Judg 1:27. The Manassites could not completely drive these long-term Canaanites out of the land, and the resultant community diversity created opportune conditions for exogamous marriages. It is the possibility of such marriages between the newly landed daughters of Zelophehad and the Canaanites that threatens the Manassite elders. The elders are also motivated by the fear that they will eventually lose the power and prestige associated with land holdings if the daughters of Zelophehad do not marry within their group. For the elders, if the daughters marry among the Canaanites, the land holdings would fall to their Canaanite offspring, and the landed position of the Manassites would decrease.

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[291] Manasseh was the father of Zelophehad's great grandfather, Machir. Manasseh is also the father of Asriel, Peresh, and Sheresh (1 Chron 17:14).

[292] According to the genealogy of Num 26, among the descendants of Gilead, Zelophehad's father, Hepher, had five brothers who had offspring. 1 Chron 17:19 records that Hepher's brother Shemida had four sons: Iahian, Shechem, Likin, and Yaniam. Additionally, just as Zelophehad has children, his male cousins probably have offspring too.

Daughters in the Deuteronomic History

The stories of the unnamed daughter of the Ephraimite who hosts the Levite (Judg 19:24);

the two daughters of King Saul, Merab and Michal (1 Sam 14:49); and King Joram's daughter,

Jehosheba (2 Kgs 11:1-2, 2 Chr 22:11, 1 Sam 13, and 1 Sam 25:2) are very fragmented, so much

so that they do not provide enough narrative fodder for this project.[293] Consequently, in its

review of daughters in the historical books, this project focuses on the stories of Jephthah's

unnamed daughter and King David's daughter, Tamar.

Jephthah's Daughter

In Judg 11:31, Jephthah vows that whoever comes out of his house to meet him after he

triumphs over his enemy will be offered as a burnt offering to the Lord. When the military hero

returns home, Jephthah's only child comes out to meet him as part of a group. The daughter

greets her father with celebratory song and dance, but her father greets her with lament,

exclaiming: "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low; you have become the cause of

great trouble to me. For I have opened my mouth to the LORD, and I cannot take back my vow"

(Judg 11:35). The daughter, is not aware of the details of her father's vow, but still acquiesces to

it, only asking that she be allowed two months apart with her female companions to bewail her

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[293] The reader is introduced to Saul's daughters, Merab and Michal, as part of Saul's genealogy in 1 Sam 14:49. Later, like Caleb's daughter, Acshah, Merab is offered as a reward for military valor in 1 Sam 17:25. She is also mentioned as a pawn in the unfolding drama between Saul and David. Although promised to David, Saul gives Merab to Ax as a wife in 1 Sam 18:17-19. Similarly, Michal is offered as a wife to David (1 Sam 18:27), Palti/Paltiel (1 Sam 25:44 and 2 Sam 3:15-17), and David again (1 Sam 3:15-17). Michal is mentioned as siding with David during his confrontations with Saul (1 Sam 19:11-17). Finally, Michal remains childless after she critiques David in 2 Sam 6:16-33.

virginity (Judg 11:37-38).[294]   Her father agrees. When she returns, her father does what he has promised and offers her as a burnt offering to the Lord.

The biblical writer never identifies the daughter as a בתולה. As already established, the designation of Jephthah's daughter as a בתולה would urge the reader to anticipate her betrothal. Instead, the narrative concludes with the tragedy of her death in Judg 11:39. Although the unnamed daughter is not a בתולה, she does bewail her בתולים. Exum and Phyllis Silverman Kramer examine probable meanings of the enigmatic phrase, "bewail her virginity."

A Time Apart - The daughter's enigmatic declaration that she wants to bewail her virginity (Judg 11:36) may be one of the most confusing statements in the biblical text. Exum and Peggy Day interpret the phrase as some form of puberty rite, while Phyllis Kramer and Mieke Bal understand the female-exclusive time apart as marking the daughter's transition before marriage.[295] Exum admits that the meaning of the phrase אבכה על-בתולי is unclear and reasons that

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[294] Jephthah's daughter's request to weep over her virginity (אבכה על-תול׳ב) may echo the concern of lost fertility reflected in the Ugaritic/Canaanite myth in which the virgin goddess, Anat, roams the hills mourning lost fertility on the occasion of Baal's death. Unlike in Anat's case, however, Jephthah's daughter has no reason to mourn that is discernable in the text. The absence of the motive for mourning challenges Boling's presumption that "my virginity" is shorthand for "my childlessness." See Robert G. Boling, *Judges* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), 209. Peggy L. Day acknowledges the need to revisit how ancient Near Eastern myths may relate to Jephthah's daughter's two-month excursion, but finds similarities in the narratives of Jephthah's daughter and the Greek myths of Iphigeneia and Kore/Persephone. Day argues that Jephthah's unnamed daughter, Iphigeneia, and Kore/Persephone all tell the story of leaving immaturity behind. Important to her argument, Day interprets *betulah* as a life stage and *betulim* as an age group designation. For Day, *betulim* should not be translated as "virginity," but as "adolescence." See Peggy L. Day, ed., *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989), 59, 60, 65. For treatments of the Canaanite myth, see Simon B. Parker, ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature: A Comprehensive Translation of the Poetic and Prose Texts* (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1949), and John Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan: The Ras Shamra Texts and Their Relevance to the Old Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1957). For the Greek myths see Martin L West, *The Epic Cycle: A Commentary on the Lost Troy Epics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Euripides, *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, trans., Holly Eckhardt and John Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, trans., Martin Cropp (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 2000); and Homer, *The Homeric Hymns,* trans., Diane J Rayor Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

[295] J. Cheryl Exum, "Feminist Criticism: Whose Interests are Being Served?" in *Judges and Method*, ed. Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 65-90; Peggy Day, *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006); Phyllis Silverman Kramer, "Jephthah's Daughter: A Thematic Approach to the Narrative as Seen in Selected Rabbinic Exegesis and in Artwork," in *Judges: A Feminist Companion to the Bible,* Second Series, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 67-92; and Mieke Bal, "Dealing/With/Women:

"it may refer to some type of puberty rite that signifies her physical maturity and readiness for marriage—some experience she wants to have before she dies."[296] Day agrees that Jephthah's daughter participated in a life-cycle ritual, and reads the biblical text alongside the Greek narratives of Iphigeneia and Kore. Day reasons that the stories of Jephthah's daughter, Iphigeneia, and Kore are each about leaving immaturity behind. Day's comparison, however, suffers from clear cross-cultural connections. Day herself admits that, "it would be a mistake to draw facile conclusions that ignore cultural distinctions," but then asserts that the structure and symbolism of life-cycle rituals in all three stories validate her comparison. Indeed, there are many stories of heroes and heroines transitioning to different life-stages; however, Day's anachronistic use of Greek characters does not wholly support the claim that Jephthah's daughter participated in a life-cycle ritual.

In light of the importance of bearing a child in the society, Kramer accepts the daughter's act as one of fellowship and time apart to mourn "her maidenhood," and Bal reads Jephthah's daughter's female-exclusive activity in the mountains as a rite of passage.[297] One way to read the daughter's actions is as a simple acquiescence to the inevitability of the vow as if Jephthah's daughter knew the vow was about her own death. Bal, however, suggests that she may have thought it was about being betrothed in marriage, which would explain why her mountainous lament centered on her transitioning out of the life stage of בתולה. Bal also argues that Jephthah's daughter was going to participate in a rite of passage that recognized her transition from the life-stage of נערה to בתולה. Following this reading, Jephthah's daughter believed that the vow her

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Daughters in the Book of Judges," in *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader*, ed. Alice Bach (New York: Routledge, 1999), 317-333.

[296] Exum, "Whose Interests," *76;* Day, *Gender and Difference*, 84-65.

[297] Kramer, "Jephthah's Daughter," 68.

father made in battle was one that gave her as a wife to a victorious warrior, a vow that was not uncommon. Caleb offered his daughter, Achsah, to the soldier who attacked and captured their enemy in Judg 1:12, and in return for a victory over the Philistines, King Saul offered his daughter Michal to David in 1 Sam 18:25-27.

There is not enough textual evidence to determine the purpose of the bewailing of the daughter's virginity; therefore, I accept the enigmatic phrase as simply a gendered time apart. While there is evidence of gendered rites and customs associated with ritual purity, marriage chastity, and cultic functions,[298] there are no other examples of biblical daughters participating in similar rites. Within the historical books, no mention is made of pre-marriage rites in the stories of Achsah, Merab, or Michal. Neither do the daughters Leah, Rachel, Zipporah or Ruth participate in similar rituals before they marry. Most striking is the absence of such a ritual in the chapter-long betrothal narrative of the matriarch, Rebekah. Surely, if a pre-marriage ritual such as the one espoused by Bal and others existed in biblical Israel, it would be included in the detailed narrative of the preeminent matriarch.

Tamar

In 2 Sam 13: 7, Tamar's father, King David, summons her to prepare food for her ailing brother Amnon. When she arrives at Amnon's house, she prepares the food, but he refuses it when she sets the meal before him. Amnon dismisses his servants and instructs Tamar to feed him the food in his chamber (2 Sam 13: 10). Tamar obliges and, despite her protests, Amnon

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[298] Menstruation renders a woman ceremonially unclean for seven days (Lev 15:19ff); birth discharge results in up to sixty-six days of ritual impurity (Lev 12:4-5); parents present physical evidence of a daughter's sexual inactivity to elders (Deut 22:15); and the call for the wailing women in times of crisis suggests a ritualistic function (Jer 9:17).

rapes her.[299] Tamar protests, but Amnon does not relent. After the assault, Amnon instructs his

servant to put Tamar out of his house. Once outside, Tamar assumes the position of one in

mourning. Finally, she encounters her brother, Absalom, who instructs her to remain quiet about

the matter. From that moment on, Tamar remains "a desolate woman" in her brother Absalom's

house (2 Sam 13:20).

The writer identifies King David's daughter as a בת, בתולה, and אחות. The major concern

for scholars represented by Fuchs and Pamela Reis is the sexual assault of Tamar in 2 Sam 13.

The use of the term בתולה complicates the story of sexual assault because by designating Tamar

as a בתולה the writers hint at a possible betrothal. Tamar is a princess who is eligible for

marriage, but who never marries.

Esther Fuchs represents the prevailing interpretation of Tamar's story, arguing that hers is

a story about a woman victimized by rape.[300] Fuchs argues that Tamar resists the rape, is

distressed by the rape and does all she possibly can to prevent it. For Fuchs, the text is

"unambiguous" in its indictment of the rapist and the vindication of the avenger,[301] and she

ultimately concludes that rape eliminates Tamar as a possible rival for David's throne.

Fuchs reads Tamar as an ideal daughter in that she resides at home under the authority

and protection of a father, is unmarried and, with no children and no textual evidence of being

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[299] In 2 Sam 13, יענה, is best translated as, "he raped her." The Hebrew verb, ענה (Piel 3ms with a 3fs suffix), describes oppression and humiliation with an aspect of violence (*HALOT*, 852). Other narrative examples of inflection of this verb include Shechem raping Dinah (Gen 34:2), the Ephraimite host offering his daughter to the men of the city to be ravaged (Judg 12:24), and the men of Gibeah raping the daughter of the house through the night (Judg 20:5). In each of these instances, the object of the verb is either oblivious to or not complicit with the plan to violently oppress her. For example, according to the text, Dinah sets out to visit with the women of the town, not to be accosted by the prince of the region, Shechem.

[300] Esther Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 2003. Also see George Rideout, "The Rape of Tamar," in *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Mullenburg*, ed. Jared J. Jackson and Martin Kessle (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1974), 75-84; and Trible, *Texts*, 1984.

[301] Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 202, 212.

anything other than sexually chaste, she is perfectly eligible for marriage. Furthermore, Tamar is a princess and, as the daughter of a powerful king, is a highly valued marriage partner. Tamar articulates her high value when she tells her attacker, "speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you."[302] Nevertheless, I disagree with Fuchs when she asserts that, without the rape, Tamar could conceivably become a queen whose status does not depend on her husband. Despite their dysfunction, the mere presence of sons in David's royal household precludes the daughter from ever inheriting the kingdom.

Pamela Reis also offers a dissenting voice to Fuchs' assessment. For Reis, Tamar's is a story of a woman who engages in consensual incest in hopes of marrying a would-be king and becoming a queen.[303] Reis supports her thesis with four major arguments: (1) Tamar prepares heart cakes which have aphrodisiacal qualities; (2) Tamar knowingly and willingly went to an unsafe place and stayed there when danger was eminent; (3) Tamar presumed that sexual intercourse obliged Amnon to marry her; and (4) Tamar was complicit with the sex act because she did not cry out. I disagree with Reis' thesis and will argue later in the body of this dissertation that Tamar's actions reflect that of a compliant and deferential female in her household.

Daughters in the Prophets

Within the prophetic books, there are not many narratives that include daughter characters. The writer of Jer 41 mentions the daughters of the King who, along with the other members of the community, are captured at Mizpah, and the prophet, Hosea, records the birth of his daughter, Lo-

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[302] 2 Sam 13:13. The narrator refers to Tamar as a בתולה in 2 Sam 13:2. Although this term does not always signal sexual chastity, the narrator emphasizes tension for love-struck Amnon by juxtaposing Tamar's virginal status with his inability to "do anything to her" in 2 Sam 13:2. Given the importance of virginity in marriage negotiations (see proof of virginity rules in Deut 22), it is reasonable to attribute sexual inactiity to Tamar's virginal state.

[303] Reis, Pamela Tamarkin. "Cupidity and Stupidity: Woman's Agency and The "Rape" of Tamar." *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 25 (1997): 43-60.

ruhamah, in Hos 1. Alice Ogden Bellis comments on the women worshipping the Queen of

Heaven in Jeremiah; however, none of them are identified as daughters.[304] Bellis singles out

wives (Hosea's wife, Gomer; Ezekiel's wife; and the fact that Jeremiah had no wife) and mothers

(Rachel and Sarah) in her treatment of women in the Prophets.

However, as previously discussed, the prophetic writers do employ daughter language to

personify cities and their inhabitants. By employing terms such as בת, בנות, and אחות, these

writers encourage the reader to frame the people as existing in a certain subordinate relationship

with the deity in much the same way the ancient Israelites understood a daughter as wholly

dependent upon her father. Renita J. Weems offers a unique view of the gendered language in the

prophetic material. Focusing on women in general, but not on daughters in particular, Weems

notes that, by portraying them as "the sexually promiscuous wife, the brazen whore, and the

mutilated paramour, the prophets were hoping to arouse in their audiences the kinds of emotions

that would help underscore their message of doom—emotions of disgust, contempt, terror, and

shame."[305] Weems does not single out daughters in her treatment of prophetic rhetoric used to

manipulate ancient audiences by presenting women, their bodies, and their sexuality; neither

does her identification of the parent-child metaphor take up issues of daughters in particular. In

fact, her reference to Israel's earliest days describes the era as representative of a courtship that

moves swiftly to mark the covenant in the wilderness as a marriage. Even here, what could be

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[304] Alice Ogden Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 163. This group of worshipping women referenced in Jer 7 and 44 may include daughters, but none are identified as such. For other treatments of women in the prophetic material, see Susan Ackerman, "Isaiah," in *Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 169-177; Athalya Brenner, *A Feminist Companion to The Latter Prophets* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); Mary Donovan Turner, "Daughter Zion: Giving Birth to Redemption," in *Pregnant Passion: Gender, Sex, and Violence in the Bible*, ed. Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 193-204; and Gale A. Yee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Women as Evil in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

[305] Renita J. Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 2.

considered a betrothal period is truncated in service to Weems' larger project: to examine how violence serves the prophets' representation of women, sex, and marriage.

Daughters in the Writings

The Writings contain several references to daughter characters, but these references are fleeting. When included in the phrase, "sons and daughters," daughters demonstrate the veracity of their fathers. It is as if the narrator says, "Not only do these men have sons, but they also have daughters!" Men with sons have fulfilled their patriarchal responsibility to continue their legacy through their sons, but the added presence of daughters suggests superlative performance. At the same time, however, fathers with only daughters are presented as deficient or lacking. Because they lack sons, some fathers take measures to correct their deficiency via adoption. As an example, in order to correct this deficit, Sheshan gives one of his daughters in marriage to his Egyptian slave, whom he has adopted.[306] The writer also rectifies the insufficiency of other sonless fathers by the presenting their daughters as extraordinary. Such daughters include Ephraim's daughter, Sheerah, who constructs Upper and Lower Beth-horon, and Shallum's daughters, who help rebuild Jerusalem. Perhaps the most exceptional daughter in the Writings, however, is Esther.

Esther

Abihail's orphaned daughter, Hadassah, discards her Jewish name for the moniker Esther when she enters the Persian King Ahasuerus's palace as part of the competition to replace Queen Vashti. Once in the custody of Hegai, the eunuch who is in charge of the women, Esther wins his

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[306] 1 Chr 7:24. The thinking is that Sheshan adopted this slave as his son so that any male offspring born to the union would stand to inherit their grandfather's patrimony, thereby retaining Sheshan's name within the community. Similarly, there is no mention of sons in the household of Shallum (Neh 3:12) or Barzillai (Neh 7:63).

favor and receives preferential treatment to the other girls competing to become the new Queen of Persia. When it is her turn to go in to the king, Esther asks for nothing except what Hegai advises. The King loves Esther more than the others, and quickly places the royal crown on her head. Once married, Queen Esther's narrative continues with her foiling Haman's plan to annihilate all of the Jews.

The Hebrew terms בת and נערה identify Esther. Broadly, Esther's subordinate character plays out in how she contributes to the divine plan to protect the Hebrew people. Narrowly, Esther's subordinate quality is nuanced by her obedience to those in power, as if working to aid them in their achieving their goals. Sidnie Ann White Crawford and Nicole Duran each address Esther's obedience and proximity to power.

Obedience and Proximity to Power - Sidnie Ann White Crawford and Nichole Duran treat various aspects of Esther's narrative.[307] Crawford highlights Esther's obedience and beauty, which, according to the ideology of the text, are pre-requisites for a wife. Esther follows the direction of both Mordecai and Hegai, the king's eunuch, and is lauded for her physical appearance. Also, once she is part of the harem, "Esther has taken steps to place herself in the best possible position within her situation."[308]

Nicole Duran explores the issue of proximity to power in Esther's narrative. Duran considers how, as a daughter, Esther moves closer and closer to the center of power. Esther advances from the Susa public square to the first harem, then from the harem into the king's

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[307] Sidnie Ann White Crawford, "Esther," in *Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon Ringe (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 131-137; and Nicole Duran, "Who Wants to Marry a Persian King?: Gender Games and Wars and the Book of Esther," in *Pregnant Passion: Gender, Sex, and Violence in the Bible*, ed. Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 71-84.

[308] Crawford, "Esther," 134. Likewise, Esther Fuchs (*Sexual Politics*, 191) includes Esther in her consideration of the repeated emphasis on the daughter's virginity as, like beauty, a valorizing statement for the biblical writer. Fuchs points to Esther in order to demonstrate that, like beauty, virginity in women seems to be a mark of high distinction. Importantly, the narrator only praises female characters for their virginity.

chambers, and ultimately from his chambers into the palace as Queen of Persia. She gravitates towards the literal seat of ultimate power; however, Duran points out that it is most likely that Esther was taken against her will to participate in the Queen competition at Susa.[309] In this way, she serves as an object of male motive and desire. Unfortunately, however, Duran does not interrogate the social currency the daughter, Esther, expends in order to access power. Esther leverages her physicality and implied sexuality in order to gain power. Conversely, Queen Vashti forfeits power when she refuses to come before the regaling king and his courtiers and, as a result, she is deposed and dethroned. Though it is beyond the scope of my project, Esther's story is ripe for a robust investigation of the embodiment of women in biblical literature. This type of investigation could include widows, orphans, adopted or surrogate daughters, and female servants.

Conclusion

As non-mothers, daughters are particularly interesting because they exist in a precarious position within the patriarchal world of the Hebrew Bible. Daughters do not have the authority that is attributed to wives and mothers in the household, nor are they afforded the community care reserved for widows. And yet, the discourse around biblical daughters, the language associated with these characters, and the insights from their narratives make this female member of the household a fascinating focus for this project.

Despite arguments concerning the degrees of safety or vulnerability based upon interior or exterior situatedness, there is no consensus on where daughters are safe in the biblical world. The physical location of biblical daughters is not the determiner of their safety. Both Dinah and

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[309] Duran, "Marry a Persian King," 72-73. Duran also points out that, in a society where virginity is a girl's "only ticket to respectable adulthood," when the girls spend the night with the king and return no longer virgins, the losing contestants stand to lose a great deal more than an opportunity to marry royalty.

Tamar are accosted; one inside a home, the other outside it. Similarly, the implication that inheritance of landed property enhances the legal standing and public authority of a daughter does not comport with the reality that a daughter still has no legal rights over her body in the biblical world. Zelophehad's daughters receive the inheritance of their father, but in their androcentric world, males wield ultimate authority in their households. Males also work to control a daughter's body—specifically her sexual virtue—because it represents a point of honor in the community. Beyond a designation of a daughter's sexual activity, however, the daughter's virginity is a commodity for her father. To that end, the death of Jephthah's only daughter is depicted as markedly tragic because it also signals the death of her valuable virginity.

The disputes surrounding biblical daughters are fascinating, and the language for this character is equally intriguing. The writers emphasize the relational aspect of a daughter's character when the term בת is used, while the term נערה marks a character who performs subordinate tasks which contribute the household or benefit others. בתולה identifies a daughter as a marriage candidate, and a לסבתו is a valuable commodity. The terms עלמה and ילדה generically designate a female child, and finally, brothers take center stage when the writers employ the term אחות to describe a daughter.

Undoubtedly, because it contains the narratives of the Hebrew patriarchs and their families, the Torah includes the most stories of daughters, and the majority of these biblical daughters are marked by the popular term בת; however, Rebekah, Dinah, and Miriam are also described as a combination of נערה, בתולה, עלמה, ילדה, and אחות. Lot's daughters illuminate the dubious character of their father, while Rebekah sets herself apart as the ideal bride for the patriarch, Isaac. Dinah remains silent, Miriam speaks on behalf of her brother, and Zelophehad's daughters speak in unison. Amid stories of princesses, concubines, and daughters of warriors,

the stories of Princess Tamar and Jephthah's unnamed daughter demonstrate that, within the Deuteronomic History, the safety of daughters is often at risk. With few examples of daughter characters within the Prophets, the orphaned daughter Esther stands alone within the Writings as a model of obedience and beauty.

Whether described as a בת, נערה, בתולה, עלמה, ילדה, or אחות, without the social status given to wives and mothers, or the community care afforded to widows, biblical daughters exist in precarious positions in a world ordered to advance the concerns and protect the rights of male elites. The laws, rules, customs, and structures rarely benefit them and are in fact often antagonistic towards them. The following chapter examines the stratification and attributes of power in an effort to frame how power operates in the stories of the biblical daughters.

CHAPTER IV

POWER AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Introduction

The biblical writers use numerous terms to describe daughter. When she performs a subordinate role, a daughter is a נערה. When the narrative centers on her as a marriage candidate, she is a בתולה. Describing a daughter as an עלמה heightens the narrative intrigue because her relationship with the protagonist is unclear. A ילדה is simply a female child or girl, and when a daughter is described as a אחות her father plays a diminished role in her narrative. Additionally, in the patriarchal world of the Hebrew Bible, a daughter exists in relation to a parent, usually the father. Not surprisingly, the biblical writer privileges the male parent by referring to Leah, Rachel, and Achsah as the daughters of Jacob and Caleb, respectively, while making no mention of their mothers (Gen 29:16 and Josh 15:16). Similarly, Lot's daughters, Jethro's daughters, and Jephthah's daughter (Gen 19:8, Exod 2:16, and Judg 11:34) are each marked by their relationships to their fathers, and their mothers also remain nameless. Furthermore, the textual evidence confirms that, while a daughter's father owns her sexuality, there is no safe location for her, and she has no legal standing in the community. Indeed, regardless of the Hebrew term used to describe her, the daughter lives under the authority of her father and has few legal rights. To that end, a daughter exists in a precarious position because she has very little power.

This chapter examines the contours of power that concern the daughter in the Hebrew Bible. Power is finite, must be legitimated, and is distributed unequally such that it produces

hierarchies. Although the major interlocutor for this chapter is Gerhard Lenski (who builds upon

the work of Max Weber), I nuance Lenski's schema by introducing gender to his stratification

model. Gender complicates power because, when power transgresses gender lines, power

relationships are no longer formulaic or predictable.

Power

Power is the finite phenomenon that is superimposed on members of a society. Power

privileges certain individuals such that members of particular groups control the actions of

others. The social theorist Max Weber understands power (German, *Macht*) as the probability

that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite

resistance.[310] In Weber's schema, there are two major types of power: *power-to-do* and *power-

over*. *Power-to-do* is an ability, aptitude, or proficiency. Biblical exaples of power-to-do

include Samson's legendary physical strength in the Book of Judges, and the seer's ability to

look into or perceive the future in 1 Sam 9. Although power may be understood as *power-to-

do*, as in the French verb, *pouvoir*, the Weberian notion of power as *power-over* reflects power

in the stories of biblical daughters. In addition to the relationships between kings and their

subjects, or military leaders and their soldiers, biblical examples of *power-over* relationships

include Sarah's exercising power over Hagar (Gen 16), the Queen of Sheba's commanding her

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[310] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 53. Weber conceptualizes power as "*power-over*." Also see Robert Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science* 2 (1957): 201-215 for a treatment of *power-over*, which Dahl frames as the "intuitive idea of power." See also Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *Wittgenstein and Justice: On the Significance of Ludwig Wittgenstein for Social and Political Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Amazon Digital Services, 2012), eBook; and Mark Haugaard, "Power: A 'Family Resemblance' Concept," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 13 (2010): 419-438 for discussions of power as an ability or capacity.

retinue (1 Kgs 10:1-13), and Jezebel's directing the actions of the elders and nobles in the matter of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kgs 21:5-16).

In the agrarian world of the Hebrew Bible, power is stratified along the axes of legal authority and control of economic surplus. Those with the greatest amount of legal authority and control of the largest economic surplus have the most power.[311] In this schema, daughters have little power.

Power is Finite

As Weber makes clear, power is a finite resource that always involves some form of conflict of wants.[312] In the biblical world, some individuals have power at the expense of others. The finite nature of power presents in hierarchical relationships because power, as presented in the world of the Hebrew Bible, is *power-over*. For example, in Gen 16, Sarai demonstrates power over Hagar when she directs her expulsion from Abram's house. Sarai has power while Hagar has none.

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[311] Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 44. Lenski defines surplus as goods and services over and above the minimum required to keep producers alive and productive.

[312] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 926. Weber, whose sociological project was overwhelmingly political and economic, understands power as the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a social action, even against the resistance of others who are participating in the selfsame action. Weber, who critiqued the expansion of the German empire after WW1 and was suspicious of the rise of capitalism, conceptualizes power as contentious. Nevertheless, modern feminist scholars like Iris Marion Young, Catherine MacKinnon, and Marilyn Frye point to Weber's distributive models of power as being traditionally masculinist in their dependence on unequal social relations. These feminist scholars point out that these unequal social relations fail because they do not illuminate the broader contexts that shape individuals' relations of power; they imply that men are powerful and women are powerless by definition; and they create situations under which women typically do not have the power to define the terms of their situation. See Catherine MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), and Marilyn Frye, *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1983).

Power Must Be Legitimated

Because there is no infinite supply of power, societies must agree on what constitutes

power and how they will determine who has it. For this reason, societies develop mechanisms to

identify the community members who have power as well as the ways to legitimate power.

Weber theorized different modes of claiming legitimacy and introduced the idea of *domination*

(German, *Herrschaft*), the probability that certain specific commands will be obeyed by a given

group of persons. This notion of domination is similar to the concept of *power-over*.[313] For

Weber, domination, or the sanctioned ability to exercise *power-over* others, is supported by

customs, material advantages, solidarity, and legitimacy. Here, legitimacy is most important

because it is a belief in the validity of a particular authority that gives that authority power.

Generally speaking, Weber identifies three ideal grounds of legitimating authority: charismatic,

traditional, and legal grounds. In agrarian societies similar to the ones depicted in the world of

biblical daughters, legal and traditional types of legitimating authority predominate.

Legal legitimating authority claims its lawfulness through a belief in the legality of rules

and the rights of those elevated to authority to issue commands.[314] Legal authority is not

determined by personal loyalty, but by an impersonal order that drives obedience. The person

with legal authority receives support from individuals who subject themselves and their work to

such authority. Such groups are organized hierarchically and receive remuneration for their

vocational contributions.[315] For example, royal officials punish those who disobey royal decrees

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[313] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 53. Weber identifies six major types of authority: charismatic, collegial, legal, normative, political, and traditional.

[314] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 215, 237. Legal authority confers legitimacy based on compliance with enactments which are formally correct and which have been made in the accustomed manner.

[315] Importantly, these administrative staff members cannot own the means of production/administration. This situation would present a conflict of interest. Weber also talks about power as the ability to realize one's own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others, but given the way the Hebrew Bible narratives are written,

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and military officials coordinate the efforts of soldiers. Similarly, the Pharaoh legitimates his authority or *power-over* the Egyptian community through the declaration of decrees and the actions of the military. The Pharaoh even exercises authority over others when he gives Joseph Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera the priest, in marriage (Gen 41:45). Additionally, based on the directions of Moses, the Israelites asked the Egyptians for silver, gold, and clothing before they left Egypt (Exod 12:34-35).

Traditional modes of legitimating authority require obedience and a sense of personal loyalty to the individual who occupies the position of esteem, and established practices bind the person who occupies the position.[316] The one in the position of power also receives the public's loyalty because of a shared upbringing.[317] Finally, in a system of traditional authority, people direct any opposition toward an individual and not a system.[318] Stories of those who were afforded power and privilege because of a belief in the sanctity of immemorial rules and powers (e.g., kings and other leaders) have the markings of traditional authority. As paradigms of holiness, members of the Israelite priesthood also had exclusive rights and privileges, including the right to offer sacrifices on behalf of the community and teach the law.[319] The Israelite priesthood exemplifies traditional authority in the biblical text.

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there are few textual clues about the will or volition of daughters. Even the dialogue between Lot's two daughters, in which they express a desire to bear children, is suspicious given the function of the story within the larger ideological enterprise of the patriarchal narratives. The concern of preserving the name of their father articulated by Zelophehad's daughters is similarly suspicious, especially in light of the appendix to their story in Num 37.

[316] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 215-216.

[317] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 227.

[318] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 227.

[319] Deborah W. Rooke, ed., *Embroidered Garments: Priests and Gender in Biblical Israel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009).

Within the biblical world, power is often legitimated by tradition through the mechanisms of patriarchy. To that end, the influence and authority of males, fathers, and brothers in the lives of daughters exemplify traditional authority in the biblical text. For example, Laban directs the activity of his daughter, Leah, on Rachel's wedding night in Gen 29:23, and Absalom directs the activity of his sister, Tamar, in 2 Sam 13:20.

Power is Distributed Unequally

The idea that there is a limited amount of available power undergirds the formation of hierarchical relationships. Though the patriarchal societies favored males, hierarchies determined the amount of power ascribed to different males; thus, not all males had the same degree of power. In his reconstruction of early Mesopotamian households, Ignace J. Gelb confirms a four-tier structure of ancient Near Eastern society,[320] outlining different types of personnel found in a household based upon a reconstruction of the thesis of Pre-Sargonic and Ur III texts. According to Gelb, officials and supervisors topped the hierarchy. These individuals were landowners and worked full-time in the household. The next tier included craftsmen who, if they had means of production in land, worked only part-time for the household, during which time they received rations. If craftsmen had no means of production in land, they worked full-time for the household and received rations throughout the year. The third group included workers and soldiers who may have had means of production in the land. These individuals enjoyed full family lives, and worked part-time in the household, during which time they received rations. Finally, women and children without family had no means of production. Those in the fourth group had no family life, worked full time for the household, and received

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[320] Ignace J. Gelb, "Household and Family in Early Mesopotamia," in *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Edward Lipinski (Leuven: Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1979), 23-24.

rations throughout the year. Gelb's reconstruction suggests a hierarchy within the ancient Near Eastern society in which each tier exercised power over the tier(s) beneath it.

Ancient Near Eastern legal codes also reflect this hierarchy and its unequal distribution of power. As an example, the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi presents the various classes of people: the free person, the commoner, and slave.[321] These different groups exercised varying degrees of power over others, such that free persons directed the actions of slaves. The Babylonian community also valued female free persons over female slaves. For example, in the section of the code that deals with the recompense for causing a woman to miscarry, offenders paid twice as much if the woman was free and not a slave.[322]

The hierarchical structures of ancient Near Eastern societies are similarly depicted in the Hebrew Bible. Douglas Knight argues that power is rarely shared equally, and the unequal distribution of resources within agrarian societies like that of ancient Israel skew the legal system by effecting laws and judicial procedures that favor certain persons or groups; e.g., those with the most power.[323] Generally speaking, the most powerful existed at the top of the hierarchy, and those with the least power existed at the bottom. Like Gelb, Knight identifies a four-tier hierarchical structure of ancient Israel.[324] At the top of the hierarchy, royals, who comprised 1-

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[321] Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 72. Free persons include men, women, and minors; however, the commoner is inferior to the free person in some rights and privileges. Male and female slaves include those belonging to free persons, commoners, and the palace.

[322] Paragraph 18 of the Code of Hammurabi notes the dependent relationship between male and female slaves as well as commoners and palace officials.

[323] Douglas Knight, *Law, Power, and Justice in Ancient* Israel (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 2.

[324] Knight, *Law, Power, and Justice*, 63-64. Knight's structure is not unlike that advanced by Norman Gottwald and others. Although scholars like Gottwald contend that the family unit was foundational for the social systems of the ancient Israelites, the public sphere and its attendant power bases had a unique, hierarchical structure atop which the King was positioned. Additionally, within the palace ecology, the King's sons, advisors, and scribes were very powerful. Moving beyond the palace gates, those men who were uniquely skilled (shepherds, farmers, merchants, craftsmen, etc.) had more power than those who did not. In the third tier of public power, landed gentlemen who

2% of the population, viewed the state as their personal property.[325] Members of the governing

class, or the elites, supported the royals and exercised political and economic power at a national

level. The elites included individuals like state officials, chief military officers, large

landowners, wealthy merchants, and priestly leaders who cooperated with royals to control the

general public.[326] Below the royals and the elites were the specialists, a group that included

bureaucrats, functionaries, retainers, merchants, and priests. Specialists were dependent on the

elites for their position and income. At the bottom of this hierarchal structure were the peasants

and craftspeople—the populous. Though they were the most populous group, the populous had

the least amount of power. Though Knight's hierarchical structure presents throughout the

Hebrew Bible, the stories of King Solomon's conscripting thirty thousand laborers to cut stones

to build the house of the Lord in 1 Kgs 5:13-17, Joshua's directing the priests to carry the Ark of

the Covenant before the people as he leads them over the Jordan River in Jos 3:6, and Abraham's

directing his young boys to stay with the donkey while he and Isaac went to worship in Genesis

22:5 suffice as examples.

   Power stands at the forefront of Knight's project, which is concerned with the

relationship between law and power in ancient Israel, and the laws that favored those in

power.[327] Knight also examines the interconnectedness of law, justice, and power, and reminds

the reader that the law, while designed to maintain order in a community, often favored those in

power. Because biblical law was often used as a tool of power, the agendas and ulterior motives

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were not necessarily part of the palace ecology were afforded a great deal of power. Finally, men with no or only
small plots of land and male slaves had the least amount of power in the public sphere.

[325] Knight, *Law, Power, and Justice*, 63.

[326] Knight, *Law, Power, and Justice*, 64.

[327] Knight, *Law, Power, and Justice*, 37.

of those who stood to benefit the most from the law's enactment—those with power and means—should be questioned.[328] Those in power advanced laws that reflected their aspirational or ideal views of Israelite society.[329] Thus, the laws of patriarchal Israel privileged males (most often wealthy males).

Numbers evidences power authenticated by legal mechanisms and the ways in which these machinations often discounted women. According to Num 30, if a daughter made a vow or oath and her father disapproved of it, he had the legal right to annul that vow. Additionally, if a daughter's father approved the vow or oath she made, but her husband disapproved it, the husband also had the legal right to annul her vow or oath (Num 30:4-9, 11-13). The law made no provision for a woman to terminate her own legal commitment; only men could rescind her vows and oaths. Men also had power over the legal engagement of women in the biblical text. That ancient Israelite law favored the powerful speaks to one way power was legitimated: by and through men.

Stratification of Power in Agrarian Societies

While Weber understands power as legitimated by way of either tradition or law, Gerhard Lenski offers an expanded model that identifies degrees or layers of power based on the relationship between tradition and law. This ordered layering is important because, in agrarian societies like the one depicted in the Hebrew Bible, the unequal distribution of power creates

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[328] Knight, *Law, Power, and Justice*, 86. Carolyn Pressler, "Wives and Daughters, Bond and Free: Views of Women in the Slave Laws of Exodus 21.2-11," in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Victor Harold Matthews, Bernard M. Levinson, and Tikva Frymer-Kensky (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 147-172. Pressler supports Knight when she cautions readers against the dangers of receiving the image of women presented in biblical law as representative of their actual lived experience.

[329] Marsman, *Women*, 46.

divisions among social classes. This relationship constitutes his idea of stratification. Lenski explains stratification thusly:

> The system of stratification in any society is essentially an expression of the value system of that society. The rewards which men and positions enjoy are a function of the degree to which their qualities, performances, and possessions measure up to the standards set by their society. Since men necessarily differ in these respects, inequality is inevitable.[330]

Lenski offers a helpful model of distributive systems in agrarian societies. In his system, elites and non-elites make up the two major divisions. The elites are members of the ruling class, the governing class, and the retainer class. The ruling class consists of kings and their families who have accumulated wealth and used community property for their personal advantage. In light of the proprietary theory of the state, which conceptualizes that the state is a piece of property that its owner may use and transmit to heirs, royals accumulated wealth and used property for their personal advantage.[331]

Members of the governing class, which consisted of personal advisors of the ruler, civil officials, and military leaders, aided the ruling class in the management of the commonwealth. Members of the governing class often shared in the economic surplus produced by others as a reward for upholding and enforcing the authority of the ruler.[332] Officials, professional soldiers, household servants, and personal retainers who served members of the ruling and governing classes in specialized capacities made up the retainer class.[333] Similar to Karl Marx's idea of the

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[330] Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 16.

[331] Lenski *Power and Privilege*, 214-16. Lenski borrows his understanding of the concept of the state as property from Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization,* trans. A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Free Press, 1947), 341-348.

[332] Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 219-220.

[333] Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 243.

petite bourgeoisie, members of the retainer class functioned in service to the royals and governors, and served as a buffer of sorts between them and the commoners.[334]

Among the non-elites, members of the merchant class (unlike those of the retainer class), enjoyed an autonomy from the royals and members of the governing class because both classes relied on members of the merchant class to engage in the mercantile activities that produced the luxury goods that marked them as elite. Merchants trafficked in the economic sphere of mercantile exchange, and were not under the authority of the royals and governors in the same way as the retainers. Thus, the merchants stood in a market relationship—not an authority relationship—to the royals and governors.[335] Similarly, members of the priestly class enjoyed protections from the royal and governing classes because they performed specialized cultic functions. The priestly class mediated relations between deities and humanity through the performance of sacrificial rites.[336] In societies where limited literacy was the rule, priests were often called upon to perform administrative tasks, which required a mastery of the art of writing.

Ultimately, the burden of supporting the state and the privileged classes fell on the shoulders of the common people, and especially the peasant farmers.[337] Members of the peasant

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[334] Karl Marx, *Class Struggles in France 1848-1850* (New York: International Publishers, 1964). Marx describes the *petite bourgeoisie* as those who are positioned between the elite, the bourgeoisie with whom they align ideologically and aspire to be, and the common, working-class proletariat. In 19th century Europe, examples of Marx' *petite bourgeoisie* included shopkeepers and artisans. I recognize that a *petite bourgeoisie* is anchornisitc here because Marx's categories do not obtain in a pre-capitalist society. My analogy here only refers to the hierarchical relationship.

[335] Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 250.

[336] Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 256. Lenski uses the term *priestly* to refer to religious leaders whose livelihood and status in society were dependent primarily on their leadership roles in the religious system. Monks, ministers, rabbis, imams, and other religious personnel that Lenski notes were not part of the landscape of ancient Israel, and the priests of the Hebrew Bible did not benefit from land rights; however, the identification of this group as uniquely positioned among the lesser elites is valid for my dissertation.

[337] Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 266, 278. Members of the artisan class, whom Lenski notes were originally recruited from the ranks of the disposed peasantry and their non-inheriting sons, function similarly to the peasant class.

class not only labored to produce the economic surplus enjoyed by the royals and others, but they were taxed by the state, and many were conscripted into the *corvée*, or forced labor pool. The remaining class existed at the bottom of the social hierarchy, and consisted of people who were considered unclean and expendable; those for whom the other members of the society had little or no need.[338]

For Lenski, power (here coterminous with class), is determined by an individual's legal authority and their control of economic surplus. Relative to power in agrarian societies were authority and influence, between which Lenski makes careful distinctions. Authority is the enforceable right to command others. Influence, by contrast, is much more subtle: it is the ability to manipulate the social situation of others, or their perception of it, by the exercise of one's resources and rights, thereby increasing the pressures on others to act in accordance with one's own wishes.[339] Legal authority is not only an individual's ability or right to participate in the legal system, but the degree to which they participate as well as their ability to command others within the context of a legal or juridical system. For example, kings could establish and enact laws through decree that their administrative support personnel would enforce; therefore, royals had the highest amount of legal authority.[340] Below royals, members of the governing and retainer classes held the next largest degrees of legal authority. Unlike royals, these men could not speak laws into existence, but they did have the responsibility to enforce laws, adjudicate

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[338] Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 280-284. Within ancient Israel, those with physical deformities were considered unclean. Expendables included criminals, outlaws, beggers, underemployed itinerant workers, and those seeking charity.

[339] Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 57. Lenski admits that the relationship between power and influence is confusing, but encourages his reader to treat influence as a special type of power.

[340] Examples of royals exercising legal authority include King Cyrus' decree to return the exiles to Judah in (Ezra 1:1-5); King Ahasuerus' establishment of the rule that Persian women were to give honor to their husbands (Esth 1:20); and King Nebuchadnezzar's command that subjects fall down to worship the golden statue when they heard specific music (Dan 3:5-6).

arguments, or bring claims to the legal council.[341] Members of the priestly and merchant classes

could also bring claims to the council and had more legal authority than peasants and artisans.

Those remaining members of the community (the unclean and the expendables) had very few

rights of their own and even fewer rights to enforce legal authority over others.[342]

The power or class of an individual is also determined by an individual's amount of

control of economic surplus. In agrarian communities, one of the greatest indicators of control

of economic surplus is the control of landed property. Because the land of a region is under the

sovereign rule of kings, royals have almost absolute control, members of the merchant class have

less, and peasants, artisans, and others have little to no control over the economic surplus.[343]

Weber contends that power is legitimated by mechanisms of legal and traditional

authority. Here, tradition is marked by the control of economic surplus. Lenski places these two

modes into the same schema, and claims that power is a function of both legal authority *and*

control of economic surplus. Neither Weber nor Lenski, however, consider gender in their

analyses. Both neglect the idea that the function of gender complicates the power in the biblical

text. Nevertheless, Lenski's conceptualization of power or class is helpful for a discussion of

power systems in the world of the Hebrew Bible.

Power and Gender

The finite aspect of power in the biblical world fuels ideas concerning the power of

women. Despite the privileging of males in the patri-centered world of the biblical text, Carol

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[341] Examples of the governing class's exercising legal authority include the "able men" whom Jethro instructs Moses to places as judges over the people in order to decide minor cases (Exod 18:21-26); the military leader, Joshua, who serves as Moses' assistant (Exod 24:13), and the various leaders who assemble ostensibly to represent the will of the people (Num 27:2, Deut 1:15, and 1 Kgs 1:11).

[342] See Appendix B for a graphic depiction of Power as Social Status in Agrarian Societies.

[343] I recognize that the priestly class does not control land, which is an important indicator of economic surplus.

Meyers argues that men did not necessarily have more power than women in ancient Israel. With respect to certain formal transactions, such as those involved in marriage, inheritance, and the like, Meyers suggests that neither the existence of an equally asymmetrical preponderance of power of male over female, nor a lopsided positive evaluation of male over female were the default positions in Israelite society.[344]

In fact, Meyers argues that the mutual dependence between early Israelite men and women meant women were afforded considerable power in domestic matters.[345] Meyers employs sociological theory to ground her argument of gender balance; however, her argument is not well supported because she erroneously employs the terms *power*, *influence*, and *authority*. Meyers' use of the terms are problematic despite her move to distinguish power, which she defines as an ability to act effectively on persons or things to sustain influence, from authority, which she defines as an abstract or legal right to make decisions affecting other humans.[346]

Meyers borrows from Weber in her understanding of power as *power-over*. Directionally, Meyers' employment of power is sound; however, she misappropriates terms in her schema. Meyers uses influence (or domination) and authority synonymously when these terms carry distinct meanings. Meyers borrows from Weber, who uses the terms *domination* and *authority* interchangeably.[347] Weber argues that domination is the probability that certain,

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[344] Carol L. Meyers, "Procreation," 504, 506. Meyers reads Leviticus 27 through a social scientific lens and affirms that, given the reproductive role women played exclusively, their bearing nearly 40% of the workload resulted in a balanced division of labor.

[345] Meyers, "Procreation," 508. Meyers also suggests that women's power in domestic matters predisposed men to accept female power when it was exercised in other capacities, including extra-domestic situations. Here, Meyers points to the leadership of biblical heroines like Miriam and Deborah, the wise woman of Tekoa, and Abel Beth Ma'acah as examples of how, even within a male-dominated society, a balanced vision of labor offers the potential for relatively high statuses for women.

[346] Meyers, "Procreation," 504.

[347] Meyers, "Procreation," 212.

specific commands will be obeyed by a given group of persons.[348] As Weber states,

"Domination ("authority") in this sense may be based on the most diverse motives of

compliance: all the way from simply habituation to the most purely rational calculation of

advantage." Later, in his treatment of the types of authority, Weber uses authority to define his

three pure types of legitimate domination. For Weber, the validity of the claim to legitimacy

based on rational grounds is called legal authority; the validity of the claim to legitimacy based

on traditional grounds is called traditional authority; and the validity of the claim to legitimacy

based on charismatic grounds is called charismatic authority.[349]

Meyer's argument suffers from a lack of specificity because she uses power, authority,

and influence interchangeably when they are not the same. Borrowing from Weber, power is the

probability that one will carry out their own will despite resistance.[350] Weber describes authority

as the legitimate exercise of imperative control (*Herrschaft*) or the probability that a command

with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons. For Weber, the head

of a household exercises authority.[351] Contrary to Meyer's conflation of terms, because women

were not the heads of households in patriarchal ancient Israel (that role was reserved for males),

by definition they could not exercise authority.

Lenski, who is most concerned with social stratification in various society types, makes

clear the distinction between domination or influence and authority when he writes:

> Authority is the enforceable right to command others. Influence, by contrast, is
> much more subtle. It is the ability to manipulate the social situation of others, or

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[348] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 212. See Weber's treatment of domination and legitimacy (941-955).

[349] Weber, *Economy and Society,* 215-301.

[350] Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization,* 152.

[351] Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization,* 152-153.

their perception of it, by the exercise of one's resources and rights, thereby increasing the pressures on others to act in accordance with one's own wishes.[352]

Furthermore, as a marker of power in agrarian societies, legal authority endows individuals with the right or community-sanctioned ability to participate in juridical processes and effect change. Sociological theory does not support Meyers' move to equate domination or influence with authority in her claim that women have influence and therefore power to the same degree as men.

Nevertheless, Meyers argues that women contributed significantly to the subsistence activities of the agrarian household.[353] She suggests that, although the biblical text may devalue females, this devaluation does not mean that the conditions that result in high statuses for women do not exist.[354] For Meyers, the uneven location of legal authority with men (over women) does not indicate unequal power or influence of male (over female) or of an unequally weighted valuation of men (versus women). Therefore, according to Meyers, texts that devalue women do not negate the possibility of their equal or near-parity contributions to the society.

Meyers uses Lev 27 to support her claim of the valuation of women; however, her use of the list in this biblical passage to make claims about the status of women for the sake of her argument is erroneous and a misuse of the worth measurement. Lev 27 offers economic valuations of individuals based on age and gender for an agrarian, pre-monarchic community. Worth, or economic value and social status, are not necessarily the same thing.

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[352] Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 57. Lenski acknowledges the confusing relationship between power and influence, and suggests that influence should be treated as a special type of power.

[353] Meyers, "Procreation." For a similar argument, also see Susan Ackerman, "Digging up Deborah: Recent Hebrew Bible Scholarship on Gender and the Contribution of Archaeology," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 66.4 (2003): 72-184; and Phyllis A. Bird, *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997).

[354] Meyers, "Procreation," 503-504.

Meyers argues persuasively that women contributed to the household subsistence activities at levels near those of men. The biblical record, which depicts women performing important tasks such as harvesting (Ruth 2), shepherding (Gen 29:9, Exod 2:16), preparing food (1 Sam 8:13), and weaving (Exod 35:25, Judg 16:14), supports such a claim. Nevertheless, Meyers' claim that the fact that conditions existed for women to be afforded high status means that those conditions were concomitant with women's power falls short. Women were not afforded power simply because they were female members of high status groups. For women in the ancient world, social status was not synonymous with power.

In the patriarchal world of the Hebrew Bible, power and authority are closely related for men. The community ascribed power to males and endowed them with the authority to exercise legal rights. According to Knight, the composition of laws into literature would have served the ends of those who possessed or sought power.[355] Because women have very few legal rights by default, they have very little power and authority in the biblical world. This important distinction confounds Meyers's connection of economic value with power and power with social status.

Meyers also claims that the 40% of female contribution to production is balanced, and that in balanced societies, women are afforded high status because there is a mutual dependence in which males accept female power beyond the domestic realm. Unfortunately, however, her claim of "high status" does not comport with the evidence presented by Lenski. In an agrarian society that privileges the land, "high status" correlates with an individual's degree of control of landed property and an assumption of leadership positions. According to the biblical text, women living in agrarian societies do not legally control landed property (see Num 27 and 36)

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[355] Knight, *Law, Power and Justice*, 27. Also see, Knight, "Political Rights and Powers in Monarchic Israel," *Semeia* 66 (1994), 93-117.

and, with the exception of perhaps Miriam and Deborah, hold no leadership positions in the community. Furthermore, in the cases of Miriam and Deborah, Meyer's claims of "unquestioned deference to leadership" are not valid. Barak defers not to the prophet Deborah's leadership, but to the words of the prophet (Judg 4:6-8). Moses and Aaron did not defer to Miriam at all. Males do not accept female power beyond domestic concerns because laws and customs privilege males and prohibit female participation in matters of law (vows) and leadership.

In the patriarchal world depicted in the Hebrew Bible, gender is a separate overlay, and power functions a certain way for men and women. Interestingly, when power relationships transgress gender boundaries, they are much more fluid. For example, Queen Jezebel encourages the masses to worship Baal and Asherah (1 Kgs 18:19), sends messengers and threatens the prophet, Elijah (1 Kgs 19:2-3), and directs the actions of elders and nobles (1 Kgs 21:8-11).[356] The royal, Esther, directs the eunuch, Hathach, to deliver messages to Mordecai (Esth 4:10), and instructs Mordecai to gather the Jewish people to hold a fast on her behalf (Esth 4:16-17). Nevertheless, it is King Ahasaurus who directs Haman to attend a dinner (Esth 5:5), and it is the king whom Haman fears. Though Haman is terrified before the king *and* the queen (Esth 7:6), he begs Queen Esther for his life, but only because he saw that *the king* was going to destroy him (Esth 7:7). Finally, the King, not Queen Esther, orders the hanging of Haman (Esth 7:9). In short, Queen Esther does not direct the execution of the governor, Haman.

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[356] Grace I. Emmerson, "Women in Ancient Israel," in *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives*, ed. R. E. Clements (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 371-394. Emmerson notes that, among Bathsheba and Maacah, the foreign woman, Jezebel is the only woman depicted with authority in a queen role (374).

The Subordination of Women

Gender-driven notions of subordination inform the paradigm which frames women as property. Julia Asher-Grave argues that, via social structure and ideology, patriarchy is often used to subordinate women.[357] Conversely, Hennie Marsman argues that subordination needs to be understood as "necessary leadership of one and fellowship of the other as the only and divinely intended way to unity and harmony in society."[358] According to her, the subordinate position of women in this hierarchical order is misunderstood if it is seen as a relation of dominance and submission. This position is problematic, however, because it makes it difficult for readers to understand female characters as individuals and disregards the textual evidence of daughters' autonomy. As I will demonstrate, many women—especially daughters—think and act autonomously. And yet, to be clear, although the property or chattel imagery is dangerously accessible for modern readers, it is not accurate. Unlike inventoried assets, women had rights and privileges in the ancient Near East and ancient Israel. Coupled with varying degrees of autonomy, these rights and privileges distinguished women from property such as material artifacts, immovable objects, and animals. Thus, I reject the idea that women were the property of men in these societies.

To be clear, within ancient patriarchal societies, males, especially sons, received preferential treatment. In Nuzi, sons were the first heirs, and daughters were not generally recognized as such. Zafrira Ben-Barak explains that Nuzi society did not view a daughter as her

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[357] Julia M. Asher-Greve, "Feminist Research and Ancient Mesopotamia: Problems and Prospects," in *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies*, ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), 232.

[358] Marsman, *Women*, 14. Here, Marsman cites Osiek again, and points out Wacker's challenge to this loyalist approach. Wacker argues that the loyalist approach lacks possibilities of feminist analysis of patriarchalism. See Marie-Theres Wacker, "Geschichtliche, hermeneutische und methodologische Grundlagen," in *Feministische Exegese: Forschungserträge zur Bibel aus der Perspektive von Frauen*, ed. Silvia Schroer, Luise Schottroff, and Marie-Theres Wacker (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), 34-36. Also see E. Schüssler Fiorenza's "Feminist Hermeneutics" entry in *ABD* (789).

brother's equal. A daughter was thought incapable of settling a father's affairs when he died, and she could not carry out the rites of the ancestors or the household gods.[359] This ancient preferential treatment of sons created a sociopolitical backdrop predisposed to subordinate daughters. To that end, the ideology of the biblical writer framed daughters as posing a threat to the community in order to substantiate the male drive to control them through subordination and other means. Daughters also posed a threat to the family's possessions because, once married, any property she held was attributed to her husband's family and not to her father's family. Because she posed a threat to the maintenance of the family's possessions, a daughter received a dowry (mainly moveable property) and gifts when she married.[360] Unlike her brothers, she rarely received real property as part of an inheritance or a marriage gift.

Women, Power, and Class

Patriarchy is the most pervasive mechanism of tradition authentication in the world of biblical daughters. Related to the issue of *power-over* is the idea that women were the property of men in ancient Israel. Scholars such as Fuchs and Setel argue that legal codes regard women as the property of either their father or their husband such that men dominated women and viewed them as their property.[361] Judith Romney Wegner argues that biblical law's view of a

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[359] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance*, 153. Documents from the ancient city of Emar mention how the first heir of wealthy families—generally the eldest son—received the main family home, while the remaining offspring ostensibly received the rest of the household belongings.

[360] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance*, 124.

[361] Fuchs, "The Literary Characteristics of Mothers and Sexual Politics in the Hebrew Bible," in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* (ed.Adela Yarbro Collins: Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 129 and T. Drorah Setel "Feminist Insights and the Question of Method" in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* (ed.Adela Yarbro Collins: Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 41. Biblical examples of the devaluation and dehumanization of women include Exod 20:17, which places wives alongside slaves, animals, and other property; Exod 21:7, which illustrates that daughters may be sold; and Num 3:15, which excludes women from the census. Importantly, Carol Meyers ("Procreation") debunks the long-held idea that women did not contribute meaningfully

woman as either a man's chattel or as a man's dependent is a function of that man's proprietary interest in the woman's sexuality.[362] Patriarchy as tradition tends to present daughters as property, a conceptualization that is fueled by the undertones of subordination. Based upon the lexical treatment of *bat*, it is easy to make the interpretive leap that biblical daughters are subordinate.

Within the confines of a particular class, men have more power than women. Kings have more legal authority and more control of economic surplus than queens. For example, among the royals, King Solomon overwhelms the queen of Sheba with his vast material possessions (control of economic surplus)—so much so that she tells him, "your prosperity far surpasses the report that I heard" in 1 Kgs 10:7 (2 Chr 9:6), and King Ahasuerus exercises legal authority such that he speaks laws into existence that banish Queen Vashti in Est 1:19. A king's power is so comprehensive that King Ahasuerus can delegate legal authority to Queen Esther and Mordecai, as is the case when he entrusts them to write an edict in his name and seal it with his seal in Esth 8:8.

Aside from males inheriting property throughout the biblical text, among the retainer and merchant class it is Jacob—not Leah or Rachel—who gains wealth (control of the economic surplus) that is Laban's flocks in Gen 30:36-31:1. A man also has more legal authority than a woman, as evidenced by the statutes which dictate that a man (a father or a husband) can nullify the vow of a woman in Num 30:3-15.[363] Finally, among women, daughters are not high in the

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to the ancient Israelite household, and Hennie Marsman (*Women*) highlights the important roles performed by women in the ancient Near East.

[362] Marsman, *Women*, 146. Also see Judith Romney Wegner, *Chattel or Person? The Status of Women in the Mishnah* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[363] For more information on vows and women, see, G. H. Davies, "Vows," in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962-76), 792-793; Tony W. Cartledge, *Vows in the Hebrew*

hierarchy. As explained in previous chapters, within the social construct of family in ancient

Israel and the Hebrew Bible, daughters have more power than servants, but less power than

mothers and wives.

Gender and Class Boundaries

In the hierarchy of women in the biblical text, queens and princesses have more power

than handmaidens, female members of the merchant class, or female servants. For example,

Pharaoh's daughter directs the actions of her handmaidens in Exod 2:5. Similarly, Leah controls

the body of her handmaiden, Zilpah, when she gives her to Jacob as a wife in Gen 30:9. Thus,

Lenski's schema persists in same-gender interactions, but is unpredictable across gender lines.

Gender complicates power because gendered interactions are unpredictable. Across gendered

lines, the royal, Esther, exercises legal authority when she directs all the Jews to fast on her

behalf in Esth 4:16; but when she issues written commands that allow the Jews to defend

themselves against the armed forces in Esth 8:11, she uses the King's seal, not her own.[364] The

textual evidence suggests that ruling women have more legal authority and economic control

than men of lesser classes; however, this phenomenon is only operative among female royals and

other female elites, such as Abigail, the wife of the shepherd, Nabal, who directs her young men

in 1 Sam 25:19, and Potiphar's wife, who directs the household servants in Gen 38:14.[365]

Bible and the Ancient Near East (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992); and Ronald T. Hyman, "Four Acts of Vowing in the Bible," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 37 (2009): 231-238.

[364] Esther completes this work alongside Mordecai.

[365] The prophet, Deborah, summons the military leader, Barak, in Judg 4:6, but she does so as a representative of the Lord. Barak, therefore, defers to the power of the Divine, not to the woman, Deborah. Similarly, King Hezekiah follows the direction of the Lord, and not of the female prophet, Huldah, in 1 Kgs 22.

Conclusion

As the least powerful among females in the family, daughters are not privileged by systems of power. Daughters have very little legal authority and they rarely control economic surplus. So when systems are antagonistic or fail them, what do they do? How do they respond? Is there a discernable pattern in the text that demonstrates particular ways daughters navigate systems of power? Because they have the least amount of female-gendered power, daughters cannot rely on social systems to work in their favor. Daughters have little legal authority. They cannot make vows, cannot represent themselves in "open court," and do no control economic surplus.[366] Thus, daughters operate out of a position of vulnerability that requires them to adapt ways to navigate antagonistic systems of power.

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[366] Zafrira Ben-Barak concludes that the inheritance Zelophehad's daughters is an anomaly. I have already demonstrated that a father controls the economic surplus that is a daughter's virginity.

CHAPTER V

DAUGHTERS AND POWER

Introduction

Depending upon which Hebrew term describes them, daughters perform subordinate

roles or figure prominently in stories of betrothal. Others signal dramatic irony in the narrative

plots of male protagonists. Like other characters, these female members of the household exist in

a biblical world structured by systems and institutions of power legitimated by tradition and legal

mechanisms. Moreover, these power systems privilege others in ways that leave daughters

vulnerable and with little power. Daughters are vulnerable because they have little legal

authority and rarely control economic surplus. For example, daughters do not have full legal

authority, as evidenced by the fact that their fathers may nullify their vows.[367] Furthermore, in

addition to the fact that daughters generally do not inherit landed property, they have little

control of economic surplus. Here, economic surplus is the daughter's virginity which is a

commodity controlled by the father. The daughters do not control economic surplus because

they do not control their own bodies, and their virginity is considered her father's commodity.

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[367] In general, women could make vows and pledges. For example, Num 30:9 stipulates that widows, those no longer under the authority of a male, could make vows. Hannah, a childless wife, makes a vow in 1 Sam 1, and another married woman makes a vow in Prov 7. King Lemuel's mother makes a vow in Prov 31, and the female worshippers of the Queen of Heaven make vows in Jer 44. Also, the married woman of Prov 7 prostitutes herself in order to pay off a vow she has made. Daughters could also make vows, but they did not have full legal authority. Num 30:3-5 stipulates that if a daughter makes a vow and her father disapproves, he can reject it when he hears of it. The father's legal authority is so comprehensive that he does not have to be present to hear his daughter's vow in order to nullify it. For more discussions of women and vows, see T. W. Cartledge, *Vows in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Sheffield: JSOT.S, 1992), 147; J. Berlinerblau, *The Vow and the "Popular Religious Groups" of Ancient Israel: A Philological and Sociological Inquiry* (Sheffield: JSOT.S, 1996); and Karel van der Toorn, "Female Prostitution in Payment of Vows in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 108 (1989): 193-205. Daughters could make vows, but valid only if buttressed by male.

In a world that affords power to those with legal authority and control of economic surplus, daughters are indeed vulnerable, which means they must navigate various systems of power in order to survive—feats that are generally accomplished in one of three ways. Some daughters acquiesce and accommodate the systems and institutions of power; others resist the traditions and legal mechanisms that legitimate power in the biblical world; and lastly, some daughters both accommodate and resist those systems of power.

This chapter demonstrates how the daughter, who lives in a precarious position because she exists beyond the nucleus of power, responds to systems of power. After outlining the elements of status which demarcate degrees of power, this chapter rehearses the narratives of Lot's daughters, Leah, Dinah, Pharaoh's daughter, Miriam, Zelophehad's daughters, Rahab, Jephthah's daughter, and Tamar, and discusses the aspects of power operative in each daughter's story. Arranged canonically, the daughters are catalogued based upon their modes of response to systems and institutions of power that disadvantage them as women who are non-mothers. Particular attention is paid to the tactics employed by royals versus non-royals and among daughters of Israelites versus foreign daughters. Additionally, careful note is made of any differences between the insider Israelites and outsider Israelites.

<center>Status in the World of the Biblical Daughter</center>

Beyond gendered differences, an important way to conceptualize power in the hierarchical world of the biblical text is by way of status. For many men status is often determined by way of family size, social relationships, and birthrights. Ironically, women in general and daughters in particular play critical roles in matters that concern men: reproduction, familial alliances, and legacies. In the male-centered world of the biblical text, men are the

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official representatives of the family unit. Importantly, in their role as managers of the

household, fathers take the lead in all matters concerning reproduction. Men in general, and

fathers in particular, are invested in such matters because kinship is traced through the male

products of reproduction, and according to patrilineal customs, kinship determines one's status or

position in the community. In addition to the direct production of offspring, kinship and its

attendant status or social position may be achieved through familial alliances. In this case, a

daughter serves as a mechanism for familial alliances via marriage. Within the biblical text,

males are connected as relatives by marriage, and these alliances superimpose networks of

relation that might counteract intergroup hostilities.[368] King Saul's attempt to control his

relationship with David through David's marriage to his daughters Merab and Michal (1 Sam

18:17 and 1 Sam 18:20-21); Caleb's use of his daughter, Achsah, as a reward for military

triumph (Josh 15:16-17 and Judg 1:12-13); and the King of the South's deployment of his

daughter in negotiations with the King of the North (Dan 11:6) all demonstrate the potential role

of daughters in marriage alliances. Additionally, the political marriages of the King of Egypt's

daughter (1 Kgs 3:1); the Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women; and the

seven hundred foreign princesses (1 Kings 11:1-3) to King Solomon serve as examples of such

familial alliances.

When the daughter is the mechanism for kinship, her virginity becomes an important

commodity. Though this dissertation has already treated the subject of virginity, it is important

to note that a daughter's virginity may help secure more profitable marriage kinship prospects

because the potential groom is assured that his male offspring are his true progeny and therefore

his entitled heirs. And, in their drive to ensure the expansion of the family, fathers and husbands

attempt to regulate the daughter and her body precisely because her body represents the veracity

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[368] Johanna Stiebert, *Fathers and Daughters in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 38.

of legacy and progeny. Power systems and institutions such as patrilineal inheritance, which limits women's access to power in the public square; laws that allow male relatives to annul vows made by women; and customs that frame women as property, all work to control the procreative abilities of women.

Lenski speaks of the status distinction between various men by identifying different class systems within a society's distributive system. He defines a class as "an aggregation of persons in a society who stand in a similar position with respect to some form of power, privilege, or prestige."[369] Different sources of power serve as foundations to different class systems. Legal jurisdiction is the primary source of power in a political class system, and wealth is the primary source of power in a property class system. Access to goods and services is the primary source of power in an occupational or work class system, and ethnicity is the primary indicator of power in an ethnic class system. In Lenski's fictionalized society, for example, the wealthy, middle-class, poor, and impoverished classes each have diminishing degrees of status. In that same society, the Spaniard, Mestizo, and Indian classes each have decreasing amounts of status.[370] Because individuals exist on a vertical continua with no static breaks between classes, and since individuals may hold membership in multiple classes (meaning, for example, an individual may identify based on both their property and their ethnic statuses) Lenski's class stratification system is complex;[371] nevertheless, his class distinctions schema oversimplifies the nuanced ways in which an individual exists in multiple class systems in the biblical world. Because his

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[369] Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 74-75. Lenski goes on to clarify that his project focuses on the distributive systems of power because the distribution of privilege and prestige (the other basic elements of Lenski's three-part distributive system) seem largely determined by the distribution of power.

[370] Lenski presents a fictional Latin American society to demonstrate power and status. See Appendix A for a graphic depicting Lenski's representation of the structure of the power dimensions of the distributive system of fictional Latin America.

[371] Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 75, 80.

class system ranks classes in a single criterion,[372] Lenski's schema should be used with caution in instances when, for example, one must account for an Israelite priest who is situated below the wealthy because he owns no property, but whose cultic occupation positions him high on the hierarchical scale.

To begin, within the foundational group (i.e., the family), the male head of household is the primary legislative and judicial authority with other adults exerting secondary legal influence. Within their households, the father or *paterfamilias* exercises authority over all members of the family, including daughters, such that they determine the future of their children.[373] In general, because the biblical world is patrilineal, which means that the heir of the household must be a son (biological or adopted) of the father, fathers designate sons to receive patrimony as inheritance.[374] Fathers also negotiate marriage contracts and control the commodity of their daughter's virginity. Ben-Barak defines the *paterfamilias* as the male head of the household who is, "the foundation and center, the leader and the sole authority in charge of the direction, economy, integrity, legal framework and life-style of the *bēt ʿāb*."[375] Matthews

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[372] Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 80.

[373] Joseph Fleishman, *Father-Daughter Relations in Biblical Law* (Bethesda: CDL, 2011), 91. Within ancient Mesopotamian societies, free persons were permitted to sell their children into slavery. Documents from Nippur demonstrate the sale of nine children, and in all but one instance, the children were girls (see A. L. Oppenheim, ""Siege-Documents" from Nippur." *Iraq* 17.1 [1955]: 87-89). Additionally, The Law of Hammurabi §117 restricts how long a child may serve after their father sells or gives them in debt slavery to another (see William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger Jr., *Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, 343). Joseph Fleishman argues however, that the ancient Israelite law of Exod 21:7-11 does not permit a father to sell his daughter into slavery. Fleishman acknowledges that the Bible attests to the sale of Israelite sons and daughters into slavery by their parents, but then turns to argue that these sales occurred during periods of crisis (as in 1 Kgs 4:1-4, Isa 50:1, and Neh 5:1-5), and therefore should not be considered customary (7).

[374] Matthews and Benjamin, *Social World*, 25. Within the biblical corpus, Zelophehad's daughters' inheritance is a unique case. See Ben-Barak, *Inheritance*, 211.

[375] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters*, 2. For more on the *bēt ʿāb* and role of the father, see David J. Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001); Ignace J. Gelb, "Household and Family in Early Mesopotamia," in *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Edward Lipinski (Leuven: Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1979), 1-97.

and Benjamin privilege the covenant nature of membership into the Israelite family, and understand the father as more than the male biological originator, but as the one responsible for feeding and protecting the household.[376] This role is so important for the family structural integrity that, on the death of the head of the household, the eldest son would become the new *paterfamilias.*[377]

Marsman helps frame a status hierarchy among women in the ancient world. Within the family, wives and mothers were afforded more status than sisters, daughters, widows, and, lastly, orphans.[378] Daughters did not have a high status within the family because, instead of directing the actions of others, daughters followed the orders of their fathers, mothers, and other older women in the household. Daughters were uniquely under the legal authority of their fathers, and their own legal rights were restricted. For example, if a father had both sons and daughters in Ugarit as well as in Israel, daughters had no right to a share of the father's inheritance.[379]

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[376] Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel: 1250 - 587 B.C.E.* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 8. Matthews and Benjamin reference Meyers' *Discovering Eve,* and highlight the importance of blood relationships, but point to shared sociological experiences of members of households as the anthropological connecting mechanism. Matthews and Benjamin read with the ideology of the text when they frame the father in the image of the Creator: as one who exercised his authority to determine the management of the household farm and herd, and over life and death by adopting sons and daughters and resolving conflicts between them, hosting strangers, and designating heirs (10).

[377] Joseph Blenkinshopp, "The Family in First Temple Israel," in *Families in Ancient Israel*, ed. J. Blenkinshopp, L. G. Perdue, J. J. Collins, and C. Meyers (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 55.

[378] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 455-464. The role of wife is given the most attention in the itinerary texts of both Ugarit and ancient Israel, and Marsman notes that being married was the "normal state of affairs" for women. In her consideration of the role of sister, Marsman suggests that the honor of a girl was closely related to that of her father and brothers, such that the brothers had their own agenda for taking revenge on those who defiled both Dinah and Tamar. The brothers' affection for the sisters was secondary (460). Widows could be under the legal authority of their fathers-in-law in the same way daughters were under the authority of their fathers. Furthermore, while a widow did have usufructuary rights to her husband's land, she did not have the right to inherit the land from him (463). Finally, in both Ugaritic literature and the Hebrew Bible, it is the task of a family member or the king to protect and feed the orphan with no immediate patriarchal connection (464).

[379] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 462. Marsman adds that, in biblical Israel and probably Ugarit, only in the absence of sons did a daughter have the right to inherit (462).

The advent of the monarchy bifurcated the status landscape for men and women. Status plays out differently among royals and non-royals such that when Israel became a monarchical nation, the overall position of women shifted and the differences between non-royal and royal women became more pronounced. Royal kings establish laws that members of the entire community follow, and as already discussed in the previous chapter, members of the priestly and the merchant classes have more power than those of the peasant and artisan classes.

Beyond the immediate family in urban communities of non-royals, male monarchs, elites, ad hoc clusters of household heads, and clan elders maintained legal authority.[380] Elite males exercised legal authority over those around them. For example, an adoption tablet from Nuzi details one man's adoption of the son of another man who is indebted to him.[381] Not surprisingly, the most powerful males (generally the elite) benefited the most from the law.[382] For instance, the legal institution described in Deut 22:29 requires a man who violates a daughter to recompense the father fifty shekels, but does not compensate the daughter. The daughter must also marry her assailant.

Among royal women, the queen had the most status amid all women because she served as an intermediary between the king (who maintained the ultimate degree of status) and his subjects.[383] The queen exercised power over her own personnel and, with the consent of her husband, influenced affairs of the state. The following examples demonstrate how the power of

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[380] Knight, *Law, Power, and Justice*, 68.

[381] E. A. Speiser, "New Kirkuk Documents Relating to Family Laws," *The Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 10 (1928): 31-32.

[382] Knight, *Law, Power, and Justice*, 27.

[383] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 464.

a queen was related to and dependent upon her husband, the king in the biblical world.[384] When

King Ahasuerus gives Queen Esther permission to use his name and seal to issue a counter

decree that saves the lives of the Hebrews (Esther 8:7-8), she influences the affairs of the state.

Similarly when Queen Jezebel writes letters in King Ahab's name and seals them with his seal as

part of her campaign to kill Naboth (1 Kgs 21:8-11), she impacts lives beyond her immediate

family members. The status of the queen mother is similar to that of the queen. The queen

mother's son, the king, delegates her power to her, and as an advisor or counselor, she exercises

indirect power. One example of this indirect power is when Adonijah approaches Bathsheba to

ask if her son, King Solomon, will give him Abishag as a wife (1 Kgs 2:13-25).

Within the palace, additional wives and concubines had less status that queens and queen

mothers,[385] and princesses have the least status among royal women. Like other daughters, a

princess exists under the authority of her father, the king. Unlike other daughters, a princess has

no recourse. Because her father is the ultimate authority in the land, there is no one to represent

the interests of a princess should her interests conflict with those of her father. Nonetheless, as

the Ugaritic stories of Hariya and the biblical story of Michal demonstrate, royal daughters are

uniquely positioned as valuable marriage partners who helped cement national and international

relations.[386] As was the case with the men, royal daughters were afforded a higher class status

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[384] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 464.

[385] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 464-465. Marsman notes that the powerful men of the court used the king's additional wives and concubines as pawns. In times of war, a king would emphasize his claim to the throne by taking the royal women of his defeated enemy. As an example, Nathan reminds King David that when he assumed Saul's throne the Lord gave him Saul's wives along with all the other trappings of the monarchy (2 Sam 12:8). Lying with a king's concubine (as Absalom does in 2 Sam 16:21-22) was understood as a hostile claim to the throne.

[386] Marsman, *Women in Ugarit*, 465. In Egypt, Ramesses II married Hittite princesses; in Mari, King Zimri-Lim married his daughters to kings of city-states; the Hittite king, Muwatalli II married his sister, Massanauzzi, to one of his vassal kings; and Hattushili III gave his daughters in marriage to foreign rulers. In the Ugaritic text, *The Legend of Kirtu*, princess Hariya participated in the international marriage with Kirtu after he besieged the city. Within the biblical text, Michal was a pawn in the conflict between her father, King Saul, and David. For more information on princesses in international affairs of the ancient Near East, see Gay Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (London:

than non-royal daughters. For example, the princess of Egypt directs the activity of all the women around her; her handmaidens as well as that of the woman who served as wet nurse to the child she finds (Exod 2:5-9).

Among non-royals, it was not uncommon for women of a higher class to exercise power over women of a lower class in ancient societies. Oftentimes this class difference presents in the form of one woman directing or controlling the body of another. For example, an old Assyrian text includes a reference to Laqipum, who agrees to purchase a slave woman for her husband who may later dispose of her at his discretion.[387] In other examples, a Neo-Assyrian contract stipulates that a barren Ṣubietu shall give her slave girl to her husband to propagate,[388] and a portion of the Law of Hammurabi allows a *nadîtu* to give her female slave to her husband to produce offspring.[389] The biblical stories of Sarah, who exerted her status and directed the procreative activity of her slave girl, Hagar (Gen 16:1-3), and of Rachel, who gave her handmaiden, Bilhah, to Jacob (Gen 30:3-4) follow this hierarchical status model. To this understanding of women in the community, Knight adds that, because a local community's well

British Museum Press, 1993); Alan R. Schulman, "Diplomatic Marriage in the Egyptian New Kingdom," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 38.3 (1979): 177-193; Kenneth A. Kitchen and Benedict G. Davies, eds., *Ramesside Inscriptions* (Cambridge: Blackwell Reference, 2014); Bernard Frank Batto, *Studies on Women at Mari* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); Trevor Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín J. Sanmartín, eds., *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places: KTU*, 2nd enlarged ed. of Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit, 1976 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995).

[387] Julius Lewy, "On Some Institutions of the Old Assyrian Empire," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 27 (1956): 8-10.

[388] Benjamin Parker, "The Nimrud Tablets, 1952: Business Documents." *Iraq* 16.1 (1954): 37-39.

[389] William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger Jr., eds., *Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, COS 2; Accordance electronic ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 344. See also Law of Hammurabi §144.

being depended on the women's economic and social contributions, the standing of women within local village contexts was probably higher than it was at the national level.[390]

<center>Daughters and Systems of Power</center>

Throughout their narratives, daughters confront systems and institutions of power that are unsympathetic towards them, and this chapter is concerned with answering the question: what do daughters do when they encounter systems and institutions of power that are antagonistic? A neat categorization of daughters' responses to antagonistic power advances the idea that positioned beyond the nucleus of power, many daughters acquiesce and accommodate systems of power, even when they prove antagonistic. When Tamar fulfills her father's request that she report to her brother Amnon's house, obeys Amnon's order to follow him into his chambers, and acquiesces to her brother Absalom's desire that she not report her rape by Amnon, she supports the patriarchal agenda. This same categorization would purport that, despite the risk inherent in opposing those systems and institutions, some daughters disregard laws and contest traditions. With little access to power, and perhaps with no sense of or benefit from its formal systems and institutions, many daughters resist. The daughter, Rahab, might serve as an example of a daughter who opposes power when she misdirects the king's messengers who inquire about the Israelite spies. These daughters characters and their actions are much more layered and complex than a cursory reading of their narratives might suggest. For this reason, I choose not to force a categorical bifurcation by which some daughters are viewed as daughters of resistance and others are labeled daughters of accommodation. Instead, I contend that all daughters both accommodate and resist at some point. As an example, Miriam both accommodates *and* resisst

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[390] Knight, Law, Power, and Justice, 72.

antagonistic systems and institutions in her narratives. At some points in her narrative, Miriam aligns with systems and institutions of power, but she does not always acquiesce.

It is important to note that the biblical writer's concern in each instance is the affirmation of patriarchy and the advancement of the plot of the dominant (Israelite) story, which is driven by male characters. While daughters' acts of accommodation are prevelant, individual acts of resistance also appear and are affirmed by the narratives if they advance patriarchy's overaching interests. In other words, whether daughters accommodate or resist the conditions of their particular circumstances, they are rewarded when their actions affirm patriarchal agendas.

Daughter Responses to Antagonistic Power

Biblical daughters are complex characters. Their complexities make it difficult to craft a profile of them because they represent a broad spectrum of social status, experiences, and concerns. Moreover, the responses of these characters to adverse conditions is not at all predictable. When faced with antagonistic or unsympathetic vestiges of power, some biblical daughters resist. With no evidence that accommodating these systems will benefit them or aid in their achievement of particular goals, these daughters push back on systems and institutions. These daughters do not behave in ways that comport with the norms of biblical daughters. Such is the case in the story of Lot's daughters. Although these two daughters resist, they also accommodate power.

Lot's Daughters

In the story of Lot's daughters power is legitimated through tradition grounded in patriarchy, specifically male acts of hospitality and the marriage customs. Patriarchy in the form

of both gendered roles for members of the community and in the male drive to regulate

reproduction is evident in Gen 18. Males assume responsibility for acts of diplomacy and

regulate the sexual activity of women. Generally, the male head of the household invites guests

into the family home and arranges the marriages, which will produce sanctioned pregnancies.

However, the pregnancies of Lot's daughters are unacceptable because they do not become

mothers through sexual intercourse with husbands, but through incest with their father. These

daughters resist the power system when acts of hospitality prove antagonistic and when marriage

custom fails them.

Acts of Hospitality - The extension of hospitality to strangers is an act of power, and

George Coats, Sharon Pace Jeansonne, Laurence Turner, and Lyn Bechtel take up this theme in

the Gen 19 narrative.[391] Coats considers how the story of Lot functions in the larger narrative of

the patriarch, Abraham.[392] For Coats, Lot is a passive foil in the literary depiction of Abraham

and in his attempt at hospitality during his exchange with the citizens of Sodom on his porch.[393]

Coats argues convincingly for Lot as a foil of the righteous Abraham by juxtaposing elements of

hospitality in each character's narrative. As an example, the hero, Abraham, reacts to the three

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[391] George W. Coats, "The Curse in God's Blessing: Gen 12:1-4a in the Structure and Theology of the Yahwist," in *Die Botschaft und die Boten: Festschrift für Hans Walter Wolff zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hans Walter Wolff, Jörg Jeremias, and Lothar Perlitt (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 39-40; Sharon Pace Jeansonne, "The Characterization of Lot in Genesis," *Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 18.4 (1988): 123-129; and Lyn M. Bechtel, "A Feminist Reading of Genesis 19:1-11," in *Genesis: The Feminist Companion to the Bible*, Second Series, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 108-128.

[392] Coats is concerned with the function of Lot in the Abraham cycle, and therefore jettisons basic mentions of Lot in the work of the priestly writer as nothing more than citations based his upon genealogical connection and spatial proximity to Abram/Abraham. The priestly writer lists Lot as a descendant of Abram's father, Terah (Gen 11:27, 31), and counts him among those who accompany Abram when he departs Haran in Gen 12:4 and 5. The Yahwist highlights the tension between Abram and Lot in Gen 13, which causes the two wealthy men to separate. According to the theology of the Yahwist, this separation disconnects Lot from the Lord's blessing. Lot presents as a passive foil in Gen 14:12 when, as part of the enemy's capture and plunder of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, he and his goods are taken. In response, his herdsman uncle, Abram, leads a virtual army to heroically rescue Lot, his family, and his goods (Gen 14:16). For further reading on the theology of the Yahwist, see Coats' "The Curse in God's Blessing."

[393] Coats, "Lot: A Foil," 119.

strange visitors by running to meet them, humbly bowing down to them before extending an

offer of hospitality which includes water, foot-washing, rest and food. After the strangers grant

him permission, he then rushes quickly to his tent, instructs his wife, Sarai, to make cakes for the

guests, chooses a tender calf for his servant to prepare, and finally serves his guests a meal (Gen

18:2-8). In contrast, Lot simply rises to meet the two visitors to Sodom, bows as a sign of

respect and invites them to spend the night and wash their feet at his home. The two do not

consent immediately, but Lot presses them and go to his house where he prepares a feast which

includes unleavened bread, which they eat.

When confronted with the crisis of the pending destruction of Sodom, the righteous hero

Abraham stands before the Lord to negotiate for the delivery of the city.[394] When confronted

with the crisis of a city mob, Coats suggests that Lot responds to the threat as a host should. In

defense of his guests, Lot offers the crowd his two virgin daughter for their pleasure in exchange

for the safety of his guests (Gen 19:8).[395] However, the visitors who rescue the passive Lot from

the mob, strike members of the mob with blindness, and later lead Lot and his family out of

Sodom before its destruction are the heroes of the narrative. Lot must be saved by the very

guests he himself sought to protect.[396] Finally, unknowingly under the influence of wine, Lot

proves passive in the procreation of his sons, Ben-Ammi and Moab (Gen 19:31-38). While

Abram was a willing participant in the procreation of Ishmael and Isaac, Lot became a father via

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[394] Coats, "Lot: A Foil," 120. The imagery of Abram standing, seemingly face to face with the Lord in Gen 18: 22 enhances the portrayal of him as righteous.

[395] Coats, "Lot: A Foil," 121.

[396] Coats, "Lot: A Foil," 122.

passive means. Lot is a foil to Abraham's righteousness and a fool in contrast to Abraham's blessedness.[397]

In his treatment of Gen 19:30-38, Coats argues that Lot is a passive fool because he becomes the father of two sons without taking the initiative.[398] Coats marks the situation in the cave in the hills of Zoar as a plight in which Lot and his daughters are the sole survivors of a catastrophe that leaves the daughters with no man to impregnate them other than their father. Coats concludes that, whether worldwide or local, the destruction of Sodom was cosmic and left no man to impregnate the daughters.[399] And yet, while Coats paints a picture of devastation, he misses the opportunity to explore the implications for the possible degrees of devastation. If the daughters are survivors of worldwide destruction that leaves them as the only source of repopulating the world, their concern for Lot's progeny seems particularly foolhardy.[400] Progeny is important in a community, and if there is no one else on earth, there is no community. However, if the daughters are survivors of a local catastrophe, their concern for progeny and motherhood is less reckless. The daughters' act to initiate motherhood actually aligns with the power structure that ascribes a higher status to mothers than to other non-mothers in the community. When the patriarchal system which charges the father with the responsibility of transitioning the daughter into the household of a husband where she will eventually birth children fails them, the daughters usurp the male role and initiate motherhood on their own

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[397] Coats, "Lot: A Foil," 127. Coats also compares Lot to the anti-hero Levite of Judg 19, who saves himself by sacrificing his concubine to a mob; and to the incestuous Noah, who curses the offspring of his son, Shem (Gen 9:20-25).

[398] Coats, "Lot: A Foil," 125.

[399] Coats, "Lot: A Foil," 125.

[400] Coats, "Lot: A Foil," 125. Coats admits the idea of worldwide devastation may be hyperbolic, but points to this interpretation as paralleling the Noah tradition. Both Lot and Noah are drunk when they engage in incestuous relationships with their children.

terms. By usurping the male role and controlling their own sexuality, Lot's daughters present as models of resistance.

Coats is not the only scholar to propose Lot as a foil for Abraham. Jeansonne situates Coats' claim of Lot as a foil in the midst of the sympathetic interpretations of Lot offered by Claus Westermann, Bruce Vawter, and John Skinner.[401] Westermann argues that Lot's act on the porch was one of despair, while Vawter says that Lot was following the hospitality custom of the day, and Skinner excuses Lot's behavior because he demonstrates courage when he is hospitable in the face of the angry mob. In her treatment of Gen 19, Jeansonne examines how the biblical narrative employs the actions of Lot to advance the theological claim that God is merciful. She considers the narrator's presentation of Lot's distancing himself from Abraham as he evolves from a companion for Abraham in Gen 12 to an adversary in Gen 13 who must be rescued by Abraham in Gen 14, and is finally estranged from Abraham in Gen 19. Despite Lot's disregard for Abraham, Jeansonne argues, Lot benefits because of their relationship.[402]

Jeansonne reads Gen 13 and highlights the conflict as one of a material nature, which leads to strife between Abraham and Lot.[403] In many ways, the separation of Lot and Abraham ethically preserves Abraham's image and persuades the reader to imagine Lot as a villain with questionable actions. On the other hand, readers sympathize with Lot because, since no one is as good as Abraham, it is no wonder that Lot makes poor and questionable decisions and is duped into fatherhood.

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[401] See Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985); Bruce Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977); and John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (New York: Scribner, 1917).

[402] Jeansonne, "Characterization of Lot," 128.

[403] Jeansonne, "Characterization of Lot," 124. Larry Helver asserts that the primary significance of this separation is the elimination of Lot as heir to the covenant promise. See Larry R. Helyer, "The Separation of Abram and Lot: Its Significance in the Patriarchal Narratives," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 26 (1983): 77-88.

Jeansonne marks Lot as a villain compared to Abraham when she juxtaposes elements of the characters' acts of hospitality toward strangers. Whereas Abraham "ran" to meet his guests, Lot merely "rose." Abraham requests his visitors to accept his hospitality, but Lot's speech lacks the former's humility. Abraham's direct address to the visitors offers them both rest and food, but Lot's words mention rest alone. Abraham's elaborate meal and Lot's simple unleavened bread suggests that Abraham offered a feast while Lot hastily offered a simple meal.[404]

Importantly, in narratives such as the one in which Lot offers his daughters to the mob, even when the daughters are not present, a male controls their economic production in the form of virginity; in this case, their father attempts to use it to barter with the members of his community. In her treatment of the hospitality theme found in the text, Jeansonne explains that an evaluation of Lot's character is heavily dependent upon how one understands his offering his daughters as substitute victims for the messengers.[405] Jeansonne is unambiguous in her read of the intimidation scene as the entire male populace demands to sexually brutalize the visitors, and in her claim that "rape is unequivocally condemned."[406] Nevertheless, Jeansonne could have done more with her observation that "the reader is led to consider whether Lot's actions are motivated by a desire to be hospitable, or for less exalted reasons" and could have pressed the issue of homosexual rape.[407] Had she done so, Jeansonne may have concluded that Lot's offer was never going to fulfill the same-sex desires of the male mob. This interpretation of Lot would

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[404] Laurence A. Turner suggests that Lot's words and actions (i.e., his use of "my lords" to address his visitors; his use of the phrase, "I pray you"; and his reference to his home as "your servant's house") as positive associations with Abraham. Instead of a contrast to Abraham, Turner interprets Lot as a favorable comparison to the patriarch. See Laurence A. Turner, "Lot as Jekyll and Hyde: A Reading of Genesis 18-19," in *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield*, ed. David J. A. Clines, Stephen E. Fowl, and Stanley E. Porter (Sheffield: JSOT, 1990), 93.

[405] Jeansonne, "Characterization of Lot," 126.

[406] Jeansonne, "Characterization of Lot," 127.

[407] Jeansonne, "Characterization of Lot," 126.

support her characterization of him as less capable than Abraham. While Abraham shrewdly assesses and meets the needs of his visitors, Lot misreads the crowd's motives and offers an unacceptable substitution.

In relation to the daughters and their ultimate position in the community, Jeansonne does not challenge the sons-in-law's actions.[408] When the sons-in-law do not join Lot's family when they flee Sodom, the sons-in-law ostensibly remove any accountability for Lot. Lot is no longer accountable for his actions because the men who could hold him accountable, the husbands of his daughters, are not present when Lot and the daughters take up residence in the hills of Zoar. Furthermore, with no husbands, the daughters are vulnerable in a patriarchal society that ascribes power to males. When God kills Lot's wife on the way out of Sodom, the daughters also lose maternal protection.

Coates and Jeansonne do not fully attend to the idea that Lot's offer of hospitality is inhospitable towards the daughters. In her treatment of the first part of the narrative, Bechtel argues that, when read from a group-orientation perspective, different insights emerge relative to homosexuality and the role of women. Bechtel explains that orientation, a source of identity, is the degree of bonding within an organization such as a household or society.[409] In highly group-oriented societies, individuals have a great bond to an organization, and they function to benefit the group. In individual-orientated cultures, which are often marked by larger societies that imbue its members with a sense of independence, identity stems from the self.[410]

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[408] Jeansonne, "Characterization of Lot," 127. Jeansonne also does not consider the implications for the number of daughters. I have already treated this in Chapter III, in which I conclude that Lot has one set of daughters who were betrothed to be married, but never marry because their fiancés either leave them behind when they flee, or perish in Sodom's destruction.

[409] Bechtel, "A Feminist Reading," 109.

[410] Bechtel, "A Feminist Reading," 110.

In her analysis, Bechtel misses the opportunity to examine margin characters in group-oriented societies. Had she done so, her feminist read could have centered on the daughters. She could have explored the question: if the outsiders are threats, what are margin people? How do group-orientated societies deal with, approach, treat and handle margin characters? I offer that these societies overlook margin characters in the same way Bechtel overlooked Lot's daughters. The problem with group- and individual-oriented schema is that it forces such a dichotomy. Daughters—who are liminal, marginal—cannot be accommodated in a dichotomous system.

Furthermore, Lot is not really a margin character. As a male in a patriarchal world, he is an outsider positioned at the gate. The fact that he invites the messengers into his home suggests that he has claimed a space within the community. And yet, an outsider living in the community is still an outsider, and may be a larger threat than an outsider residing outside of the community. This is particularly important in the case of the daughters, whose gender and non-mother statuses further minimize their power as outsiders. Bechtel is right when she claims the daughters are margin characters.

And yet, Bechtel only deals with the first part of the story of Lot's daughters. However, if we carry her outsider schema through the narrative, Lot's daughters maintain their unsure, ambivalent, and ambiguous positions as margin people throughout. The daughters are unsure because, as has already been considered, it is not clear to the reader if they are married or not. The daughters are ambivalent in that they are seen in in-between locales: on the way out of Sodom, or on the way to Zoar. They are also ambivalent characters because they are in a cave, but not firmly positioned in the community. The entire incest experience highlights the daughters' ambiguous position because, as a result, they become mothers and sisters to their

son/brothers. They birth Ben-Ammi and Moab, which makes them mothers, but because they share the same father, they are also siblings.

According to Bechtel, women are valued in group-oriented societies because they are builders of the community. Mothers do not necessarily constitute all women. And yet, as non-mothers, daughters are on the margin. What Bechtel does not consider is the fact that, as non-mothers, daughters may be potential builders, but they have not demonstrated their building abilities. In this way, the daughters are unsure. At any rate, however, Lot's family is on the margins, and Bechtel misses the point that the reader cannot anticipate contributions of margin-dwellers. Coupled with an ethos of ambiguity and ambivalence in the narrative, it is easy to lose track of daughters, and readers are forced to make guesses about them.

Marriage Customs - In the patriarchal world of the biblical text, society placed high value on maternity and motherhood for women. Being a mother was the most prestigious position for a woman in the ancient world.[411] As such, Lot's daughters seek maternity, and in so doing align with the societal norms of women in a patriarchal society. The family dynamics of Lot's daughters suggest that they are in a precarious position. Their father demonstrates his willingness to sacrifice them in the name of male hospitality, and later encourages their fiancés to abandon them.[412] In a world in which a father's major responsibility is to transfer daughters into the household of other males (i.e., husbands), Lot's actions jeopardize the future of his family.

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[411] Marsman, *Women*, 191. Marsman points to the act of bearing children as ensuring the continuity of generations, and to the belief that barrenness was considered a sin in both Mesopotamia and biblical Israel.

[412] For treatments of Lot's offering of his daughters as an act of hospitality towards the messengers, see Lyn M. Bechtel, "A Feminist Reading of Genesis 19:1-11"; Johanna Stiebert, *Fathers and Daughters in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Esther Fuchs, "Who is Hiding the Truth? Deceptive Women and Biblical Androcentrism," in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 137-144. Bechtel offers that, as an outsider, Lot tries to secure favor through hospitality, but his offer of two non-threatening, marginal women is incongruent and totally inappropriate (123).

When the patriarchal system (which should have secured husbands for them) fails, Lot's daughters usurp a male role. The daughters find themselves in a cave with their father and "not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the world" (Gen 19:31). When they realize that the systems and institutions have failed them, Lot's daughters act autonomously and respond by initiating their own pregnancies.[413] In this way, the daughters usurp a male role and reject the patriarchal drive to control reproduction. This act threatens to displace males and requires corrective action. The biblical writer responds by disconnecting the defiant daughters from the Israelite community by making them the matriarchs of two foreign communities: the Moabites and the Ammonites. Despite their acts of resistance, Lot's daughter's final acts serve the interests of patriarchy. According to the patriarchical power system, motherhood is the ultimate role for women and Lot's daughters become mothers at the end of their narrative. In the end, even the biblical writer, who never names the daughters and thereby minimizes their narrative importance, controls their bodies by having them birth sons. In this way, Lot's daughters also accommodate systems of power.

In much the same way the resistance of Lot's daughters seems to eclipse their acts of accommodation, so do Leah's acts of accommodation overshadow her acts of resistance. With no legal authority or control of economic surplus, like many biblical daughters, Leah aligns with systems and institutions of power by upholding traditions and abiding by laws. Leah accommodates systems of power as if to rely on the system to work on her behalf.

Leah

In Gen 20, Jacob meets Rachel at a well and falls in love with her. Jacob explains that he is one of her kinsmen, and Rachel runs to her father, Laban, who invites Jacob to his home. Jacob remains in

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[413] Though not critical to this investigation, Lot's daughters speak to each other.

the household, and when Laban asks him to quote a price for his labor, Jacob negotiates seven years of service in exchange for Rachel. Laban agrees to Jacob's marriage terms, but then deceives Jacob into working seven more years by placing his first-born daughter, Leah, in Jacob's marriage bed instead of Rachel. In Gen 29:16-17, the first-born daughter of Laban is described as having lovely, weak, soft, or lazy eyes.[414] And yet, as if the two daughters were interchangeable, Laban gives Leah (instead of Rachel) to Jacob, and Jacob consummates his marriage with her (Gen 29:23).[415] The following morning, Jacob complains that Laban has given him the wrong daughter. In response, Laban explains that the custom of their community requires the first-born daughter to marry first. Jacob concedes and renegotiates to work for Laban for another seven years in order to earn Rachel as a wife.

The story of Leah as a daughter is brief because the narrative quickly moves to her becoming a wife and mother. Within Leah's story, however, the patriarchal traditions of the father's negotiating marriage contracts and the male concern to control the female body conscript power. Laban does not consult Leah regarding her desire to marry, nor does he make her aware of his plan to substitute her for her sister, Rachel, on the wedding night. Leah never speaks, nor does she take any action suggesting that she challenges the patriarchal authority of her father or the tradition of the community in any way. In response to the systems and institutions of power, Leah acts in obedience to her father.

Although Leah has all of the indicators of a nonresistant female character in that she is obedient to the patriarch and remains silent, she also resists systems and institutions of power. It is because of Leah that Jacob must work seven more years for Laban in order to earn Rachel in

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[414] Gen 29:16-17. Phyllis S. Kramer, "Biblical Women that Come in Pairs: The Use of Female Pairs as a Literary Device in the Hebrew Bible," in *Genesis: The Feminist Companion to the Bible,* Second Series, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 222. While the use of the term in Hebrew is unclear (and variously translates as "lovely," "soft," "heavy," or "weak,"), Kramer suggests that the term is polarizing and allows readers to interpret Leah as bad or negative compared to Rachel. This interpretation draws on the description of Leah's eyes using a term "which is taken to mean she is lacking in beauty, on Jacob's apparently regarding her as less desirable, and on other subtleties."

[415] In Gen 29:23, Jacob יבא אליה, or "went in" to Leah. The verb, בוא, (to "come," "come in," or "go in") is taken to mean to have sex with.

marriage (Gen 29:26-28). In this way, the writer uses Leah to delay the satisfaction of the

Israelite hero, Jacob. As an obstacle to the success of the Israelite hero in his quest to marry the

daughter he loves, Leah proves resistant[416].

Dinah

The patriarchal traditions of the fathers negotiating marriage contracts, the male drive to

control the female body and the general concern to honor males all conscript power in Dinah's

story.

Marriage Customs - As is the case in the narratives of Leah, Rachel, and Rebekah, the

father, Jacob, assumes the responsibility of negotiating the terms of his daughter's marriage

agreement. Importantly, Shechem recompenses Jacob because the sexual assault violates the

father's rights. Aside from establishing intermarriages between the two families, Jacob receives

control of economic surplus in the form of access to the marketplace and land tenure in the

region of Shechem. This increase in Jacob's power base is particularly impressive because Jacob

is not a member of the Shechemite community. However, unlike the cases of Leah, Rachel (Gen

29:22-30), and Rebekah (Gen 24), there is no textual evidence to suggest that Dinah is aware of

the marriage plans.

Control of the Female Body - Contrary to van Wolde's argument that ענה does not denote

rape, and Sarah Shectman's claim that Shechem defiles or debases Dinah but does not rape her,

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[416] Though beyond the scope of this dissertation, as a mother, Leah resists patriarchal power when she subverts her husband's authority by using mandrakes to control reproduction in Gen 30:14ff. Ths use of mandrakes as an aphrodisiac to promote fertility defies Jacob's authrotiy to control the bodies of Leah and Rachel. See Amy Kalmanofsky, *Dangerous Sisters of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 28.

in this instance Dinah is raped by Shechem.[417] Yael Shemesh challenges the claim that the word

ענה is non-violent and instead serves as an evaluative term in a juridical context denoting a

spatial movement downwards in a social sense—in short, that it should be translated as

"debase."[418] Instead, Shemesh considers the semantic field of the verb in the Hebrew Bible

canon in the piel stem, and concludes that ענה is always negative, involving pressure and distress

in non-sexual contexts; additionally, it is almost always a consensus that, when it is used in a

sexual sense, it refers to rape.[419]

Shemesh interprets Dinah's narrative as a story of rape and asserts that one problem with

scholars like Fleishman is that it does not consider the female perspective. Shemesh observes

that, when he comes to define rape, Fleishman's standard is the man's intentions concerning the

women: is it simply a case of satisfying his own lust, or does he in fact entertain an honorable

intention to marry the woman?[420] Shemesh offers a viable critique to the long-standing

interpretation of this and similar narratives as she challenges the reader to consider the

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[417] See Chapter III. Sarah Shectman, *Women in the Pentateuch: A Feminist and Source-Critical Analysis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 101-102. Shectman reads Gen 34 as a love story developed from two distinct traditions. In one tradition, Dinah is marked as the daughter of Leah (v 1), Shechem has sex and debases Dinah, Jacob and his sons negotiate with Hamor, and Simeon and Levi attack the city. In the other tradition, Dinah is Jacob's daughter (vss 7, 13, 25, and 27), Shechem wants to marry Dinah, Jacob and his sons negotiate with Shechem, and all of Jacob's sons attack the city.

[418] Shemesh, "Rape is Rape," 4.

[419] Shemesh, "Rape is Rape," 5-6. Shemesh points to Gen 15:13 and 16:6, Exod 22:21ff, 2 Sam 7:19, 2 Kgs 17:20, and Ps 102:24 as examples of *'innah* denoting rape when used in a sexual sense. Shemesh concedes that Deut 22:23ff challenges the notion of ענה as sexual because the general interpretation of this law situates the action as part of a seduction rather than a rape. Shemesh counters the prevailing perspective with the argument that the girl is punished because she does not cry out, not because she consents to the intercourse. Shemesh supports this claim with research on rape that shows women often do not fight back or call out for help because of fear of retaliation by their rapists. Here, Shemesh's application of modern rape research does not align with the context of the biblical world. Modern women in industrialized countries exercise a degree of autonomy and self-interest that is missing in the depiction of ancient women in the biblical world.

[420] Shemesh, "Rape is Rape," 13.

perspective and experience of the rape victim (most often a female) when deciding whether the act is truly rape.

Shemesh's reading is useful, as she offers compelling intertextual support for the interpretation of Dinah's narrative as one of rape. Specifically, Shemesh argues that the attempted rape foiled by Lot's visitors in Gen 19, the rape of the concubine of Gibeah in Judg 19, and the rape of Tamar by Amnon in 2 Sam 13 all share plot parallels and linguistic similarities with Dinah's narrative. [421] For example, in all four stories, the rape occurs in the rapist(s)' own territory. In Dinah's case, Shechem, the prince of the region, seizes her when she is on her way to visit with the women of Shechem. Additionally, the outcome of many of these rape narratives often triggers the destruction of the rapist(s)' community, and the revenge is often enacted between men. In the case of Dinah's story, her rape serves as the catalyst for the destruction of the city of Shechem as her brothers kill all the men "because their sister had been defiled" (Gen 34:25-27). Finally, these plot equivalences are reinforced by linguistic similarities in the Hebrew verb ענה and the use of the noun נבלה in the narratives.[422]

Shechem's reading of Dinah's rape also considers the ability of Jacob and his sons to control the female bodies under their charge. Similarly, Meir Sternberg reads Dinah's narrative with patriarchal concerns for the brothers. He argues that the narrator weaves a story designed to elicit sympathy for them as victims because Shechem's act is a transgression against the brothers. Sternberg also contrasts the brothers' emotional response with Jacob's silence in Gen 34:5-7,considers the brothers' concern that their sister's marrying an uncircumcised man would be dishonorable, and finally distances Simeon and Levi (the two sons of Dinah's mother, Leah)

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[421] Shemesh, "Rape is Rape," 19-20.

[422] Shemesh, "Rape is Rape," 20. The stories of Dinah (Gen 34), the Gibeahite concubine (Judg 19 and 20), and Tamar (2 Sam 13) employ verbs with the root ענה. Gen 34, Judg 19, and 2 Sam 13 refer to Dinah, the concubine, and Tamar as a, נבלה, respectively.

from the group of brothers in an effort to further stress the need for sympathy towards the

brothers.[423] In spite of this close reading, however, Sternberg's portrayal of the brothers of

victims is not wholly sustainable because it requires readers to sympathize with the brothers

despite their deception and acts extreme violence. It is difficult to accept deceptive and violent

characters as victims.

To Sternberg's treatment of Jacob's silent response to the news of his daughter's abuse,

Dana Fewell and David Gunn consider alternative possibilities. Instead of reading his silence as

a gross failure as the head of the household, Fewell and Gunn suggest that he deliberately waits

to consult with his sons, or at least refrains from action until all the men of the house are

present.[424] However, this portrayal of Jacob as cautious does not comport his personality in

other portions of the Hebrew Bible. Jacob's grasping of his brother's heel in utero (Gen 25:26)

suggests that he is aggressive. His deceptive acquisition of the birthright and blessing of the first

born (Gen 25:29-34 and 27:1-29), and his manipulation of Laban's flock's reproductive practices

(Gen 30:25-43) also suggest that he is a man of action. Furthermore, in Gen 32 Jacob wrestles

and earns the new name, Israel, because he has striven with God and humans and has prevailed

(Gen 32:28). Jacob is aggressive, manipulative, and adversarial. He is not cautious.

Male Honor - Fewell and Gunn agree with Sternberg's conclusion that the lack of

circumcision of the Shechemites challenges the brothers' honor.[425] According to the patriarchal

customs, however, any honor restored to Dinah's family goes to Jacob as the male head of the

household. Furthermore, the other elements of the marriage agreement elevate Jacob's status

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[423] Sternberg, *Poetics*, 459, 468, and 472. Fewell and Gunn take issue with Sternberg's argument here. For them, no sympathy should be afforded to two men who would massacre an entire city for the sake of one (Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance," 205).

[424] Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance," 198.

[425] Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance," 202.

within the social strata of the region because he gains legal standing and control of economic surplus. But honor is not a concern for Jacob. What neither Sternberg nor Fewell and Gunn consider is that having non-Israelites circumcise themselves is tantamount to grafting foreigners into the community. Reading with the ideology of text, foreigners must display some great act of allegiance to the God of the Israelite community in order to earn a place in the community. For example, Rahab articulates her trust in the Israelite God and acts to support the efforts of Joshua and his army in Judg 2. Furthermore, this type of extension of community by proxy generally occurs when the Israelites are in the dominant position. Rahab is grafted into the community after the Israelites take Jericho. Such is not the case for Jacob and his family. They are outsiders in the Shechemite community. Although Hamor's offer to share resources (women, goods, and land) is admirable, it is wholly unreasonable to expect the Shechemites to abandon their traditions and become Israelites. The claim that this act is designed to restore family honor attributable to the brothers is imperfect.

Finally, the writer distances Simeon and Levi, the two sons of Dinah's mother, Leah, from the group of brothers in an effort to further stress the need for sympathy towards them. Sternberg juxtaposes Simeon and Levi's principled response to the degradation of their sister with the self-serving pillaging of the others brothers. Fewell and Gunn acknowledge Sternberg's argument is defensible, but point out that his case could be stronger. For Fewell and Gunn, Simeon and Levi's sense of poetic justice, exemplified in the circumcision trick, might well demand the defilement of the Shechemite women in return for the defilement of their sister.[426]

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[426] Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance," 205. Sternberg (466-467) and Fewell and Gunn (204) all postulate a poetic justice associated with the circumcision requirement. They claim that, because Shechem's penis started the trouble, it is only right that the penis be the site of its conclusion.

In their drive to interrogate the brothers, Sternberg, Fewell, and Gunn acknowledge the silence and silencing of Jacob. Throughout Dinah's story, her brothers collectively assume the role of patriarch. This shifting of roles is not unexpected as, in this narrative, Dinah is most often referred to as a אחות. The brother's eclipse the father, but the daughter instigates the controversy by usurping a male role. Specifically, Dinah's actions do not comport with those customary for woman because, in her going to visit with the other (foreign) women, she usurps the male role of diplomat. Matthews and Benjamin charge the father with hosting strangers,[427] generic admonitions to the people of Israel to welcome, love, or care for strangers (Exod 23:9; Lev 19:33-34, 24:22; Deut 10:19; Jer 22:3; Ezek 47:21-23; Mal 3:5), and the narratives of Abraham at the oaks of Mamre (Gen 18), of Lot at the gate of Sodom (Gen 19), and of Laban (Gen 24) suggest that engaging strangers is a male function. The idea that women do not proactively engage strangers or foreigners may have its root in the public/private dichotomy that undergirds the inside/outside debate examined in Chapter 1; however, the stories of Jael, who goes out to meet Sisera outside of her husband's tent in Judg 4:18; Abigail, who sets out to meet David and his men in 1 Sam 25:18; and the wealthy woman who decides to build a room for the prophet, Elisha, in 2 Kgs 4:10 complicate the notion that women do not engage strangers. While Kass, Frymer-Kensky, and Brenner argue that Dinah's act of *going out* to visit with the women of the region made her vulnerable because women are not safe in exterior spaces, the larger issue is that she usurped the gendered role of diplomacy.[428] In return for this transgression, Dinah fades into the background of her own story.

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[427] Matthews and Benjamin, *Social World*, 8.

[428] See Kass, "Regarding Daughters and Sisters," 31; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading*, 176-177; and Athalya Brenner, *I Am,* 25.

Esther Fuchs argues that the rape of Dinah removes her from the patriarchal genealogical landscape and subsequent concerns of inheritance. The function of the rape therefore becomes clear in view of the problems a female tribe poses within a patriarchal framework. Stigmatizing Dinah and disposing of her through the narrative solves the problem of a tribal ancestress.[429] Dinah's motivation is never disclosed, her point of view is never described, her response to her assault is never detailed, and her voice is never heard. Readers are left to wonder how this daughter lived out her life after her brothers decimated her rapist's town. However, leaving Dinah's story unresolved is not the only way to address this legacy problem. Dinah and her offspring could be jettisoned from Jacob's patrimony and tribal legacy by exogamous marriage (this is the exact thing the elders worry about in Num 36), spinsterhood (just as Tamar lives out her days in her brother's house in 1 Sam 13), or death (as the death of Jephthah's daughter ostensibly ended any hopes of a family legacy in Judg 11).

Many of the elements of Dinah's story point to her as a daughter who accommodates systems and institutions of power that do not always operate in her interests. Dinah relocates to Shechem's house in an act that signals her acquiescence to the marriage and marriage terms negotiated by her father and brothers, and she is overpowered by Shechem's drive to control her body when he seizes her and lays with her by force (Gen 34:2). In all of this, Dinah remains silent. Dinah's silence however, betrays her portrayal as a daughter who only accommodates. When Dinah goes out to visit the women of the region in Gen 34:1, she usurps the male role of diplomat. This act defies social convention and resists traditions that reserve diplomacy for males. Dinah both accommodates and resists.

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[429] Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 223.

Pharaoh's Daughter

Both legal mechanisms and tradition legitimate power in Exod 2. Beyond patriarchy, tradition presents as the male desire to control reproduction, and the social customs associated with class The Pharaonic decree serves as a legal mechanism through which power is legitimated. Patriarchal convention calls for the alignment with the needs and wants of the male head of the household. That the male head of household is, indeed, the head of the entire country intensifies this convention. As Pharaoh, the daughter's father stands as the ultimate authority in the land. The Pharaoh is the political, religious, and economic leader of the entire Egyptian community.[430] As such, he wields power over everyone. The pharaoh is the final adjudicator of the law: his commands become law, and he commands the military. Furthermore, related to Pharaoh's absolute authority in the land is the notion of patriarchy. As a daughter, the princess should comply with the directives of her father, but she does not. As a member of the Egyptian community, Pharaoh's daughter should follow the royal commands of the Pharaoh. When she rescues the newborn Hebrew boy from the river, Pharaoh's daughter doubly resists the power systems legitimated by patriarchy.

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[430] Ronald J. Leprohon considers the institution of kingship in Pharaonic Egypt and concludes that as chief justice, the Egyptian king was considered the fount of all law and thus the foundation of moral righteousness, the supreme high priest who stood as a link between gods and men, and a strong sovereign who protected his nation against enemies (273). In many ways, the Egyptian king was regarded as an embodiment of divinity (693). Importantly, Murnane points out that the term "pharaoh," the title by which the Egyptian king is known in the Bible, literally means "big house," and it originally referred to the palace (693). For more on the role of Pharaoh in ancient Egypt see Ronald J. Leprohon, "Royal Ideology and State Administration in Pharaonic Egypt," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack M. Sasson (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 273-287; William J. Murnane, "The History of Ancient Egypt: An Overview," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack M. Sasson (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006) 691-717; Kenneth A. Kitchen, "Pharaoh Ramesses II and His Times," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack M. Sasson (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 763-744; Peter A. Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs: The Reign-by-Reign Record of the Rulers and Dynasties of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994); Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses II, King of Egypt* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1983); and Christine El Mahdy, *Tutankhamen: The Life and Death of a Boy-King* (London: Headline, 1999).

Male Control of Reproduction - Pharaoh's daughter resists the patriarchal drive to control reproduction vis-à-vis the female body when she becomes a mother. Based on a comparative analysis of extra biblical material, Brevard Childs concludes that Pharaoh's daughter becomes a mother to Moses.[431] Childs begins by outlining the sequence of events that establish the parallel relationship between a Sumerian-Akkadian text and the Hebrew narrative. In both instances, a child is found, recognized as one without parental oversight, delivered to a wet nurse for a set wage, weaned, returned to its owner, and finally adopted.[432] Childs points to a common practice in which ancient Near Eastern aristocrats hire wet nurses to suckle and raise children during a stipulated period. After the period of employment, the nurse would return the child to the aristocrat, who would then raise the child. An Old Babylonian text details how a child was sold to a wet nurse for a *mārūtum* (legal term for adoption) because the mother was unable to meet the payment for *tarbītum* (legal term for wet nurse duties).[433] This example establishes the legal principle that affords the right of possession to the one who pays for the child's upbringing.[434] In the story of Moses, that right belongs to Pharaoh's daughter.

J. Cheryl Exum adds that, though no laws about adoption appear in the biblical legal corpus, foreign contexts like the ones detailed by Childs support the claim that Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses as her son.[435] Exum notes that the story ends with the naming of the child by the princess, which may be a sign of her claim to the child. Customarily, the mother

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[431] Brevard Childs, "The Birth of Moses," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84.2 (1965): 109-122. Childs suggests that the naming of the child after its weaning period may be part of the traditional sequence in the act of adoption, but admits that this is uncertain (112).

[432] Childs, "The Birth of Moses," 111.

[433] Childs, "The Birth of Moses," 112.

[434] Childs, "The Birth of Moses," 112.

[435] J. Cheryl Exum, "You Shall Let Every Daughter Live," in *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy,* ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 37-61.

named the child.[436] Pharaoh's daughter is unique in that there is no mention of a husband who would serve as a father alongside her.[437] Pharaoh's daughter becomes a mother with no male interaction. Thus, she negates the male role in reproduction.

Class Concerns - Tradition presents in Pharaoh's daughter's story by way of social customs associated with class. Beginning in Exod 2:3, readers know the girl is not part of the royal entourage, but Pharaoh's daughter engages her as if she is under her direct authority. The princess understands that her royal status gives her power over all non-royals in the land, and especially over non-royals who share her gender.

In Egyptian society, Pharaoh's declaration is law; therefore, when Pharaoh's daughter circumvents the decree and protects the newborn Hebrew boy, she resists legal authority. Pharaoh's daughter acts in direct opposition to the decree of the King of Egypt. Although Pharaoh's command (Exod 1:22) did not include stated punishments, it is reasonable to assume that those who did not obey the demands of the Pharaoh would be punished severely. As a princess, Pharaoh's daughter's acts of resistance are overt, but she conspires with Miriam, whose acts of resistance are covert. Importantly, while Pharaoh's daughter's resists her father and, by extension, Egyptian patriarchy, the writer affirms her acts of defiance because they support the Israelite agenda of protecting the one who would eventually become the savior of those Israelites enslaved by Pharaonic Egypt. In this way, the Egyptian princess both accommodates and resists power.

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[436] Exum, "Let Every Daughter Live," 56.

[437] While the woman's adoption is anomaly, it is not uncommon for males to adopt in the biblical world. Childless Abram articulates the custom of male adoption in Gen 15:2-3, and Sheshan adopts the servant Jatha as a son who marries his daughter in 1 Chron 2:34-41. Ben Barak (*Inheritance by Daughters,* 86) also offers that it was not uncommon in a household without sons for the father to adopt a son-in-law into it, as is the case of Barzaillai in Ezra 2:61 (Neh 7:63).

Miriam

Miriam encounters systems and institutions of power legitimated by tradition.[438] Miriam navigates power in the for of social customs related to class status, and she manages patriarchal concerns of gendered roles. With no regard for prescribed social boundaries designed to control her, Miriam takes on the role of the princess' maids, disregards her subordinate Hebrew standing, and ignores the customs associated with her non-royal status. Miriam waits to be spoken to and offers a solution to the princess' problem when she says, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" (Exod 2:7). Young Miriam makes her recommendation in a form of a question, not in the form of a statement, which conveys the appropriate amount of deference to the Egyptian royal. The social order dictated that Hebrews were deferential to Egyptians, and non-royals were certainly submissive to royals. Yet, when the opportunity presents itself, Miriam politely offers a solution to the person in power,[439] resisting the control of her non-Egyptian and non-royal status.

Gendered Roles - Throughout the biblical record, women celebrate the triumphs of males. Miriam aligns with the patriarchal agenda when she celebrates male triumphs and engages in celebration appropriate for women when men achieve victories. In the biblical world, women dance in celebration of Israelite victory in battle. Similarly, Miriam leads the women in dance

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[438] Miriam also encounters systems of power authenticated by legal mechanisms. I have addressed this topic in my treatment of Pharaoh's daughter; however, here I note that to the extent that she participates in a secret scheme to ensure the livelihood of her younger Hebrew brother after the King of Egypt commands his people to kill the Hebrew boys by throwing them all into the Nile River, Miriam navigates legal mechanisms of power. She continues to defy the law of the land when she ensures that her newborn brother is nourished through a wet nurse, and her actions undoubtedly extended the life of the Hebrew boy.

[439] J. Cheryl Exum, "Second Thoughts about Secondary Characters: Women in Exodus 1.8-2.10," in *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 53-55. Exum highlights the quick thinking of young Miriam, whose vital speech, offered without hesitation, contains a daring proposal for Pharaoh's daughter.

after the demise of Pharaoh's army in Exodus 15.20-21.[440] As a young woman, she also speaks

to the congregation when she sings her victory song,

It is also at this juncture that Miriam resists the traditions of exclusive male leadership.

Beginning in Exod 15:20, Miriam leads the community in a song of victory. She sings and the

women follow in her dancing and celebration. In this way, Miriam resists the social system that

ascribes leadership roles only to males. After the Israelites escape Pharaoh's army and walk on

dry ground through the Red Sea, Miriam sings the victory song. However, by centering her voice

and leading the song, the biblical writer reduces her contribution to a truncated echo of Moses'

song; [441] however, Miriam's leadership is undeniable. She grabs the tambourine and all the

women follow her lead and begin making music and dancing.[442]

The patriarchy of the community and of the biblical writer no doubt prohibited Miriam

from singing first. Phyllis Trible argues that the repetition of Miriam's singing after Moses

suggests that her contribution is derivative while his is original.[443] Later, in Num 12:2, Miriam

(along with her brother, Aaron) challenges the exclusive leadership position of Moses. In

response, the deity strikes Miriam with a skin disease that requires her to remain outside the

camp for seven days. Specifically, Miriam offers herself as a viable candidate for formal

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[440] Other examples of women dancing to the return of heroes include Jephthah's daughters (Judg 11:34), the women greeting David and King Saul after the defeat of the Philistine (1 Sam 18:6), and the psalmist's description of the festal procession into the sanctuary (Ps 68:26).

[441] Miriam's one verse song (Exod 15:21) seems like a refrain to Moses' song of praise for Yahweh's victory (Exod 15:1-19).

[442] This communal response does not happen when Moses sings. Moses *sings with* the Israelites, but Miriam assumes a leadership position and *sings to* the gathering. In so doing, she resists the notion that only men can be leaders.

[443] Phyllis Trible, "Bringing Miriam out of the Shadows," in *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 171. For additional treatments of Miriam's song, see J. Gerald Janzen, "Song of Moses, Song of Miriam: Who is Seconding Whom?," in *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 185-199; Rita J. Burns, *"Has the Lord Indeed Spoken Only Through Moses?" A Study of the Biblical Portrait of Miriam* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); and Athalya Brenner-Idan, *The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative* (London: Bloomsbury), 2015.

leadership when, while camped at Hazeroth, she asserts that the Lord speaks through her as well as Moses (Num 12:2). Miriam usurps the prescribed gendered role of community leader when she suggests that Moses is not the only one to whom the Lord speaks. Although she and Aaron made the claim, Aaron is not punished because, as a male, he does not threaten the gendered power structure. In response, the male deity corrects Miriam by striking her with a skin disease that makes her unclean for seven days while the community waits. As such, Miriam resists a social system that only ascribes leadership to males, and attracts loyal followers who mimic her actions and submit to her delayed travel schedule.

An interesting pattern emerges when the stories of Miriam are read as a group. When Miriam is surrounded by other women, her safety is certain. When she is not surrounded by women, or when she is in male-dominant spaces, her safety is challenged. Throughout the biblical text, daughters are safe when they are surrounded by other women, when they are in the company of women—those instances in which the narrative explicitly demonstrates or implicitly suggests that there are more than two women are present. Though daughters are surrounded by other women in female-exclusive spaces such as birthing areas and those communal areas set aside for women during their menses, very few of their narratives unfold in these spaces.

For example, in the stories of Miriam, the daughter is safe when she is surrounded by the royal retinue near the river (Exod 2), and when the women join her in song and dance after the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod 15). It is only when Miriam stands as the only woman that she suffers. In Num 12, the Lord summons Miriam and her brothers out of the tent of meeting and strikes only her with a skin disease. Similarly, Jephthah's daughter is safe when she is surrounded by other women at Mizpah who come out to welcome the victorious warriors (Judg 11:34), and when she and her companions spend months in the mountains (Judg 11:38). It is

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only when she returns to her father that she suffers. In Judg 11:39 Jephthah kills her. Additionally, Lot's two daughters are safe when there are other women with them inside the house and while leaving Sodom. The two daughters are not alone because their mother is with them until she perishes in Gen 19:26. Reading with the logic of the text, it is only when the two are alone in the cave with their father that they suffer for their willful acts of incest. The writer punishes the daughters by making them responsible for the birth of combatants of the Israelites: the Ammonites and the Moabites.

This observation is a bit different from Bohmbach's argument. Bohmbach argues that daughters inhabit a liminal space. This is also different from the long-standing inside/outside argument that asserts that women are not safe outside. This inside/outside argument is often used to chastise Dinah for getting raped when she goes out to meet with the women of the city. Daughters are most safe when they are surrounded by other women,[444] but these spaces are not defined by geography (inside spaces) or psycho-territorial spaces (liminality).

Dinah and Tamar are never in the company of women, and these daughters are the victims of assault. Dinah is raped on her way to visit with women, and Tamar is raped in her brother's home. In each of their narratives, the daughters are alone when they are assaulted. Conversely, Rebekah and Pharaoh's daughter are always in the company of women. Although

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[444] Biblical daughters are surrounded by other women in female-exclusive spaces such as birthing areas, and are set apart during their menses; however, very few of their narratives unfold in these spaces. There is some evidence that, at least in the New Kingdom, birth took place in a specially built structures; however, there are no descriptions of childbirth or the birthing space in the Hebrew Bible. Aside from references to how a menstruating woman should be treated in the text (see Lev 18:19 and Num 5:2-3), there is no mention of designated spaces for these women. It is most likely that male biblical writers did not write about these spaces because as female-exclusive spaces, the writers knew nothing of them. Renita Weems alludes to this male lack of awareness of female-exclusive spaces and the activities performed therein when she asserts that the entire Exod 1 narrative pivots on the axis of assumptions about difference, including the differences between men and women. See Renita J. Weems, "The Hebrew Women Are Not Like the Egyptian Women: The Ideology of Race, Gender and Sexual Reproduction in Exodus 1," *Semeia* 59 [1992]: 30. For more information on female spaces see Gay Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press, 1993), 83; Rosiland M. Janssen and Jac J. Janssen, *Growing Up in Ancient Egypt* (London: Rubicon Press, 1990).

Rebekah speaks directly to Abraham's servant at the well, convention and the servant's observation that "the daughters of the townspeople are coming to draw water" (Gen 24:13) suggests that she is probably not the only woman present.[445]

Rhetorically, the biblical writer may be signaling more than the simple message that daughters should stay in their places and out of male spaces. This presentation of daughter characters constricts the movement of daughters and limits their access to power. Moreover, this rhetorical mechanism distances them from power by placing them beyond the nuclei of legal authority and the control of economic surplus. Positioning the daughter character in this way conditions readers to expect daughters to exist beyond and without power.

Young Miriam resists the social custom that would limit her access to power because of her non-Egytpian and non-royal status, but then comports with gendered expectations when she celebrates male victories with singing and dancing. This same Miriam later resists traditions of exclusive male leadership at the Red Sea and at Hazeroth.

Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah (Zelophehad's Daughters)

Although the unified actions that result in a change to the legal corpus of ancient Israel frame the interpretation of these daughters, their inheritance is an anomaly in biblical Israel.[446] The daughters position their request for the receipt of their father's inheritance as an effort to ensure that their father's name does not disappear among his kinsmen. The daughters understand

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[445] Marsman, *Women*, 420, 426. Although drawing and carrying water was a task performed by men and women in the ancient Near East, Ugaritic literary texts involving 'Anatu, Pughatu, Thatmanatu, and the female inhabitants of Udumu serve as examples of this being women's work. The biblical examples of Hagar (Gen 21:19), the seven daughters of Jethro (Exod 2:15-17), the girls who meet Saul and his servant on their way to find Samuel (1 Sam 9:11), and the widow of Zaraphat (1 Kgs 17:10-11) all demonstrate that drawing water was women's work.

[446] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters*, 64. Ben-Barak concludes that the story of Zelophehad's daughters is rooted in non-Israelite tradition. While stories of other daughters in sonless households permeate the biblical text, they do not compare to that of Zelophehad's daughters.

that a man's name is his legacy in ancient Israel, and this framing of their request both aligns

with the patriarchal concern of retaining a man's name through his inheritance and supports the

male desire for control. With this understanding, the daughters appeal to the leadership in three

rhetorical moves. Their first move is to absolve their father of any wrongdoing that would have

prohibited him from receiving his apportionment. In this way, the daughters clear the deck for

their request to be considered by rational members of the community's leadership team. In this

way, they appeal to male reason. In their second move, the daughters argue that the name of

their father is important. Here, they appeal to the sensibilities of the male leaders by pointing to

the critical concern for all ancient Israelite men—the preservation of one's name. Zafrira Ben-

Barak points out that the ancient inheritance practices were designed to preserve over the years

the important components of the *bet 'ab*'s integrity, one of which was the father's name and

memory.[447] In their third and final move, the daughters remind their father's kinsmen that,

although Zelophehad was virile (he did have five children after all!), he simply did not have a

son. Had Zelophehad had a son, the daughters would not need to make a request to preserve his

name, since that is the only thing they present themselves as seeking. But since their father did

not have a son, they need help to make things right for him. It is important to note that, at no

time do the daughters present arguments that directly benefit them. Their arguments center on

male concerns and male concerns alone.

Rooted in generations of patriarchal concerns, tradition legitimates the systems of power

in the story of Zelophehad's daughters. Specifically, gendered roles associated with inheritance

determine power in the narrative found in Num 27 and 36. The textual evidence that Moses

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[447] Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters*, 3.

never transferred the inheritance to the daughters is disconcerting. [448]   It is clear that the elders are not concerned about protecting the name of their brother, Zelophehad. Had Zelophehad's name been the issue, the daughters would not have needed to argue past the point of his eligibility or good standing within the community in order to secure the divine decree. There is something important about the kin group that motivates and worries the community elders: there is something at stake for the elders of the community if the daughters never marry or do not marry within their kin group.

That there are scarce eligible Manassites for the daughters to wed seems unlikely. According to the genealogy of Numbers 26, among the descendants of Gilead, Zelophehad's father, Hepher, had five brothers who, more than likely, each had sons.[449] If that is the case, Zelophehad has male cousins that the daughters can marry. 1 Chronicles 17:19 records that Hepher's brother Shemida has four sons; Iahian, Shechem, Likin, and Yaniam. Additionally, just as Zelophehad has children, his male cousins probably have offspring, too. The daughters of Zelophehad are fifth generation Manassites and can legally marry their cousins. Moreover, the tribe of Manasseh extends broadly to include the descendants of all of Manasseh's children,[450] grandchildren, great grandchildren, and all of their descendants. It is unreasonable to believe that the daughters do not have any kinsmen in the area to marry. Maintaining kin group cohesion through marriage cannot be the overarching concern of the elders.

The writer of Numbers situates Zelophehad's story in the midst of a cumbersome genealogy. The writer introduces him in the middle of a census inspired by YHWH. YHWH

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[448] Wil Gafney takes up this issue in *Womanist Midrash* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, forthcoming).

[449] That Zelophehad has no sons seems such a rare occurrence that it marks him as different. In fact, fathers such as Caleb (Josh 15:16-19, Judg 1:12-15, 1 Chron 2:49), Sheshan (1 Chron 2:34-41), Machir (1 Chron 2:21-22), Asher (Num 26:46), Eleazar (1 Chron 23:22), and Barzillai (Ezra 2:61, Neh 7:63) also have no sons.

[450] Manasseh was the father of Asriel, Peresh, and Sheresh (1 Chronicles 17.14) in addition to Zelophehad's great grandfather, Machir.

commands Moses and Eleazar (Aaron's son) to take a census of all the adults who are the descendants of those who came out of Egypt, are at least 20 years old, and are capable of bearing arms. The census is organized by tribal group, and the land is apportioned by shares with the larger groups receiving larger shares (Numbers 26.53). Understandably, those who are a part of Levi's tribal group are counted separately because they do not receive a land share. The regular census nets 601,730 individuals (Num 26:51), which means that each of the twelve groups should receive 8.33% of the land if the land is apportioned equally. However, the land is not divided equally, but according to the census, and larger groups received larger pieces of land. Judah numbers 76,500 individuals (12.7%) and therefore receives the largest land allotment. Importantly, the group in which Zelophehad and his kinsmen are located, Manasseh, numbers 52,700 (8.75%). Judah is given approximately one and a half times more land than Manasseh. Furthermore, the two land allocations are buffered by the smaller allocations of Dan, Ephraim, and Benjamin. The elders of Manasseh may be threatened by the possibility that Judah will encroach upon their land and, if the daughters of Zelophehad marry and beget Judahites, Zelophehad's land will ultimately transfer to Judah.

The Manassite elders are hyper-concerned about preserving land from other kin groups. As each kin group vies for prominence and power in the days before the monarchy, the elders use the marriage requirement to ensure that Zelophehad's land portion remains in their kin group. The elders are motivated by the fear that they will eventually lose the power and prestige associated with land holdings (control of economic surplus) if the daughters of Zelophehad do not marry within their kin group. If the daughters marry outside their kin group, the land holdings of the kin group will decrease. As a result of these marriages, however, the males of their kin group retain control of the economic surplus of land.

As Levites, Moses and his family do not receive any land, so he has little concern for ensuring that land allotments are finalized. Joshua, a non-Levite with a sensibility for bestowing the spoils of war to the victor because of his military experiences, has concern for ensuring that land is distributed properly. It is not until the daughters appeal to Moses' successor, Joshua, that they are given the land that YHWH commanded they receive.

Indeed, it is not until the story concludes in Joshua 17, when the daughters confront Joshua about not receiving their inheritance, that their act of resistance reaches a climax. Here, the daughters are ultimately resistant when they come before the community leaders demanding the land that Moses should have transferred to them. The daughters come without their husbands. Contrary to the desire of the male elders, they are not controlled by their male heads of households, do not speak through their husbands, nor do they rely on their husbands to transact this important unfinished business.

The inheritance of the daughters of Zelophehad upsets the social order of their community such that the elders amend the divine decree with a stipulation around marriage. Furthermore, when the daughters sought and received the inheritance of their father, they usurp an important male role of exclusive inheritance beneficiary. According to Israelite custom, only sons received patrimony in inheritance.

Zelophehad's daughters transgress gender boundaries when they participate in legal activities. In Numbers 27, the daughters resist male control when they stand before the community at the tent of meeting and ask for something beyond the established legal parameters. In their standing, the daughters challenge the male desire to control women by relegating them to peripheral positions in the community. They also call attention to themselves. Further, by standing in the very public space of the tent of meeting, the daughters challenge the male need to

control access to power because women are not often found in the sacred tent.[451] Finally, the

daughters resist male control by challenging the patrilineal custom of transferring land

inheritance to male offspring when they ask for their father's inheritance. And yet, Mahlah,

Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah accommodate the patriarchal drive to control their female

bodies when they marry sons of their father's brothers in Num 36:11-12. Furthermore, their

endogamous marriages accommodate the patrilineal inheritance custom by securing their father's

portion within his kingroup.

Rahab

In Josh 1, Joshua sends two Israelite men to surveil Jericho. The two spies enter the

house of a prostitute named Rahab and spend the night there.[452] Upon hearing of the presence of

Israelite spies, the king of Jericho sends an order to Rahab to bring the foreign men out of her

house. Rahab hides the Israelite spies and explains that men did, in fact, come to her, but she did

not know where they were from, and they had already left. She encourages the king's

representatives to pursue the Israelite spies quickly, "for you can overtake them" she tells them

(Josh 1:5). Rahab admits to the Israelite spies that their Lord has given them the land of Jericho,

that their military reputation proceeds them, and that the people are afraid of them. In return for

her kindness towards them, she asks that they deal kindly with her and her family. Specifically,

Rahab asks: "Give me a sign of good faith that you will spare my father and mother, my brothers

and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death" (Josh 1:12-13), and the

spies agree. In exchange for not disclosing their whereabouts, they promise to save Rahab and

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[451] Moses met with God in the tent of meeting (Exodus 33.9-11). Exodus 38.8 and 1 Samuel 2.22 each depict women serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting, but not participating in the business of those gathered in there. The business of the tent of meeting seems reserved for the Levite priests, who participated in cultic rituals (Leviticus 4.1-5.13, Numbers 3.5-10, and 1 Chronicles 6.31-32), and for the men of the community.

[452] The Hebrew זנה is generally translated as "harlot" or "prostitute."

her family when they invade the city. Rahab helps the Israelite spies escape Jericho with instructions to avoid the king's soldiers. Later, during the Israelite invasion, Joshua instructs the spies to: "Go into the prostitute's house, and bring the woman out of it and all who belong to her, as you swore to her" (Josh 6:22). The biblical writer records that Rahab and her family members are grafted into the Israelite community because she hid messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho (Josh 6:25).

Tradition demarcated by patriarchy, the male drive to control the female body, and gendered roles legitimates power in Rahab's narrative.[453] The canonical placement of Rahab's story also has power implications. Rahab challenges the patriarchal custom of deferring to the male head of household when, instead of aligning with the agenda of the king (the city's ultimate male head of household), she opposes his program with deception. When the King of Jericho inquires about the spies, Rahab (who has hidden the spies on her roof) feigns ignorance about the Israelite spies and knowledge of their whereabouts. When the king's soldiers ask where the spies came from, she acknowledges that the men came to her house, but states that she does not know where they came from. Having hidden the spies on her roof, Rahab trades on the envoys' presumption that, as a citizen of Jericho, she would willingly aid them in their search. To the soldiers, Rahab presents herself as a model citizen invested in the success of the King's envoys when she tells them: "True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they came from. And when it was time to close the gate at dark, the men went out. Where the men went I do not know. Pursue them quickly, for you can overtake them" (Joshua 2.4-5).

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[453] Peter F. Lockwood, "Rahab: Multi-faceted Heroine of the Book of Joshua," *Lutheran Theological Journal* 44.1 (2010): 39-50. Lockwood suggests Rahab navigates systems of power authenticated by legal mechanisms when she challenges the decree of the king of Jericho and aids and abets the spies of Israel. The text does not explicitly point to a decree; however, the fact that the king dispatches soldiers to ascertain the whereabouts of the spies suggests that he has issued some form of royal command. Because I have already considered how daughters engage the legal mechanisms of power associated with decrees in the story of Pharaoh's daughter (and for the sake of brevity here), I treat Rahab's deceptive response to the king's inquiry under the heading patriarchy.

Control of the Female Body - Rahab resists antagonistic systems of power identified by the patriarchal male drive to control the female body. Introduced as a זנה, or prostitute, Rahab exists on the margins of acceptable society.[454] In a patriarchal world that seeks to control women's bodies, Rahab is antithetical because, by profession, she controls her own body.[455] As a prostitute, she resists the male desire to control female sexuality. The writer challenges readers' tendency to control Rahab by dehumanizing her based upon her profession. While the community may make negative assumptions about women who exist on the margins of society because of their sexualized professions, the writer carefully depicts Rahab as not engaging in any sexual act within the story itself. The spies lie down, but they do not lie down with Rahab.

The biblical writer often uses the rhetorical device of sexualizing characters in order to discredit them.[456] Randall Bailey takes up various polemic agendas found in the Hebrew Bible and points out that a major agenda of the biblical writer is to discredit people who practice taboo sexual acts. Once the group is discredited, they are in effect dehumanized by labeling. Once the group has been dehumanized, the reader readily accepts Israel's oppression of the group.[457] Though highlighting Rahab's sexualized profession should dehumanize her, the writer ultimately lauds her. In addition to desexualizing Rahab, the writer also humanizes her by naming her. Finally, the writer humanizes Rahab by grafting her into the Israelite community. Perhaps it is her final position within the Israelite community that saves her from being totally sexualized and

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[454] Although she is described as a prostitute, Rahab does not engage in sexual activity.

[455] Though designated as a prostitute, there is no textual evidence that Rahab ever engaged in prostitution with the Israelite spies. The spies came to her home and spent the night there, but there is no mention of sexual intercourse or financial exchange.

[456] The descriptions of King Ahasuerus in Esther 1 employ this rhetorical device.

[457] See Randall C. Bailey, "They're Nothing but Incestuous Bastards: The Polemical Use of Sex and Sexuality in Hebrew Canon Narratives," in *Reading from this Place,* vol 1, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Talbert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 121-138.

ultimately dehumanized by the writer. By framing her as a sex worker who does not participate

in any sexual acts, naming her, and aligning her with the Israelite community, the writer retrieves

Rahab from the fate of other dehumanized and discredited characters.

Finally, Rahab pushes back on systems of power legitimated by patriarchy when she

usurps the male role of protector. Carol Meyers argues convincingly for the gendered role of

men associated with defense in ancient Israel.[458] For Meyers, protection (defense) activities are

characteristically almost entirely dependent upon male activity.[459] In addition to serving in the

formal, standing armies of the king during times of war, men also participate in militia

systems.[460] The biblical text attests to very few examples of female soldiers.[461] Rahab usurps

the male role of protector when she negotiates for the safety of her family. Additionally, the fact

that she singles out her father, mother, siblings and others suggests that she is taking

responsibility for her entire household in much the same way a male head of household would.

Rahab's defiant act of saving the Israelite spies results in the protection of her family. As

Rahab's motives are revealed, she also defies the custom that all citizens acquiesce to the

commands and concerns of the King (the ultimate male) and challenges the patriarchal notion

that males control female bodies. Rahab ultimately protects herself, the male spies, and her

entire family.

Gendered Roles - Randall Bailey notes how Rahab negotiates the safety of herself and

her family when Jericho is about to be destroyed, but does not consider the implications

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[458] Carol Meyers, "Procreation, Production, and Protection: Male-Female Balance in Early Israel," in *Community, Identity and Ideology: Social Science Approaches to the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Charles E. Carter and Carol L. Meyers (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 489-514.

[459] Meyers, "Procreation," 494.

[460] Meyers, "Procreation," 495.

[461] Deborah goes to battle with Barak, but her participation is only at his request and is separate from her civilian role as a prophet who judges Israel (Judg 4:4, 8).

concerning power. The daughter Rahab performs tasks generally associated with male military tacticians and the male head of household. Bailey highlights how Rahab switches alliances, but does not attend to the fact that Rahab assessed the potential enemy, concealed assets, and negotiated better than the Israelite spies. The two males were sent to surveil the land and the inhabitants' position, and they returned with little information other than what Rahab shared with them; they were not at all stealthy in their reconnaissance because the King dispatched messengers directly to their location; and they basically acquiesced to Rahab's demands. Not only does the daughter, Rahab, do the job of military men, she also negotiates for the safety of her entire family, a function generally relegated to the father or male head of the household.

Rahab's assumption of power associated with male roles is further complicated by the fact that, as Bradley Sherwood and Aaron Crowell note, as a foreign prostitute Rahab exists on the margins of both Canaanite and Israelite society.[462] Sherwood argues that, as she appears in every scene and she engages in direct dialogue, Rahab is an important character in Judges 2, but as a prostitute she exists on the margin. Borrowing from Phyllis Bird, Sherwood states: "a necessary supposition for Rahab and ch 2 is 'the harlot [functions] as a marginal figure in the society, tolerated but despised.'"[463] Furthermore, Rahab's position on the margin heightens the irony associated with her role in the surprise deliverance motif. Sherwood explains how, when, instead of following Joshua's command to go and see the land around Jericho in Josh 2:1, the spies go and enter Rahab's house, their actions violate the command/fulfillment pattern

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[462] Bradley L. Crowell, "Good Girl, Bad Girl: Foreign Women of the Deuteronomistic History in Postcolonial Perspective," *Biblical Interpretation* 21.1 (2013): 1-18, and Aaron Sherwood, "A Leader's Misleading and a Prostitute's Profession: A Re-Examination of Joshua 2," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 31.1 (2006): 43-61.

[463] Sherwood, "A Leader's Misleading," 48. Sherwood is also careful to highlight how Rahab's prostitute profession aligns with the Deuteronomistic metaphor for idolatry and Israel's abandonment of its covenant commitments to God. Examples of the use of this metaphor include Exod 34:16-17 and Deut 31:16-18.

established by Joshua and Israelites in the first chapter of the book.[464] This pattern breach

signals a calamity motif. Then, the narrator surprises the reader with the introduction of the

marginalized woman, Rahab, and transitions to a motif of deliverance. Deliverance occurs

through the acts of Rahab. It is because of her that the Israelite spies avoid capture by the king's

officers, and her family members escape the destruction of Jericho.

Much of what makes Rahab a surprise heroine is her foreign status. Readers do not

expect a non-Israelite to play such a critical role in the advancement of Joshua and the Israelites

into Canaan. Bradley Crowell examines the Deuteronomic Historian's (DH) portrayal of foreign

women (i.e., Rahab, Samson's women, the woman of Endor, and Jezebel) as a threat to Israelite

identity formation.[465] Specifically, DH paints foreign women as hypersexualized, deceitful, and

seductresses.[466] Crowell concludes that Rahab is an acceptable foreigner because she affirms

YHWH. To this exploration of foreign women, I add that the story of Rahab highlights how

Israelite males are unable to control foreign women. In the patriarchal society of biblical Israel,

foreign men are responsible for controlling foreign women, but if Israelite males cannot control

the foreign men they surely cannot control the foreign women. These women are therefore

marked as dangerous. By focusing on sexualized aspects of foreigners/others, the biblical

writers absolve Israelite males of the daunting responsibility of controlling foreign women by

presupposing that sex, sexual beings, and sexual urges are uncontrollable. The writer of Joshua

controls the foreign Rahab, however, by making her subject to YHWH (religion), which carries

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[464] Sherwood, "A Leader's Misleading," 49. The Lord directs Joshua to cross the Jordan into the Promised land and Joshua immediately follows the command and instructs the people to prepare for crossing (Josh 1:1-16). This pattern reflects one depicted in Num 13:1-21, when the Lord commands Moses to sends spies to the land of Canaan and Moses follows the command and sends spies, including Caleb.

[465] Bradley L. Crowell, "Good Girl, Bad Girl: Foreign Women of the Deuteronomistic History in Postcolonial Perspective," *Biblical Interpretation* 21.1 (2013): 1-18.

[466] Crowell, "Good Girl," 8.

more power than human power structures (law, tradition, etc.). The biblical writer cannot control Rahab's foreign status (and all the complications that her gender and profession bring); therefore, theological beliefs trump carnal human abilities and social structures.

In Joshua 2:5, Rahab goes on to compliment the tactical acumen of the soldiers by encouraging them to hurry, because they could overtake the spies. Without even pointing out which direction the spies went, Rahab would have the soldiers believe that they can catch them. Given her profession, it is not unreasonable that Rahab has experience hiding clients and misdirecting persons looking for them. The two Israelite spies are probably not the first men she has lowered out of her window. In truth, Rahab's act is one of hidden resistance because she misdirects the King's envoys in order to protect the spies.

Canonical Placement - Interestingly, power also presents beyond the action depicted in the Josh 2 narrative itself. The placement of Rahab's story is relevant for a discussion on power because canonical positioning has interpretive implications. Meaning is grafted into metanarrative relationships. Robinson and Lockwood take up the concern for the placement of the Rahab story in the metanarrative concerns of power outside the action depicted in Josh 2. Within the metanarrative of the Israelite's entry into the land of promise, the story of Rahab found in Josh 2 seems appropriately placed. Bernard Robinson, however, argues that chapter two does not fit logically, but reflects the awkward amalgamation of two distinct traditions: that of the supernatural conquest narrated in Josh 1 and Josh 6, and that of an account of the capture of Jericho by force with the assistance of a prostitute.[467] In Josh 1, the Lord directs Joshua to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River into the massive territory with the assurance that no one would be able to stand against them (Josh 1:1-9). Similarly, in Josh 6, the Lord assures

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[467] Bernard P. Robinson, "Rahab of Canaan—and Israel" *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 23.2 (2009): 259, 261.

Joshua that the Israelites may take Jericho by simply marching around its walls for seven days (Josh 6:2-5). Reading with Roland de Vaux, Robinson argues that the interjection of the conquest with the help of a Canaanite prostitute in Josh 2 does not comport with the divinely ordered conquest stories found in Josh 1 and Josh 6, but comes from a tradition about the fall of Jericho which attributed it to a betrayal from within by Rahab.[468]

Peter Lockwood disagrees, and states that Josh 2 follows Josh 1 seamlessly by subverting the reader's expectation of Israelite obedience and loyalty, and ultimately foreshadows Joshua's treatment of the people of Israel and the Lord's covenant relationship with the Israelites.[469] In the same way Rahab draws the spies into covenant relationship through negotiation and an oath (Josh 2:9-14), Joshua draws Israel into a covenant relationship with the Lord in Josh 23 and 24. Lockwood argues that, because the Israelites enter into covenant with the Lord and not Joshua, Rahab's engagement with the spies foreshadows the Lord's relationship with the ancient Israelites. For Lockwood, Rahab's story theologically demonstrates that divine grace outweighs divine judgment, and that the Lord's favor extends towards those who confess faith such that they are spared the ban.[470] Thus, confession and adherence to covenant stipulations are more important than nationality.

It is reasonable that, in its final form, Josh 2 is a mixture of various traditions that are now awkwardly placed within the canon. Despite its probable traditional lineage, in its current form, Josh 2 offers its readers a unique story of a daughter. Importantly, while scholars like

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[468] Robinson, "Rahab of Canaan," 259. Also see Roland de Vaux, *Histoire Ancienne d'Israël* (Paris: Gabalda, 1971), 550. Notably, de Vaux's perspective aligns with the peasant revolt model of settlement advanced by George Mendenhall and Norman Gottwald.

[469] Peter F. Lockwood, "Rahab: Multi-Faceted Heroine of the Book of Joshua," *Lutheran Theological Journal* 44.1 (2010): 41, 46-48.

[470] Lockwood, "Rahab: Multi-Faceted Heroine," 46.

Robinson and Lockwood debate the canonical position of Rahab's narrative, what they neglect to consider is the commentary on power dynamics in stories of daughters associated with destruction. Specifically, in the stories of Lot's daughters and Rahab, daughters involved in the destruction of their city or community often usurp male roles.[471] Lot's daughters live through the destruction of Sodom, and when faced with the idea that there were no more men left in their city, they fulfilled the male role of controlling reproduction and instigated their own pregnancies. Rahab, lives through the conquest of Jericho, and takes on the male role of diplomat.[472] In the same way that the writer affirms the resistant acts of Pharaoh's daughter because they advance the plot of the Israelites (especially the male Israelite hero), so does the writer uphold Rahab's acts of resistance towards the king of Jericho and his messengers because they help ensure Joshua and the Israelites prevail in their conquest of the Canaanite city. That Rahab and Pharoah's daughter are disloyal to their respective communities is unproblematic. The biblical writer affirms these daughters who, in service to the concerns of Israelite males, thrawt non-Israelite patriarchy. In this way, Rahab also accommodates antagonistic systems and institutions of power.

Jephthah's Daughter

Both tradition and legal mechanisms legitimate power in the story of Jephthah's unnamed daughter. In Judg 11, tradition is indicated by patriarchy and gender-specific customs. The daughter's musical performance that welcomed returning warriors and her deference to the male

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[471] Job's first set of daughters (Job 1); Shiphrah and Puah (Exod 2); King Joram's daughter, Jehosheba (2 Kgs 11); and the daughter of the King of the South (Dan 11) are also examples of daughters who are associated with narratives of city and community destruction.

[472] Robinson and Lockwood each point out that Rahab acts as the (male) head of household in Josh 2. Athalya Brenner also portrays Rahab as the head of household in her creative retelling of the Joshua narrative. See Athalya Brenner, *I Am ... Biblical Women Tell Their Own Stories* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005).

head of household point to systems of power legitimated by tradition in her narrative. Additionally, because the vow to the Lord serves as a binding contract, Jephthah's daughter also navigates systems of power legitimated by legal mechanisms. Uniquely, although she appears to exert some degree of autonomy in the administration of her body and embodiment when she requests a time apart to bewail her virginity, Jephthah's daughter accommodates the systems of power. Her very concern for virginity, a commodity controlled by the male, is evidence of her acquiescence to the systems of power identified by the male drive to control the female body.

Mieke Bal, Phyllis Silverman Kramer, and Alicia Ostriker interrogate the two-month activity during which Jephthah's daughter bewails her virginity.[473] Cultural theorist and critic Bal reads Jephthah's daughter's participation in the female-exclusive activity in the mountains (Judg 11:36-37) as a rite of passage. Bal grounds her argument in a particular understanding of בתולה. She understands the term בתולה as a life-phase that does not end: a life-phase towards which one goes.[474] For Bal, Jephthah's daughter goes in the direction of her בתולה, and in so doing, prepares to transition from one life-phase to another. As discussed earlier in this dissertation, Bal's life-phase transition proposal comports with the second aspect of a woman's life within daughter scholarship: transition to marriage. Borrowing from Victor Turner's

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[473] Mieke Bal, "Dealing/With/Women: Daughters in the Book of Judges," in *Women in the Bible: A Reader*, ed. Alice Bach (New York: Routledge, 1999); Phyllis Silverman Kramer, "Jephthah's Daughter: A Thematic Approach to the Narrative as Seen in Selected Rabbinic Exegesis and in Artwork," in *Judges: A Feminist Companion to the Bible*, Second Series, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 67-92; and Alicia Ostriker, "Fathers and Daughters: The Jephthah Issues and the Scream," in *Embroidered Garments: Priests and Gender in Biblical Israel*, ed. Deborah W. Rooke (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 151-159. For other treatments of Jephthah's daughter, see Elisheva Baumgarten, '"Remember that Glorious Girl'': Jephthah's Daughter in Medieval Jewish Culture," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 97.2 (Spr 2007): 180-209; Susanna Bede Caroselli, "The Dissemination of Jephthah's Daughter," in *From the Margins 1: Women of the Hebrew Bible and their Afterlives*, ed. Peter S. Hawkins and Lesleigh Cushing Stahlberg (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 86-101; and Valerie C. Cooper, "Some Place to Cry: Jephthah's Daughter and the Double Dilemma of Black Women in America," in *Pregnant Passion: Gender, Sex, and Violence in the Bible*, ed. Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 181-191.

[474] Bal, "Dealing," 322.

examinations of rites, Bal offers that rites of passage demarcate transitions and are often symbolized in a spatial form such as an isolated wilderness experience, in which the initiate participates and is separated from the world of childhood, often for several months. For Bal, Jephthah's daughter goes off to the mountains in order to move towards her בתולה or to participate in a rite of passage that marks her transition from being marriageable to being married.[475]

Bal names Jephthah's daughter Bath and argues that she refers to herself as a בתולה. Bal writes, "the word usually translated as "virgin" (*betulah*) is used by Bath herself, not by Jephthah or by the narrator."[476] In her argument, Bal rightly stresses that virginity is a male concern, but Bal's linguistic claim is imprecise. The daughter speaks in Judg 11:36-38, and references her בתולים (virginity).[477] The daughter refers to her virginity, but does not call herself a virgin. Some readers may counter that this difference represents semantic minutiae by arguing that the one who possesses virginity is a virgin, however, as has been established, in the biblical world the father has ownership of virginity. The distinction is important and Bal's argument that the use of the preposition *'al* with the noun (על-בתולי) points to a female conception of בתולה as a life phase that may better be stated as a female conception of בתולים as a life phase is also flawed.[478] Bath never refers to herself as a virgin, but directs her father's attention to her virginity. Had she named herself as a virgin, Bath would have demonstrated an autonomy that conflicts with the

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[475] Bal, "Dealing," 322. Additionally, for Bal, the concept of בתולה is positioned in a series in which נערה is the preceding and עלמה is the following term: unmarried, marriageable, and recently married.

[476] Bal, "Dealing," 321.

[477] In Judg 11:37 and 38, בתולים (virginity) appears in construct with a 1cs suffix: בתולי (my virginity). Although there are thirteen instances of בתולה (virgin) appearing in construct (בתולת) in the Hebrew Bible (Deut 22:19, 2 Kgs 19:21, Isa 23:12, Isa 37:22, Isa 47:1, Jer 14:17, Jer 18:13, Jer 31:4, Jer 31:21, Jer 46:11, Amos 5:2, Lam 1:15, and Lam 2:13), there are none with a 1cs suffix. Biblical characters refer to their virginity, not to their virgin.

[478] Bal, "Dealing," 322.

image of an acceptable daughter. When she speaks of her virginity, Bath accommodates a patriarchal system that views virginity as a commodity controlled by men. Bath speaks in a vernacular that resonates with her father's sensibilities. Moreover, she uses the language of the patriarchal writer and his supposed audience to the end that she is accepted as an ideal daughter.

Although Bal misreads the Hebrew, her argument that Jephthah's daughter anticipates moving to the next life stage by marriage has merit. The daughter understands her father's vow as one that commits him to give her as a wife to a victorious warrior. Intertextual evidence supports the idea that Jephthah's daughter expected that the vow her father referenced was one of her betrothal on the battlefield. It is not uncommon for fathers to incent warriors with the hands of their daughters in marriage. For example, Caleb offers his daughter Achsah to the soldier who attacks and captures their enemy in Judg 1:12. Additionally, in return for a victory over the Philistines, King Saul offers his daughter Michal to the soldier, David, in 1 Sam 18:25-27. Unlike Achsah and Michal however, in Judges 11, instead of being transferred into the home of a husband, Jephthah's daughter is sacrificed to the deity. Jephthah kills his daughter.[479]

Kramer offers that a reading of Judg 11:37-38 and suggests that the daughter goes to the mountains to bewail what appears at first glance to be her virginity. Kramer supports this interpretation by pointing to the societal importance of bearing children, re-visions virginity as maidenhood, and suggests that the daughter mourned the fact that she would never have a child.[480] Kramer buttresses her claim with notations from rabbinic literature such as Exodus

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[479] Bal, "Dealing," 320. Bal juxtaposes Caleb's daughter, Achsah, and Jephthah's unnamed daughter, and concludes that daughters are depicted as rewards. Achsah is the reward for the military hero, Othniel, and Jephthah's daughter is the reward for the hero, Yhwh As Bal states, "Yhwh, then is the real victor. According to the tradition that we see at work for example in Judges I, the victor is entitled to the chief's daughter as a bride. Just as Othniel, there, deserves Achsah, chief Caleb's daughter, Yhwh deserves Bath. . . . Bath will not be given as a bride but as a burnt offering, not to a husband but to another, higher father (11:30-31)."

[480] Kramer, "Jephthah's Daughter," 68. Kramer considers the importance of the daughter's virginity when she connects virginity (here, understood as sexual purity or chastity) and an object's appropriateness (blemishless-ness)

Rabbah, which suggests the daughter spent the two months with the elders proving her virginity; and Altschuler, who claims that the daughter cries over her virginity because she will not marry.[481] Kramer does not challenge the straightforward reading of the text, nor does she consider the lack of narrative clues. Nowhere in the biblical text does Jephthah's daughter say or do anything that demonstrates her awareness that she will die, or hints at an understanding that Jephthah's vow has anything to do with her future as a wife or mother. Her response to her father in verse thirty-six suggests she merelyknows he has made a vow, knows that she is implicated in that vow, and understands that fulfilling the vow depresses her father.

Ostriker interprets the daughter's bewailing of her virginity, similarly to Kramer. Ostriker states that the daughter mourns the fact that she will never get a chance to lose her virginity (she will never experience sexual pleasure), or specifically, that she will never have sons. Ostriker shares this observation with Susanna B. Caroselli, who accepts John Gower's interpretation that Jephthah's daughter is mourning the lost opportunity to bear children.[482] Gower modifies the Judg 11 narrative in his poem, *Confession amantis*, and presents Jephthah's

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for sacrifice. Kramer reads the importance of virginity in the Judg 11 narrative alongside the role of virginity in the Greek story of Iphigenia, the mythical Greek virgin whose sacrificial death is connected to military exploits. In Iphigenia's case, the maiden had to be sacrificed before the winds would enable the Greek ships to sail to Troy (153).

[481] Kramer, "Jephthah's Daughter," 70, 72. Kramer also considers the work of Pseudo-Philo, who names the daughter, Seila, and claims she has a theophany while away; Josephus, who affirms she knew she would die and was compliant with her father's wishes; and from the midrashic collection, Midrash Tanhuna, which offers a dissenting voice claiming the daughter challenges her father and argues for biblical precedent for him not sacrificing her. See James H., Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983); Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged Works*, trans., William Whiston (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987); and *Midrash Tanḥuma*, trans. John T. Townsend (Hoboken: Ktav, 1989).

[482] Susanna Bede Caroselli, "The Dissemination of Jephthah's Daughter," in *From the Margins 1: Women of the Hebrew Bible and their Afterlives*, ed. Peter S. Hawkins and Lesleigh Cushing Stahlberg (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 98. Caroselli considers artwork associated with the story of Jephthah's daughter because she asserts that a visually oriented society assigns importance based upon imagery. Caroselli highlights depictions of Jephthah's daughters as a type of Christ, a type of the Virgin Mary, the personification of Synagogue, and of the slothful maiden. The fact that the amount of appropriations of the story of Jephthah's daughter decreased after the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance, but is significant afterward is important to Caroselli because, without the imagery, "for many, she does not exist at all" (101).

daughter as slothful because she is childless. According to Gower's interpretation, the daughter

"bewails her virginity," or bemoans not having children because she was not focused on the most

important thing for a maiden: becoming a wife and mother. Gower's interpretation burdens the

daughter with her own demise because "rather than dally as a virgin the Daughter should have

been wed and procreating, then she would not have needed to lament her childless state at the

moment of her untimely death."[483]

Ostriker highlights the phrase, "never known a man," in Judg 11:39 as an indicator that

the loss of her virginity makes the daughter an unacceptable sacrifice.[484] Specifically, Ostriker

uses this notion of acceptable sacrifice to connect Jephthah's daughter to the Greek character,

Iphigenia. As noted earlier, Peggy Day similarly connects Jephthah's daughter to the daughters

Iphigenia and Persephone, both of whom are sacrificed by or separated from their fathers as part

of commitments about which the daughters are unaware.[485] While the Iphigenia allusion

includes a father's military commitment and a daughter's death, like those found in Judg 11,

Iphigenia's story is different from that of Jephthah's daughter's for three reasons. To begin,

Iphigenia is a goddess, and as such has power and access to power in ways a mortal daughter

does not. Second, Iphigenia is not an only child, but the eldest daughter of Agamemnon and

Clytemnestra. Because Agamemnon has other children, Iphigenia's death does not signal the

end of all hopes of progeny and legacy as does the death of Jephthah's only child. Third, the

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[483] Caroselli, "The Dissemination of Jephthah's Daughter," 98. For more on Gower's treatment of Jephthah's daughter, see John Gower, *The Complete Works of John Gower,* ed. G. C. Macaulay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), and Peter Nicholson, ed., *Gower's Confessio amantis: A Critical Anthology* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991).

[484] Ostriker, "Fathers and Daughters," 152.

[485] See Euripides, *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, trans. Holly Eckhardt and John Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), and Homer, *The Homeric Hymns*, trans. Diane J Rayor (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 17-34.

narrative discloses the pretext under which Iphigenia goes to Aulis: she is to marry Achilles. There is no explicit mention of a pending marriage in the story of Jephthah's daughter.

Although the Persephone allusion includes a father's commitment and a daughter's time with companions on a hillside, Persephone's narrative does not include any references to the possibility that her lamenting her descent into the Underworld had anything to do with her virginity or her childlessness. Furthermore, similar to Iphigenia, the story of Persephone is different from that of Jephthah's daughter in at least two important ways. First, Persephone is a goddess. In fact, Persephone goes on to be named Queen of the Underworld in the Greek myth. Second, unlike Jephthah's daughter, Persephone's mother, Demeter, plays an integral role in her narrative. Not only does Demeter sit nearby as her daughter plays on the hillside (her father, Zeus looks on from the sky), but she searches for her daughter when she goes missing. It is Demeter who becomes depressed by the loss of Persephone and eventually demands her return from the Underworld. This proactive maternal presence distinguishes Persephone from Jephthah's daughter. Persephone and Jephthah's daughter are not the same. These daughters encounter and navigate systems of power differently.

Importantly, throughout the narrative, Jephthah's daughter does not violate the cultural expectations of women and does not challenge male authority. In keeping with the expectations for women, she comes out to meet the victorious warrior with timbrels and dancing, a scene that echoes those in other texts in which women greet returning warriors with dance and celebration. Miriam and the women on the side of the Red Sea (Exod 15:20), the women greeting David and King Saul after the defeat of the Philistine (1 Sam 18:6), and the psalmist's description of the festal procession into the sanctuary (Ps 68:26) suffice as examples of this phenomenon.

Notably power is legitimated by the tradition of patriarchy as reflected in the fact that Jephthah maintains control of his daughter. In this particular narrative, the father has the authority to refuse her request. The daughter is also wholly obedient to the father, even unto death.[486] She does not question him, his incongruent act of lamentation, or the details of his vow. When she hears that she is the cause of his trouble and that he has made an irreversible vow to the Lord, she aligns her actions with his will. Her response is simply: "do to me according to what went out from your mouth" (Judg 11:36). Phyllis Trible reads the daughter's response to the father as one that is not at all angry, but is instead full of compassion.[487] In so doing, Trible presents her as morally superior to Jephthah. J. Cheryl Exum reads the daughter as surrendering, submitting, and subordinating without protest.[488] In response to her father's exclamation in Judg 11:35, she blindly acquiesces to his plan, and aligns with the male agenda of vengeance, war, and conquest.[489] Jephthah's daughter defers to the male head of household without question and, in so doing, appeals to the tradition of patriarchy in ancient Israel.

Although Jephthah's daughter appeals to the tradition of patriarchy, as I have argued in this chapter, her story demonstrates that daughters often find safety when they are in spaces populated exclusively by women. It was only when she returns to her father that Jephthah's

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[486] Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 188. Esther Fuchs describes Jephthah's daughter as the supreme image of the perfect daughter, whose loyalty and submissiveness to her father knows no limits. Esther Fuchs notes the patriarchal investments in the positive portrayal of a perfectly obedient daughter, and highlights the verse introducing the daughter as depicting her most important characteristic: her complete obedience to her father (Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 178, 182).

[487] Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 102.

[488] J. Cheryl Exum, "Feminist Criticism: Whose Interests are Being Served?," in *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 76.

[489] See Judg 11:30-31 for the vengeful vow made by Jephthah during his battle with the Ammonites. Fuchs notes that the daughter justifies her submission to her father by reminding him that fulfilling his vow to YHWH is a just and venerable deed because YHWH has defeated his enemies (Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 187).

daughter is harmed. Males are not present (and therefore do not dominate) in this mountain space, therefore patriarchal concerns – which often signal trauma for daughters - are not the primary focus.   In many ways, Jephthah's daughter claims resistance when she goes to the all-female space on the mountain.

Tamar

In her narrative, Tamar defers to her father's command when she goes to prepare food at her brother Amnon's house. She fulfills his wishes of when she follows him into his room to feed him.[490] Finally, Tamar capitulates to the reasoning of her brother, Absalom, when she silently lives out her days in his house instead of reporting Amnon to the authorities.[491] Tamar does not violate cultural expectations when, even in mourning she places ashes upon her head, tears her clothing, and cries; all are normative behaviors for one in distress.[492] In each of these instances, Tamar navigates a traditional system of power that is marked by patriarchy. Moreover, in her story, Tamar is pitted against the drive for male control of the female body in the form of rape. Moreover, chiastic features of the narrative literally encroach upon the daughter, Tamar, encompass and isolate her, climax in her sexual violation, and recede from her.

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[490] The Hebrew of 2 Sam 13:10 (תבא לאמנון אחיה החדרה) places Tamar in the private, interior space of her brother's room, which intuitively sets the stage for sexual assault. Derived from the verb for "to surround or obscure," a חדר is primarily understood as a private bedroom (see Gen 43:30; Judg 15:1, 16:9, and 16:12; 1 Kgs 1:15; and Song 1:4), but can also represent a special, inner chamber with limited access, as in the Hebrew used to designate David's architectural plans for the temple (1 Chr 28:11). It can also be used to describe a storeroom used as a hiding place (see 1 Kgs 22:25 and 2 Kgs 9:2). English translations like the Common English Bible (CEB), New English Translation (NET), and New International Version (NIV), render Tamar as bringing the food "to her brother Amnon in the bedroom" (CEB and NET) or "to her brother Amnon in his bedroom" (NIV), which reflects private or secluded qualities of the Hebrew term.

[491] Tamar's public display of mourning and her moving through the streets suggests her intent to disclose the incident.

[492] For treatments of ashes, torn clothes, and crying as signs of mourning, see J. B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East in Pictures*, 2nd edition with supplement (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 634, 640, or Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. John McHugh (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 59.

Rape, then, is the central concern of power in the story of Tamar, and David Rideout, Phyllis

Trible, and Esther Fuchs represent those scholars who interpret 2 Sam 13 as her rape, while

Pamela Reis offers a dissenting voice.[493]

Rideout examines how repetitive styles are used by the author to shape the narrative of 2

Sam 13. Rhetorical devices such as the repetition of terms, recurrence of patterns, and

replication of chiastic structures all work to craft the Hebrew story of rape. As Rideout asserts,

"the brief account of the rape of Tamar contains no less than 11 repetitions of the word "brother"

(*'ab*) and eight of the cognate word "sister" (*'ahot*)."[494] The repetitive and sometimes redundant

use of these terms draws the reader's attention to the familial relationships, highlights the

destructions of the royal house, and heightens the dysfunction of Amnon's rape and David's lack

of response to the rape of his daughter.[495] Second, the repetition of the verb חלה, "to be sick,"

ironically signals both the false and the true sickness of Amnon. Amnon is sick with desire for

Tamar in verse 2, and looks sick enough to Jonadab that his friend encourages him to pretend he

is sick in verse 5. In verse 6, Jonadab and Amnon manipulate his sick appearance in David's

presence, and Amnon uses this feigned sickness as a pretense to remedy his physical ailment of

physical desire for his sister by raping her. Third, the recurrence of a request-description of

fulfillment pattern retards the progression of the story and heightens the suspense for the

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[493] David Rideout, "The Rape of Tamar," in *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, ed. Jared J. Jackson and Martin Kessle (Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1974), 75-84; Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); Esther Fuchs, *Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman*, ed. David and Philip R. Davies Clines (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 2003); and Pamela Reis, "Cupidity and Stupidity: Woman's Agency and The "Rape" of Tamar." *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 25 (1997): 43-60.

[494] Rideout, "The Rape of Tamar," 75.

[495] Rideout, "The Rape of Tamar," 77. Although the Hebrew simply reports that David was very angry (ויחר לו מאד), according to translations derived from or influenced by LXX, David does not punish Amnon because he loves his firstborn son (2 Sam 13:21).

audience.[496] For example, Jonadab describes his proposal to Amnon in verse 5 when he

encourages him to lay on the couch, pretend to be ill, ask his father to have Tamar come prepare

food for him. The fulfillment is described in verse 6:

> Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick. The king came to see him, and Amnon said to
> the king, "Let my sister Tamar come and prepare a couple of cakes in front of me, and let
> her bring them to me.

David summons Tamar to Amnon's house to prepare food, and verse 8 provides the detail of her

fulfillment of the request: "Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was in bed. She

took dough and kneaded it into cakes in front of him, and cooked the cakes."

Rideout records six formulaic request fulfillment repetitions, and claims that this

rhetorical device retards the progress of the narrative and thereby heightens suspense for the

audience.[497] Finally, Rideout highlights a structural repetitive pattern when he points to the

chiastic arrangement of 2 Sam 13. In Rideout's rendering, the cumulative act is the rape of

Tamar in verse 14:

A   Amnon is in love with Tamar (vss 1-4)

   B   Tamar comes to Amnon's house and bakes bread for him (vss 5-9a)

      C   Amnon orders his servants out, that he might be alone with Tamar (vss 9b-10)

         D   Amnon commands Tamar to come lie with him; she pleads with him but to no

         avail (vss 11-14a)

            E   Amnon rapes Tamar, and his love for her turns to hate (vss 14b-15a)

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[496] Rideout, "The Rape of Tamar," 78.

[497] Rideout's identification of the rhetorical value of repetition is similar to Robert Alter's discussion repetition in
the biblical narrative. Alter outlines a scale for repetitive structuring and focusing devices which includes leitwort,
motif, theme, sequence of actions, and type-scene. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative.* (New York: Basic
Books, 19810, 94-95.

D'   Amnon commands Tamar to get out, she pleads with him but to no avail (vss 15b-16)

C'   Amnon calls a servant back and orders him to lock Tamar out (vs 17)

B'   Tamar leaves Amnon's house, mourning her fate (vss 18-19)

A'   Absalom hates Amnon for having raped Tamar (vss 20-22)

Rideout argues convincingly for the use of repetition in Tamar's narrative. His observation that David positions both Tamar and Amnon for their demise uniquely holds the father-King responsible for the dysfunction of his family.[498] Moreover, the placement of verse 14 at the apex of the chiasm points to the pivotal function of Amnon's act. For Rideout, "the whole story builds to and falls away from this act."[499]

Rideout's presentation of 2 Sam 13 as story of family dysfunction would be stronger had he pointed to the daughter, Tamar, as a mechanism for this dysfunction. In this narrative, the nucleus of all the dysfunction, brother-sister incest, paternal neglect, and the eventual fratricide is Tamar. Additionally, the larger canonical witness does not support his claim that Tamar is ruined because no virginity means no future.[500] Furthermore, Rideout overlooked two important narrative reversals in his treatment of repetition and chiastic structure. Although Rideout points out that in C and C' Amnon removes the servants in verse 9 and removes Tamar in verse 17, he overlooks the fact that, in these expulsions, Amnon also isolates himself. Structurally, this isolation of Amnon sets the stage for Amnon to draw Tamar closer to him and his desire as she comes into his chamber in verse 10 and serves as the backdrop for Amnon to emotionally reject

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[498] Rideout, "The Rape of Tamar," 77.

[499] Rideout, "The Rape of Tamar," 83.

[500] Rideout, "The Rape of Tamar," 76. According to Lev 21:13-14, priests are the only males in the community who are required to marry virgins.

her and dismiss her from his presence when he tells her to get out in verse 15. With no witnesses, isolation serves as a platform for Amnon's rape of Tamar.

Rideout also fails to acknowledge that the words of males direct the action and position of the daughter. When David sends word for Tamar to go to Amnon's house to prepare food, she goes (2 Sam 13:7 and 8). When Amnon directs Tamar to move into a separate room of the house (2 Sam 13:10), she follows his direction. When Amnon commands his servant to put Tamar outside of the home (2 Sam 13:18), she leaves. When Absalom encourages her to remain quiet and stay with him (2 Sam 13:20), Tamar dwells in Absalom's house. At every turn of the narrative, the daughter acquiesces to male power. Even when she speaks up, Amnon does not listen to her (2 Sam 13:14 and 16), and the male (and his desire) overpowers her. In much the same way, rape victims are overpowered by their assailants; indeed, male words overpower Tamar throughout her narrative.

Trible considers the chiastic structure of Tamar's narrative and identifies 2 Sam 13:9d-18 as the central unit of the story. For Trible, Tamar's is a story of entrapments, and "the rape itself constitutes the center of the chiasmus."[501] To begin, men surround Tamar throughout the narrative. The narrator introduces the characters in 2 Sam 13:1 as Absalom, David's son; Tamar, his beautiful sister; and Amnon, who is also David's son. From the beginning of the narrative, two males surround Tamar. Later, Jonadab, Amnon, and David each discuss Tamar. Jonadab and Amnon devise a scheme to lure her into Amnon's presence, and David summons her to go to her brother's house to prepare food for him (2 Sam 13:7). Even in her physical absence, male desire surrounds Tamar, and male directives determine her movement. Once in the house, Amnon closes in on her when he moves her to his chamber and seizes her before he rapes her (2 Sam 13:10-11). Finally, Absalom engulfs Tamar when he instructs her to remain quiet about the

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[501] Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 44.

rape and move into his home (2 Sam 13:20). In this way, Absalom silences and isolates Tamar, the rape victim. The acts of surrounding, constricting, and seizing pre-stage the rape, and the acts of silencing and isolating work to further victimize the rape victim.

In addition to the words and actions of the male characters, the narrative structure also envelops the daughter. Trible demonstrates the pivotal aspect of the rape as part of the structural snare as follows:

A   Amnon's command to the servants and their response (13:9de)

    B   Amnon's command to Tamar and her response (13:10-11a)

        C   Conversation between Amnon and Tamar (13:11b-14a)

            D   Rape (13:14b-15b)

        C' – B'   Conversation between Amnon and Tamar: Amnon's

            command to Tamar and her response (13:15c-16)

A'   Amnon's command to a servant and his response (13:17-18)[502]

Trible offers an interesting treatment of 2 Sam 13. For Trible, words and actions literally close in on Tamar in violent ways, and eventually culminate in her rape. She strengthens her argument of entrapment and rape when she points out how the verbs חזק, בוא, and שכב signal the quick and forceful action that precedes the rape, and how, through a series of orders, Amnon manipulates the occasion.[503] However, Trible overreaches when she ascribes motive to characters when the text does not support such. For example, Trible poetically presents Amnon

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[502] Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 44. Trible highlights that the Hebrew omits the preposition to stress Amnon's brutality, and notes that if the repetitions of verbs confirms the predictability of Amnon's act, the direct object, "her," underscores cruelty beyond the expected.

[503] Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 45. Here, the verb, חזק (be strong) is inflected in the Hif case. Therefore, Amnon grabbed, seized, or grasped Tamar. Both בוא, and שכב appear in the imperative. Amnon commands Tamar to come to him and lie with him.

as being motivated by anguish when, regarding Amnon's reaction after raping Tamar, she states, "To hear might mean repentance. So Amnon chooses to close out her voice, even leaving his refusal for the narrator to report. Amnon cares not at all for his sister. He acts against her will to pursue his lust."[504] With no textual markers such as Amnon's explaining himself, perhaps to his servant, Trible cannot know Amnon's repentant motives.

Rideout and Trible offer two credible interpretations of the chiastic structure of 2 Sam 13, but overlook several options. As a challenge to the side of the inside/outside debate which maintains that women are safe as they remain in interior spaces, I offer a different interpretation of the chiastic structure of 2 Sam 13. In this chiasm, in the daughter is vulnerable despite being in an interior space.

A Tamar is inside a home (13:1-7)

  B Tamar goes to a home (13:8-9)

    C Tamar is raped inside a home (13:10-17)

  B' Tamar leaves a home (13:18-19)

A' Tamar is inside a home (13:20-21)

Second, I offer a chiastic reading that has potentially negative implications. Here, the daughter's direct speech acts precipitates her rape. This interpretation is harmful in that it re-victimizes the victim by advancing the idea that the daughter does something to cause the sexual assault.

A Tamar is silent (13:1-11)

  B Tamar speaks (13:12-14)

    C Tamar is raped (13:14-15)

  B' Tamar speaks (13:16)

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[504] Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 46.

A' Tamar is silent (13:17-21)

Like Rideout and Trible, throughout her treatment of 2 Sam 13, Fuchs uses the term "rape" to describe Amnon's assault on Tamar. Fuchs introduces her project by stating that most discussions of 2 Sam 13 (along with Gen 34) "tend to take at face value the stories of sisters' rape," a statement that speaks of the evaluative strategy which unambiguously characterizes Amnon as a sly, corrupt, and ruthless character who rapes "an innocent virgin who is his half-sister," and points to the rape laws that assume that the real victim is "the raped woman's father or brother."[505] Furthermore, the designation of sections of her essay as, "Rape and the Father's Home," and "Rape as Institution or Experience," along with the examinations of the emotional attitude of the female victim after the sexual assault all demonstrate that Fuchs understood Tamar to be raped.

Like Rideout before her, Fuchs points to the repetition of "brother" and "sister" to highlight the fact that the narrative is dealing with a family drama, and that even the closest relatives must not be trusted.[506] Fuchs adds that the repetition of "food" (לחם) and "cakes" (לבב) reinforces the ironic tension between innocent appearances and hidden motives, and that the repetition of "house" (בית) is not coincidental.[507] For Fuchs, the different uses of "house" emphasize the importance of constricting the daughter at home. The use of "house" to reinforce this directive is not wholly sound for two reasons: first, the only reason the daughter left her original "house" was in obedience to her father; and second, according to the inside/outside

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[505] Fuchs, *Sexual Politics,* 201, 202, 204. Exod 22:15-16 and Deut 22:28-29 describe how the father is compensated for the rape of his daughter.

[506] Fuchs, *Sexual Politics,* 211.

[507] Fuchs, *Sexual Politics,* 212.

theory, the daughter should be safe in interior spaces. Adherence to this house directive falsely presumes that the directive supersedes the tradition of paternal obedience.

Fuchs' claim that the sister functions as a catalyst for the males in the narrative is valid. Tamar is the factor who determines the culpability of the villain, Amnon, and the heroism of the brother, Absalom.[508] In the larger narrative scheme, Tamar is the vehicle by which Amnon's threat to the Davidic throne is eliminated and Absalom's claim, as that of the just avenger of those exploited by others, is justified. Fuchs also highlights Tamar's rejection of Amnon's advances as an example of female autonomy, and claims that Tamar's autonomy, ability, or right to avenge herself is taken away by Absalom's heroic act.[509] While Tamar, through her reasoned speech act, exercises a degree of autonomy when she attempts to dissuade Amnon, Absalom took away her rights. However, Absalom does not deprive Tamar of her right to avenge herself because, as a woman in the biblical world, Tamar does not have this right. There is no canonical support for women avenging themselves of rape.[510] Furthermore, much of Fuchs' argument rests on the idea that brothers (not the sisters themselves) are the heroes of rape stories. Fuchs suggests that, like most detailed narratives about sister-figures, 2 Sam 13 presents Tamar as a victim who depends on her brother for deliverance.[511]

Finally, within the text, Tamar has recourse she does not exploit. Following her own advice, Tamar could have spoken with her father. Instead of asking him for permission to marry Amnon, Tamar could have told her father of the rape, but to what end? Her quest for justice

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[508] Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 202.

[509] Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 204.

[510] Other narrative examples of women being raped include Dinah in Gen 34, the concubine in Judg 19:25, and various groups of women who are raped when their cities are overthrown (see Num 31:7-18, Judg 21:10-24, and 2 Sam 12:11-14). These women do not avenge themselves.

[511] Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 200.

most probably would have gone unresolved since, according to 2 Sam 13:21, when David heard about the transgression, he was angry, but took no action against Amnon. In the world of the Hebrew Bible, rape is a matter among men. It is one man's transgression against another, such that the transgressor makes restitution with the male who is transgressed. There is no place for women in these transactions. There are no rights for the female victims of these acts. For Fuchs to argue that Absalom took Tamar's right to avenge herself presumes that Tamar may have taken action against Amnon; and yet, because there is no restitution for female victims of rape, Fuchs reasoning here is faulty.

Pamela Reis, however, is not at all sympathetic towards Tamar.[512] She argues that Tamar's is not a story of a woman victimized by rape. Rather, it is a story of a woman who engages in consensual incest in hopes of marrying a would-be king and becoming queen. Reis supports her thesis with four major arguments: First, Tamar prepares "heart cakes," which have aphrodisiacal qualities; second, Tamar knowingly and willingly goes to an unsafe place and stays there when danger is eminent; third, Tamar presumes that sexual intercourse obliges Amnon to marry her; and, finally, Tamar is complicit with the sex act because she does not cry out.

Reis translates the term לבבות found in verses 6 and 8 as "heart-cakes," and suggests that Tamar prepares these items as a flirtatious act in order to sexually arouse Amnon.[513] Rideout, Trible, and Fuchs do not mention "heart cakes" and chose to translate לבבות simply as "food," or

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[512] Reis, "Cupidity and Stupidity," 43-60.

[513] Reis, "Cupidity and Stupidity," 46. Reis renders "heart cakes" based upon the word לבב being embedded in the word לבבות. This translation is supported by *HALOT*, which renders the word as, "heart-shaped pastry." *HALOT* defines לבב as "a kind of pastry: heart-shaped pastry" (*HALOT*, 516)., *BDB* renders לבב in 2 Sam 13 as, "cakes, probably pancakes." (*BDB*, 525). For similar treatments of לבב see J. B. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel,* vol 1, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981 and Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes, *The Double Voice of Her Desire.* Edited by Jonneke Bekkenkamp, and Freda Dröes, and David E. Orton. Leiderdorp: DEO Norwich, 2004.

"cakes."[514] Reis' unique translation choice supports her idea that Tamar seeks to entice Amnon, but does not harmonize with analyses of the larger scholarly community.

While Reis argues that Tamar seeks to marry Amnon, I read the text differently. Tamar's compliance with the command of her father, the King, and the demand of her brother, the Prince, are in deference to male figures in her patriarchal and androcentric community. Unlike Tamar of Gen 38, Potiphar's wife, and Delilah, Tamar's words and actions are neither solicitous nor sexually enticing.[515] Tamar does not speak kindly, alluringly, or lovingly to Amnon. All of her direct speech to her brother serves to deter and obstruct his aggressive behavior. Tamar also does not seduce Amnon through her actions or her presentation. The writer does not include any adverbs to suggest that Tamar's arrival or preparation and presentation of the food was anything more than a platonic act (2 Sam 13:8-9). Additionally, Tamar arrives wearing a long robe with sleeves, which do not signal temptation (2 Sam 13:18). Furthermore, the text does not demonstrate that Tamar is intent on marrying Amnon, or hopes to become her brother's wife as a result of rape. As a princess, she undoubtedly anticipates becoming a wife by more traditional and acceptable means, and most likely expects her royal father to marry her off for political gain.

Rideout, Fokkelman, Trible, and Fuchs interpret Tamar's story as one of a woman victimized by rape. It is a story of a woman who is challenged by deceit, disregard, and disillusionment. Rideout and Fuchs cite Amnon's feigned illness; the interchangeable use of לחם (food) and לבבות (cakes) by Jonadab, Amnon, and David; and Absalom's veiled long-term revenge plan as examples of deception employed by characters in the text. David's lack of a response to Tamar's plight, and Absalom's initial reaction to his sister's situation demonstrate a

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[514] Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 208, Rideout, "The Rape of Tamar", 79, and Trible *Texts of Terror*, 42.

[515] In their attempts to exert sexual autonomy, Tamar, Potiphar's wife, and Delilah each act and say things to entice their targets. Tamar changes clothes and takes up a position where Judah presumably might notice her in Gen 38:14; Potiphar's wife tells Joseph to lie with her and grabs his garment in Gen 39:7 and 12; and when instructed to coax Samson, Delilah feigns emotion in her encounters with him in Judg 16:5.

disregard for Tamar's well-being. Finally, Amnon's dishonorable reaction to her reasoned pleas in 2 Samuel 13:12-14, and her final desolate state must have disillusioned her. More important, Tamar suffers despite dutifully obeying each of the commands of the men in her family.

Tradition is also marked by virginity, specifically the father's control of a daughter's בתולים until marriage.[516] A father values the virginal status of a daughter.[517] When a man violates the virginity of a daughter prior to marriage, the offender legally violates the father's rights, and the father must be compensated.[518] That the daughter's sexuality is the legal right of the father also explains why there is no prohibition against a father's having sexual intercourse with his daughter in Leviticus. The father has rights to her virginity and he can exercise those rights. Therefore, in 2 Sam 13 Amnon's rape of Tamar is a transgression against the father, David, and not his sister.

The importance of virginity prior to marriage finds precedence in biblical law.[519] Oftentimes, the honor of the household is bound up in its guarantee that the bride is a virgin at the time of marriage. Thus, in 2 Sam 13:2, the biblical writer highlights the fact that Tamar is a virgin (בתולה, *betula*). Amnon also notes her virginal state. Thus, Tamar is a virgin and, by all textual accounts, is concerned with maintaining that status—at least until she is rightly betrothed. When Amnon grabs her and begins to force himself on her, Tamar protests. In 2 Sam 13:12, Tamar speaks directly to her brother and admonishes him to not force himself upon her because

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[516] I took up the concern of virginity as a commodity in a previous chapter. Also, see Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel*, and Matthews and Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel* for discussions of the importance of the בתולה and the role of the father in the life of the daughter.

[517] See Matthews and Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel* for discussions of the importance of the virgin and the role of the father in the life of the daughter.

[518] Deut 22.28-29 stipulates that if a man sexually violates a virgin, he must make restitution by marrying her and paying her father fifty shekels of silver.

[519] Deut 22.13-21. Because virginity was such an important characteristic of an ideal wife, initial sexual contact between men and women was designated for the wedding night. Deut 22.13-21 stipulates that a stained sheet from the wedding bed serve as proof should the husband allege the wife was not a virgin at the time of their wedding.

"such a thing" is not done in Israel. Scholars articulate various understandings of the meaning of "such a thing"; however, based upon context, Tamar is referring to Amnon's immediate actions: seizing her and forcing her to engage in sexual intercourse. Furthermore, Tamar's mention that such a thing is not "done in Israel" points to some Israelite custom. Tamar, then, is navigating a power system of tradition that is marked by a custom: the custom of preserving the virginity of a young girl until marriage.

Finally, related to the custom of virginity are customs associated with marriage, specifically the role of the father in the negotiation of marriage contracts. Marriage is another marker of the system of power authenticated by tradition in the story of the daughter Tamar. Tamar therefore follows the tradition when she expresses concern about Amnon's attacking her and refers him to her father, who as the male head of household would negotiate the terms of her marriage, in 2 Sam 13:13. Here Tamar appeals to a shared understanding of the customary processes associated with sexual intercourse and marriage. In all of her actions, Tamar never violates the cultural expectations of women. She obeys the males and does not transgress gendered boundaries.

Biblical evidence supports the idea that pre-marital sex does not preclude marriage. [520] On the contrary, provision is made for men who engage in pre-marital intercourse. Deut 22:9 details that the men simply have the option and responsibility to marry the girl. Additionally, although virgins are considered prized brides, the fact that Tamar was a member of the royal family most probably mitigated her non-virginal status for potential suitors. Who would not want to marry the beautiful daughter of King David during the time of the monarchy?

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[520] Priests were the only individuals legally required to marry virgins. Among the prohibitions for the members of the priesthood, Lev 21:13-14 states that a priest may only marry a virgin from his kin group. He may not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or one who is degraded by harlotry. Arguments persist around what is at stake for a woman to be a virgin when she married. Most of these arguments revolve around the importance of the husband being assured that any children born to their union are indeed his.

And yet, in spite of her relative power as the daughter of royalty, Tamar is both a model of accommodation and suffers as a result of her submission to male control. Tamar, the daughter of King David, is summoned by her father to prepare food for her ailing brother Amnon at his home. When she arrives and prepares the food, she is asked to feed him in his chambers. Tamar complies with the wish of her ailing brother and, once in his chambers, is sexually assaulted by him. Tamar protests, but Amnon does not relent. He rapes Tamar, and then instructs his attendant to put her outside. While outside mourning, Tamar meets her brother, Absalom, who advises her to remain silent. Tamar complies and spends the rest of her life "desolate" in Absalom's house. Like Jephthah's daughter, Tamar does not violate the cultural expectations of women. When her safety is threatened, she challenges male authority, but ultimately, suffers at the hand of Amnon. Nevertheless, like Jephthah's daughter, Tamar is a model of accommodation as she submits to the commands and desires of the males in her narrative. Jephthah's daughter accommodates her father. Tamar accommodates both her father and her brothers. As with the other daughters examined in this chapter however, Tamar does not only accommodate. When, beginning in 2 Sam 13:12, she protests Amnon's advances, Tamar also resists.

Conclusion

Biblical daughters navigate systems and institutions of power that do not always treat them favorably. Static, bilateral categorizations are insufficient to describe the responses of these characters when they encounter antagonistic systems and institutions of power. Overall, daughters are models of both resistance and accommodation based on the degree to which they respond to systems and institutions of power that are antagonistic to them.. Miriam accommodates systems of power when she sings after Moses at the Sea, but she resists when she

aides in the defiance of Pharaoh's decree and when she challenges Moses' exclusive leadership. The outsider, Rahab deceives the king and his messengers, accommodates the Israelite spies, and usurps the male roles of protecting her family and controlling her female body. Furthermore, as a woman who controls her own sexuality, Rahab is marginalized by a society that does not celebrate sexually active women who are not married.

Perhaps because she understands herself to have no recourse among the palace leadership in the matter of her rape by her brother, Princess Tamar accommodates the systems and institutions of power in her narrative when she aligns with the agenda of her father and her two brothers. Similarly, as the only child of the outcast war hero, Jephthah's daughter has no support in the community. Banished from his own community, Jephthah makes such a name for himself as an outlaw that he exists beyond the borders of acceptable Israelite society. As the daughter of a rogue who lives outside the law, Jephthah's daughter cannot appeal to anyone who might exercise power over him. I characterize Jephthah as a rogue based upon the textual evidence that the people of Gilead expelled him from the community and he became so renown for his fighting that he attracted outlaws to join him in raids against neighboring communities (Judg 11:2-3). Thus, her only option is to align with her father's agenda. Born to the community outcast, Jephthah's daughter is an extreme outsider.[521] As the only child of Jephthah she is an example of a daughter whose circumstances dictate their degree of resistance. Finally, Leah does not challenge her father when he leverages her body to increase his economic position by tricking Jacob into working for him for an extended period of time. Despite these examples however, it not enough to label Tamar, Jephthah's daughter, and Leah as accommodating.

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[521] Judg 11:1-8. Jephthah, whose father is unknown, is the son of harlot. Over time, Jephthah developed such a reputation for battle that the Gileadites solicited his leadership to fight the Ammonites.

When systems of power threaten them, biblical daughters resist, but they resist along a continuum. Most often these daughters usurp a male role, and the degree of their resistance is contextual. As a royal, Pharaoh's daughter overtly resists the systems of power when she overtly defies legal and traditional markers of power. The outsiders, Lot's daughters and Rahab, also resist, but their acts of resistance are executed covertly and deceptively. Finally, Dinah transgresses a gendered boundary and is silenced by the biblical writer. Yet, the category, resistant, does not wholly capture the responses of Pharoah's daughter, Lot's daughters, Rahab or Dinah. The biblical daughter does not always accommodate each system of power, nor does she only resist. In many ways, the daughter characters reflect the nuanced nature of human reality and their actions cannot be neatly catalogued or contained. Biblical daughters both accommodate and resist. Based upon this review of select daughter narratives, when daughters accommodate, they often demonstrate their acquiescence through silent obedience. In the same way, when daughters resist many speak. Although every daughter exists under the same rubric of power, each daughter navitgates power differently. Importantly, *t*hroughout their narratives, these daughters negotiate systems to power variously depending on the circumstances.

CHAPTER VI

EPILOGUE

When asked about the richness of her preaching, the late Bishop Leontine T. C. Kelly of

the United Methodist church would say, "I never finish, but I do stop!" Bishop Kelly believed

that her salvific message was always larger than the sermonic moment itself. Similarly, my

concern for biblical daughters is larger than this dissertation. Although I am not finished with

my fascination of daughters in the Hebrew Bible, after years of research, discoveries, writing,

enhancement, refinement, re-writing, re-re-writing and fine-tuning, I have to stop here, reflect on

my project, and consider my path forward.

This project grew out of a deceptively simple question: "What about the daughters?"

And yet, as simple and profound as it may be, this question is misleading, because biblical

daughters are not homogeneous. Some biblical daughters are royalty, and are afforded privileges

unavailable to the daughters of the general populous. Most daughters speak and claim a degree

of autonomy via their voice, some daughters have no voice at all. Some daughters have siblings,

while others exist as only children. Some daughters are part of the Israelite community, while

others are foreign outsiders. Each of these identifiers have bearing on daughters in the Hebrew

Bible. "What about the daughters?" is also complicated by the fact that daughters contributed

differently to their communities. Some daughters work outside the home while others perform

tasks that render them homebound. Throughout the biblical canon, daughters rebuild temple

walls, shepherd flocks, gather water, dance, sing and play musical instruments, sew, cook and

weep. "What about the daughters?" is an intricate question because biblical daughters each have

different experiences. Daughters are princesses, concubines and household servants,. Some

daughters never experience bodily harm, while others are physically assaulted.

Indeed, daughter is a complicated concept. My examination of daughters in the Hebrew

Bible is informed by semantics, sociological theory, and narrative critical methodology. I

circumscribe daughter as that female member of the household who is readily identified with a

parent but not yet a mother. I began my project with an exploration of the semantic range of בת

and other words used to describe daughter. Notably, the Hebrew term, בת is the only term

examined that means daughter. Along with its plural, בנות, also signifies cities and their

inhabitants, denotes smaller villages that are dependent upon larger cities, and is used in

numerous idioms and phrases. When a daughter is described as a נערה, she functions in a

subordinate role, and when she is described as a בתולה she is often involved in a betrothal

narrative. The introduction of an עלמה into a story heightens the narrative tension because this

character introduces dramatic irony; readeers can not anticipate how the עלמה may advance the

plot.. A ילדה is simply a female child, and when a daughter of primarly described as an אחות, her

brothers perform the roles otherwise assigned to the patriarch. Furthermore, although *daughter*

is both a sexed and a gendered being, the biblical writer often conflates these two different

elements. The biblical writer's preoccupation with a daughter's sexual experiences and her

gendered contributions to the community meld two elements that feminist theorists have helped

us understand to be quite different. Responsible treatments of daughter, therefore, must step

outside the androcentric ideology of the biblical text.[522]   Throughout my project, I acknowledge

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[522] I borrow from J. Cheryl Exum (1993) who works from the assumption that the biblical text was produced by and
for a male-centered community that reflects androcentric ideas about women. The constructions of women in
general, and daughters in particular, serve androcentric interests. Importantly, here and throughout this dissertation I
use the term ideology in the descriptive sense as in 'world view' already in existence.

this ideology and push back against its influence on the collective understanding of daughters in the biblical text.

An androcentric ideology is particularly myopic in cases related to daughters and virginity. I argue that virginity is not at all limited to sexual activity. Moreover, a daughter's virginity is not hers in a possessive sense, but is a commodity controlled by the patriarch. To the ongoing discourse around spatiality and safety, I add that a daughter's safety has little to do with her physical location because systems and institutions of power press in upon this character equally regardless of whether she is inside or outside. Additionally, female-exclusive spaces seem the most safe for biblical daughters. I also examine sociological models of power and offer that the introduction of gender complicates these patterns. Specifically, hierarchical power dynamics are not consistant when a female with higher status is in relationship with a male.

Because it played an important role in my project, I examined power. I hoped to identify an axiomatic relationship between power and the fate of biblical daughters. I therefore identified its theoretical contours, its structural elements, and conscripted its representation in biblical narratives. I concluded that, for daughters in the Hebrew Bible, power is power-over, finite and legitimated by both legal mechanisms and tradition. Importantly, the most prominent mechanisms of the legitimation of power in the lives of biblical daughters is patriarchy.

Patriarchy highlights gendered and unequal distributions of power that result in particular conceptualizations of daughters. These images support the male drive to control the daughter and her body. These patriarchal conscriptions also focus on her physical beauty, anticipate her maternal, procreative role, push her away from the nucleus of authority, and mark her as subordinate. Furthermore, patriarchal conscriptions of daughter advance the idea that daughters were the property of men and such envisioning of daughters as property (akin to moveable

property or livestock) advances ideas of subordination and negates the autonomy of biblical daughters.

Armed with these findings, I thought I would discover a pattern for daughters and their response to power. I hoped to conclude that when daughters encounter antagonistic systems and institutions of power in the biblical text their responses are predictable: they either accommodate or resist. At minimum, I expected to categorize daughters based upon a limited number of responses. Perhaps I would add a third category for a small group of daughters that generally resist, but accommodate to a small degree.

I found that daughters respond to power in very fluid ways. Instead of there being some daughters who I can categorize as accommodating and others whom I can label as resistant, I found that all daughters both accommodate and resist power. Dinah resists societal convention and transgresses a gendered boundary when she acts as a diplomat in her quest to visit with the women of the region, but she silently accommodates the patriarchal drive to control the female body for the rest of her narrative. Rahab accommodates the biblical writer by supporting the interests of the male Israelite heros, but she resists the patriarchal drive to control the female body in her designation as a prostitute – a marginzlied member of society, and when she transgresses gendered boundaries when she – not her father - negotiates for the safety of her family. .

For those who look to the biblical text for guidance and affirmation, this examination of daughters may send the message that female bodies are commoditized by men. This revelation may be upsetting to both women and men. If a daughter and her embodiment are to be bartered or traded among men, what might that mean for young girls growing up in 21st century America? What might this mean for young boys, especially those who might envision their only power in

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society as connected to their treatment of women? At best, these findings may burden men with psychological pressures that advance notions of male supremacy based solely on genitalia. The socio-economic implications of adopting this mindset and the attendant folklore concerning the scarcity of 'good' men are far-reaching, and potentially encourages women to fight over suitable spouses. Additionally, what are the implications of this message for members of the LGBTQIA community? What are girls who grow to be lesbian, queer, or transgendered women supposed to do with this information?

Many of the findings of my project are infuriating, if not depressing, but *Daddy's Little Girls?: An Examination of Daughters in the Hebrew Bible* is where my larger work begins. Although it is beyond the scope of this project, the roles of mothers in the stories of daughters warrants investigation. What role do mothers play in the safety of daughters? Lot's daughters devise the desperate plan in the cave after the death of their mother; Dinah is raped while her mother, Leah, is nowhere to be found; and readers never meet the mothers of Jephthah or Zelophehad's daughters.

If penning daughters as obedient, submissive, and expendable is the biblical writers' convenient way of handling otherwise unwieldy characters, there may be some more inconvenient yet liberative ways to read these stories. I would like to revisit the stories of biblical daughters with the presupposition that such daughters view the world with suspicion. What if daughters have an ideology of suspicion such that they view males (those empowered by the patriarchal power systems) as untrustworthy? What might it mean that Tamar obeyed despite her distrust of David, Amnon, and Absalom? And what about Jephthah's daughter, who should have asked the terms of her father's vow instead of blindly acquiescing.

In some ways, I almost wish I had not set out to examine daughters in the Hebrew Bible. The stories are not uplifting. We do our daughters and sons a disservice when we teach them that their value is wholly dependent upon their ability to align themselves with the people who have the trappings of power and success. With one hand, we exhort them to develop their God-given abilities in order to live fulfilling lives and contribute to society, while with the other hand we offer them theological data that supports the idea that their abilities and contributions do not count for much. I would like to explore different ways to read these stories alongside youth and young adults. I suspect there may be some more responsible ways to engage the text that do not leave faith-filled readers disillusioned with the theological enterprise.

Going forward, these questions demand reasoned answers. Here, I stop, but I know I am not finished.
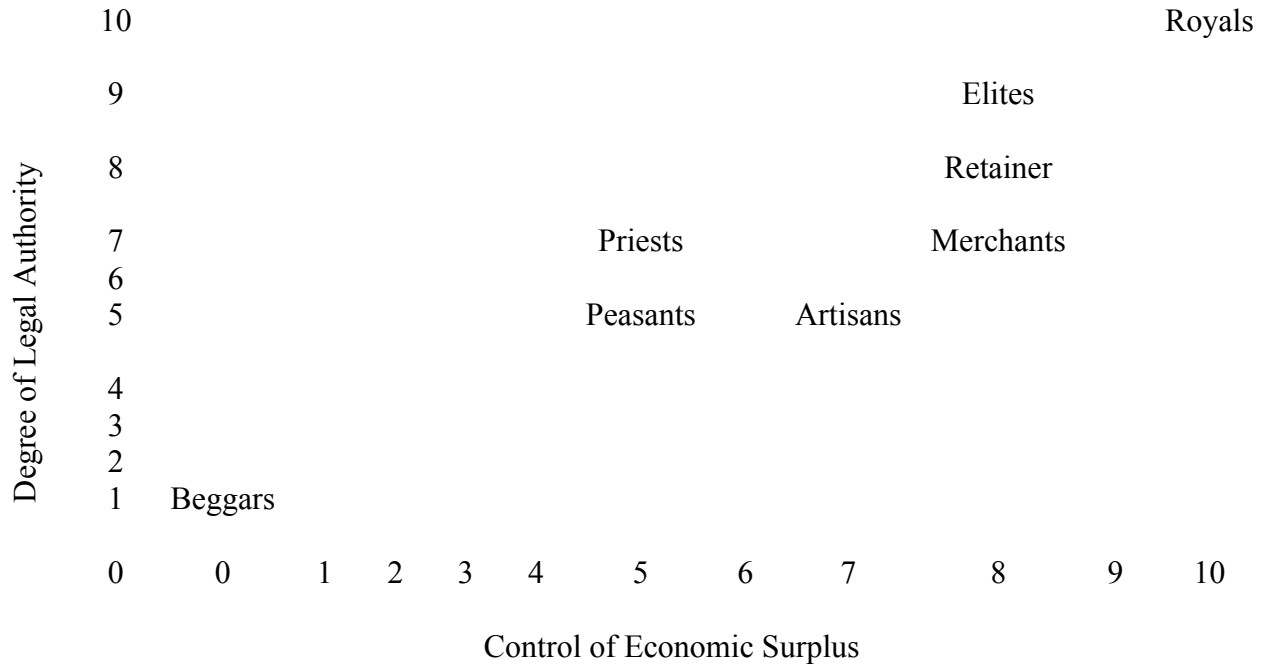
Lenski's Fictional Latin American Society (modified)[523]

The Distributive System			
The Political Class System	The Property Class System	The Occupational Class System	The Ethnic Class System
The Elite	The Wealthy	Large Landowners	Spaniards
The Bureaucracy	The Middle Class	Independent Farmers / Officials / Merchants	Spaniards
The Apolitical Class	The Poor	Peasants / Artisans	Mestizos
The Apolitical Class	The Poor	Peasants / Artisans	Indians
Suspected Enemies of the Regime	The Impoverished	Beggars, Prostitutes, Unemployed, etc.	Indians

In this society there are four important sources of power: 1) political activity, 2) wealth, 3) work or occupational activity, and 4) ethnicity. These classes are not of equal importance despite their equal distribution in the top row of this chart. Within each class system there are a series of classes. Though imprecise, the different sizes of the individual sections represent boundaries between the classes.

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[523] Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 80. This chart is a modified version of Lenski's original graphic.

Power as Social Status in Agrarian Societies

10   Royals

9   Elites

8   Retainer

Degree of Legal Authority

7   Priests   Merchants
6
5   Peasants   Artisans

4
3
2
1   Beggars

0   0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Control of Economic Surplus

Based upon Lenski's schema of social stratification in agrarian socieites, this graphic depicts the spatial relationships between members of different classes and how they might interact with each other along the axes related to power. Along the Degree of Legal Authority axis, members of the royal class have the highest amount of legal authority. Through decree, kings establish and enact laws that their administrative support systems (i.e., members of the elite class which includes governors and military leaders) enforce. Below them, members of the retainer class have decreasing degrees of legal authority.   These men cannot speak laws into existence like kings, but they are ascribed the responsibility to ratify laws (elders), adjudicate arguments, or bring claims to the legal council. Members of the priestly class and merchant classes can bring claims to the council and have more legal authority than peasants and artisans, and those remaining members of the community (beggars) have very few rights.

Along the horizontal axis, class is determined by an individual's amount of control of economic surplus. In agrarian communities, economic surplus is represented by the control of property, goods, and services.   The greatest indicator of control of economic surplus in agrarian communities is the control of landed property and its production. Because the land of a region is under the sovereign rule of kings, royals have almost absolute control, members of the merchant class have less and peasants, artisans and others have little to no control over the economic surplus.   The priestly class because they perform important cultic tasks, therefore these men are afforded a degree of status despite the fact that they have little control of economic surplus because they do not own any landed property.

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