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Date

Bearers of a Narrative of Listening in the Age of Testimony:  
Determining Meaning for Genesis 34

By

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Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Division of Religion

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M.A. Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 1995

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An abstract of  
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Emory University  
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Doctor of Philosophy  
Graduate Division of Religion  
2009

## Abstract

### Bearers of a Narrative of Listening in the Age of Testimony: Determining Meaning for Genesis 34

Frances H. Fite

In this dissertation, I critique what I perceive to be a lack in the method of determining meaning currently in use in Biblical Studies in the United States, in that the current dialogical method not only fails to take into account adequately the role of subjectivity in the determination of a meaning for a biblical text and but also in that it allows little or no room for subjectivities other than those within the interpretive circle of specialist readers to be decisive in the determination of meaning for a biblical text. My assertion about the inadequacy of such an approach to biblical interpretation is based on the systematic murder of six million Jews in Europe, a horror which was constructed and carried out by Christians, whose views of the Bible had been informed by the determinations of an educated elite in dialogue with each other; in other words, on the basis of a method of meaning-determination which the Holocaust has shown to be destructive when it comes to determining meanings for biblical texts. This way of determining meaning creates hermeneutical problems because the situations of characters who are not front and center in a biblical text often are misinterpreted and consequently so is the entire situation depicted in the text. The change to interpretative method which I recommend is the addition of accounts of and by people whose situations resemble those of characters who are marginalized and silenced in biblical texts. Using their testimonies or stories about them provides the means by which a text can be understood more fully. In this way, this method affords the opportunity of making better sense of the text as whole. In connection with this approach, I emphasize translation because translators cannot endlessly engage in the deferral of meaning, but must decide on a meaning and, as the Holocaust makes clear, the meanings they decide on have consequences in the lives of actual human beings.

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*To Elisabeth Fritzl, who lived through hell  
and managed to raise and educate three children while doing so.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is not possible for me to express adequately my gratitude to my adviser Carol Newsom, except to say that this dissertation simply would not exist had it not been for her continued support and expert guidance throughout a very long process. I am grateful, as well, for the other members of my committee, David Petersen and Brent Strawn, whose careful reading of my work and considered opinions in response to it enabled me to achieve a better understanding of the issues at play in my dissertation and to rework it accordingly.

Others whose labors contributed to my accomplishing my goal are the staffs at Pitts and Woodruff libraries. Without their expertise, patience and kindness, I would not have managed to complete this project. The same can be said Pescha Penso. Also kind and competent, she rescued me on more than one occasion.

Still others whose kindness and attentiveness saw me through some difficult days and long nights are the many friends who expressed interest and gave support, especially my forever friends--the "group"--and my newfound friends at First Presbyterian Church of Toccoa. The Reverend David Keister of Toccoa Church came on the scene late in the process, but he was just the person I needed to see me through to the end.

As I reread my completed work, I saw in it intimations of my up upbringing—traces of my mother, who was an empathetic listener with a gift for encouraging people in all walks of life to pursue their dreams and develop their capabilities, and of my father as well, who was a true gentleman and who, in his approach to others, tutored me in the appropriate use of power. As for the rest of my family, I am grateful for my grandchildren, Janey and Mac, for being who they are and for bringing joy to all who know them. Special thanks go to my sister and brother-in-law for helping me get started on this path and for staying with me throughout, as did all of my extended family. Most of all though, I am grateful for my children, J.D. and Kris and Becky and Roger, for their moral and technical support, and for my husband, John, who was there throughout. He was "like a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land."

## ABBREVIATIONS

ALD	Aramaic Levi Document
BDB	Brown, Driver, Briggs
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
FLDS	Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints
HALOT	Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
Jub	Jubilees
KJV	King James Version
LPT	Levi-Priestly Tradition
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Massoretic Text
NAB	New American Bible
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OL	Old Latin
RSV	Revised Standard Version
Tg. Neof.	Targum Neofiti
Tg. Onq.	Targum Onqelos
Tg. Ps.-J.	Targum Pseudo-Jonathon
T. Levi	Testament of Levi
TEV	Today's English Version
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament



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## **Chapter One: Subjectivity and the interpretive process**

### **Introduction**

In this dissertation I investigate the role of subjectivity not only in the creation of meaningful biblical texts by those who composed these texts, but also in the creation of meaning by those who received and who continue to receive these texts. I assert the importance of taking into account the subjectivity which is fundamental to both of these meaning-making processes.<sup>1</sup> By “subjectivity” I mean people’s personally-formed matrices of meaning, which are shaped by the historical time period in which they live, as well as by the expectations imposed by their cultures, by their commitments and values, by their own personal experiences, and by their acquired knowledge. In terms of the composers of biblical texts (both authors and redactors), all of these factors can be seen as coalescing in the creation of their compositional desires: the purposes for which they created an original text<sup>2</sup> or compiled a redacted text. In terms of the readers of biblical texts, all of these factors can be seen as coalescing in the creation of their interpretive desires—the purposes for which readers read the biblical text.<sup>3</sup>

An investigation of the nature of the sexual encounter between Shechem and Dinah in Genesis 34 enables the role of subjectivity in the processes of writing and reading biblical texts to come partially into view, because recently within the North

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<sup>1</sup> That reception is the dominant meaning-making process can be seen in James Barr’s (*The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979], 14) observation that a translation is the result of “the way in which the text was seen, read, and analyzed for grammar and meaning by the translators”—thus indicating the control which the translator has over the source text.

<sup>2</sup> It is not possible to prove whether or not the MT contains the original work of any author. However, throughout my dissertation, I exegete and analyze Genesis 34 as if it were the creation of an author. E. A. Speiser (*Genesis: Introduction, Translation and Notes* [Garden City: Doubleday, 1964], 267) does not view Genesis 34 as a conflated text but sees it as the work of *an* author.

<sup>3</sup> By making these claims, I align myself with Mary McClintock Fulkerson (*Changing the Subject: Women’s Discourses and Feminist Theology* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994], 20), who asserts that desire “is essential to the complex and conflicted process of human understanding.”

American academy<sup>4</sup> the traditional interpretation of Shechem as a rapist who, after raping Dinah, fell in love with her<sup>5</sup> has been called into question and other possibilities concerning the nature of what transpired between Dinah and him are under consideration.<sup>6</sup> On the one hand, there are scholars whose interpretations of Genesis 34 represent the view that Shechem was not a rapist, but only a lover.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, there are scholars who indicate that Shechem was not a lover, but only a rapist.<sup>8</sup> In the process of my demonstrating which of these three views—the traditional one or one of the more recently entertained ones—evidences a solid foothold in the MT,<sup>9</sup> the

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<sup>4</sup> I use the description “North American” to refer to the United States only, even if biblical interpretation is conducted in the mainstream academy in Canada in a manner similar to the way in which it is undertaken in the U.S. All uses of the description “North American” in this dissertation refer only to the United States.

<sup>5</sup> In my dissertation, I represent this construction of Shechem in the following way: rapist/lover.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen van Wolde (“Does ‘Innā Denote Rape? A Semantic Analysis of a Controversial Word,” *VT* 52 [2002], 528) notes that “in modern biblical studies until the 1980’s biblical scholars appear to be unanimous in regarding . . . [Shechem’s sexual encounter with Dinah] as a forceful encounter. . . . Since then, opinions start to differ.”

<sup>7</sup> These scholars include Lyn M. Bechtel, “What If Dinah is not Raped?” *JSOT* 62 (1994), pp. 19-36; Claudia Camp, “The (E)strange(d) Woman in the Land: Sojourning with Dinah,” ch. 7 in her *Wise, Strange and Holy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); Calum M. Carmichael, “Dinah, Leah, and Sarah,” ch. 4 in his *Women, Law, and the Genesis Traditions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1979); Joseph Fleishman, “Shechem and Dinah”—in the Light of Non-Biblical and Biblical Sources,” *ZAW* 116, no. 1, 2004, pp. 12-31; Tikva Frymer-Kensky, “Law and Philosophy: The Case of Sex in the Bible,” ch. 16 in her *Studies in Bible and Feminist Criticism* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2006·5766); M. Gruber, “A Re-examination of the Charges against Shechem Son of Hamor,” *Beit Mikra Quarterly* 54 (1999), pp. 119-127: his article was translated from Modern Hebrew for me by Marian Broida of Emory University; Ita Sheres, *Dinah’s Rebellion: A Biblical Parable for Our Time* (New York: Crossroad, 1990); Ellen van Wolde (see n. 6 *supra*); Moshe Weinfeld, “Humanism,” part 3, ch. 2, in his *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1972); N. Wyatt, “The Story of Dinah and Shechem,” *UF* 22 (1990), pp. 433-458. Others whose work expresses this view in some manner include Nisan Ararat, “Reading According to the ‘Seder’ in the Biblical Narrative: To Balance the Reading of the Dinah Episode [Heb.],” *Hasifrut* 27 (1978), and Yair Zakovitch, “A Survey of the Literary Study of the Bible in Israel [Heb.],” *Newsletter of the World Association for Jewish Studies* 20 (1982). I do not include Ararat’s and Zakovitch’s interpretations in my analysis of the interpretations of Genesis 34 which present Shechem as not a rapist, because I was not able to get a copy of Zakovitch’s article and because the influence of Ararat’s work was not evident in the analyses of any other scholars, as Gruber’s influence is evident on Fleishman (see Chapter 3, pp. 131-133). Therefore I did not have Ararat’s article translated from Modern Hebrew.

<sup>8</sup> These scholars include Susan Ackermann, “The Personal Is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love (‘ĀHĒB, ‘ĀHĀBĀ) in the Hebrew Bible,” *VT* 52, 2002, pp. 437-457; Sandra Gravett, “That All Women May Be Warned: Reading the Sexual and Ethnic Violence in Ezekiel 15 and 23.” (Ph.D. diss., Graduate School of Duke University, 1994); and Susanne Scholz, *Rape Plots: A Feminist Cultural Study of Genesis 34* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> The MT currently serves as the base text for professional analysis of the biblical text.

subjective construal of meaning by the author of Genesis 34, as well as by the interpreters of biblical texts comes into view.

By asserting that these subjectivities come into view, I am not claiming that I am privy to any one else's mind, for, as translation theorists Basil Hatim and Ian Mason rightly note, “verifiable evidence of what goes on in the translator's mind is not readily available”<sup>10</sup>—nor is that kind of information readily available about the authors or redactors of biblical texts. However, Hatim and Mason further assert that “it is legitimate to make informed guesses.”<sup>11</sup> In terms of the interpretive process, a primary source of information concerning the subjectivity which is operative in the interpretive process is the determinations interpreters make concerning the relational/social dynamics depicted in a biblical text. This is revelatory of their subjectivity, for, as Sandra Gravett notes, “translators make judgment calls about how scenes play and bring their interpretive assumptions to the fore.”<sup>12</sup> In the process of my analyses not only of biblical texts but also of my analyses of the interpretations of other interpreters of biblical texts, my interpretive desires, as well as theirs, come into view. When this happens, our interpretive desires can be seen to be tightly interwoven with our interpretive assumptions, one of the most important of which being what we think the biblical text was *about* to its author and original recipients. This decision influences and is influenced by the way in which we construe the relational/social dynamics in the text under consideration, thus bringing into view—at least in part—our subjective construal of meaning.

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<sup>10</sup> Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, *The Translator as Communicator* (London: Routledge, 1997), 171.

<sup>11</sup> Hatim and Mason, *The Translator*, 171.

<sup>12</sup> Sandra Gravett, “Reading ‘Rape’ in the Hebrew Bible: A Consideration of Language,” *JSOT* [2004], 283. Cf. Mishael Maswari Caspi (“The Story of the Rape of Dinah: The Narrator and the Reader.” *HS* [1985], 26), who acknowledges the role of “the subjectivity of the reader's perception. The reader visualizes the action and records mentally an interpretation of what the narrator is saying.”

The decision concerning what the text was about to its author also brings the author's subjectivity into view,<sup>13</sup> as well as those of his recipients, as he created or compiled his text in a certain way in order to convey its 'aboutness' to a certain group of recipients.<sup>14</sup> Thus the way in which he constructed his text, as well as its content, can be seen as having been influenced by his perception of the subjectivities of his ideal recipients. As a result, their subjectivities can be seen as 'present' in the result of his labor.<sup>15</sup> In addition, in a narrative text like Genesis 34, there are the subjectivities of the characters in the text, whose subjectivities reflect and 'speak to' the subjectivities of these ideal recipients.<sup>16</sup> And there are, as well, the subjectivities which come into view in relation to the social realities of the world which are evident in the assumptions which underlie and inform biblical texts.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, when biblical texts are the focus of attention, there are also the subjectivities of prior translators and other authoritative interpreters of the text which have 'entered' the text in the process of its journey through time. Their construal of the meanings of biblical texts has become a part of the meaning of the text for many current recipients, who then consider the results of these prior determinations of meaning to be

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<sup>13</sup> Tod Linafelt ("Mad Midrash" and the Negative Dialectics of Post-Holocaust Biblical Interpretation," in *Bibel und Midrasch* [ed. Gerhard Bodendorfer and Matthias Millard; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1998], 266) asks the pertinent question, "What teller of tales does not invest something of his or her being into the telling?" He goes on to note that, as a result of this self-investment of the teller in the tale told, the story does not "exist completely separate from the horizon of the teller."

<sup>14</sup> This is, of course, the interpreter's *perception* of the author's subjectivity and those of his recipients.

<sup>15</sup> Strictly speaking, it is the composer's *perception* of their subjectivities which is present in the text, but since authors and redactors of biblical texts created their texts in order to address needs and concerns of their own times, then the results of their efforts—the written text—is at least partially reflective of the subjectivities of those who inhabited the worlds in which the author(s)/redactor(s) composed their texts.

<sup>16</sup> This assertion is based on my proposal that Genesis 34 is a work of didactic fiction. See Ch. 6, p. 254.

<sup>17</sup> These subjectivities are part of "the real life situations behind the vocabulary of the Old Testament." This quote is from Benedikt Hartmann's introduction to the third edition of *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (ed. Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, Johann Jakob Stamm, et. al.; Leiden: Brill, 1994, CI.) Hartman is commenting on "what interested Ludwig Koehler (1880-1956) most" in his considerations of the meanings of Biblical Hebrew words.

‘in’ the text, when in fact, they actually are ‘outside’ the text. One exception in this category of subjectivities is those of the Masorettes, whose subjectivities have become part of the meaning ‘within’ the text,<sup>18</sup> because their pointing of the consonantal text is regarded as authoritative in terms of the meanings ‘in’ biblical texts.<sup>19</sup>

As for subjectivities other than those of specialist interpreters which are ‘outside’ the text and which influence its interpretation, the subjectivities of the persons for whom analysts are interpreting/translating also can be seen as part of the interpretive mix, for analysts’ concerns in regard to the reception of their interpretations will influence the way in which they undertake their analyses of biblical texts. In terms of a formal translation project, the persons outside the text whose subjectivities come into play are those of the sponsors of the project, because, when they make their translation decisions, interpreters will attempt to meet the expectations of these sponsors concerning the final product. In addition, the subjectivities of the proposed recipients also will influence translators’ decisions, because interpreters will be attempting to meet their needs when

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<sup>18</sup> There is some degree of fluidity to the authority afforded the Masorettes, as some consonants in the MT and some of the pointing have been regarded as requiring emendation.

<sup>19</sup> Meaning is never really ‘in’ a biblical text. The text is, rather, a conveyor of the meanings of the lives behind the lines in the text to the lives in front of the lines of the text. The lives in front of the biblical text refer to people who currently construct meanings on the basis of the meanings of those lives lived long ago: those lives behind the lines in the text. (For further description of the lives behind and in front of the lines of the text, see pp. 15-16 *infra*). As for the lives behind the text, recourse to David Roskies’ (“Foreword,” in *Bearing the Unbearable: Yiddish and Polish Poetry in the Ghettos and Concentration Camps* [ed. Freida W. Aaron; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990], ix) list of requirements for readers of these poems can help me make my point about meaning which is conveyed across time and space by the written word. Roskies describes the kind of knowledge he says readers must bring to these poems in order to be able to understand them. His requirements reveal that his real desire is that those who read these poems will be able to *hear* the voices of the unjustly silenced and in that way be enabled to *see* their lives: the lives behind the lines in the text. Roskies writes, “First, one must know the external facts: the precise chronology of mass murder; the names of every occupied town, city, and street . . . ; the difference between ghetto, labor camp, and death camp; the technology of death and starvation. Then one must know how the people singled out for destruction organized their inner lives: the soup kitchens and schools, the concerts and poetry contests, the underground bunkers and resistance movements. Then one must know the languages spoken and written by Europe’s Jews. . . . Then, since artistic expression draws in equal measure from earlier art as from observable reality, one must be thoroughly at home in classical and modern Jewish and European culture. Having done all that, one can begin to evaluate the satiric broadsides, the sentimental lyrics, the lullabies, the epics, and the hymns written and sometimes performed in the valley of death.”

making their translation decisions. However, the group outside the text whose subjectivities have the greatest influence in terms of the interpretation and translation of biblical texts is the analyst's fellow scholars. This is the case because these are the readers who will determine not only how well interpreters have adhered to the approved methods of interpretation in reaching their conclusions but also how accurately the interpreter's analysis reflects the biblical text.<sup>20</sup> That this is the case can be seen in James Barr's assessments of the validity of the scholarly method current at the time at which he wrote his monograph, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, in which he critiqued that method. Barr refers to the "accurate evaluation of the meaning of expressions,"<sup>21</sup> as well as to the "obvious semantic value" of a word,<sup>22</sup> and also to what he considers to be the "natural" way to regard a certain preposition type.<sup>23</sup> The questions then arise: accurate to whom, obvious to whom or natural to whom? The answer to these questions is accurate, obvious, and natural to those who have the authority to make the decisions as to what is accurate, obvious and natural. This is a necessary condition of the production of interpretations and translations of the Bible: those with the authority to do so—because of the level of expertise they bring to the task—must determine what is an accurate representation of the source text.

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<sup>20</sup> Edgar V. McKnight's (*Postmodern Use of the Bible: The Emergence of Reader-oriented Criticism* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988], 263) observation that "readers make sense of the Bible in light of their world by means of methods supplied and validated by that world" is pertinent here.

<sup>21</sup> James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961) 1, italics mine. He also refers to the "accurate evaluation of linguistic phenomena" (2) and to the "necessity for the accurate discussion of the semantics of the words used" (3).

<sup>22</sup> Barr, *The Semantics*, 100, italics mine.

<sup>23</sup> Barr, *The Semantics*, 76, italics mine.

### Authoritative determiners of meaning

That it is those endowed with the authority to decide who determine *what the meaning of occurrences is* can be seen in Mary McClintock Fulkerson's "example of forced penile-vaginal intercourse performed by a male on his female spouse."<sup>24</sup>

Fulkerson states that

this act consists of both physical (nonlinguistic) components and linguistic components... (the pertinent judicial code)... Yet its meaning cannot be limited to either linguistic or physical aspects. The legal code by itself does not define the act; the coital bodily act does not offer forth its meaning.<sup>25</sup> Although the whole includes both [linguistic and nonlinguistic aspects], it is, strictly speaking, neither. It is precisely the work of the category "discourse" to enable *us* to characterize these elements as a ... meaningful whole. That whole is a configuration of significations or discourses. . . . What the act is—legitimate marital relations or brutal rape.... These are simply different realities.... They get their being from the entirety of the discourse.<sup>26</sup>

What is evident in Fulkerson's example is that there *has been* an actual *objective* occurrence—what she refers to as the "thatness" of an actual event.<sup>27</sup> In terms of a biblical text, "thatness" refers not only to the situation depicted in the text under consideration but also to the "thatness" which inspired the composition/construction of the pericope. The decision as to *what* it was that transpired Fulkerson refers to as determining the "whatness" of an event. In terms of a biblical text, determining the "whatness" of what is depicted in the text refers not only to deciding *what* the text was

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<sup>24</sup> Fulkerson, *Changing*, 88. Cf. Donna Haraway ("Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," ch. 9 in her *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* [New York: Routledge, 1991], 195, italics hers), who also acknowledges that reality encompasses "*both* the concrete, 'real' . . . and . . . semiosis and production."

<sup>25</sup> The victim and the perpetrator both *know* that he has raped her, whether or not the judicial code recognizes what he has done as rape (see the next page for the subjectivities of the husband and wife), just as a murderer knows that he has murdered someone whether or not he is convicted of the crime. For a description of the highly subjective embodied knowledge of victims of trauma, see n. 107, *infra*.

<sup>26</sup> Fulkerson, *Changing*, 89.

<sup>27</sup> Fulkerson, *Changing*, 88.



about to its author, but also to *what* he did in order to convey what the text was about to him.<sup>28</sup>

In Fulkerson's example, part of the social dimension of the subjective determination of meaning can be seen in "the pertinent judicial code," which encapsulates the subjective construal of the event by the authorities who created the code; that is, the defining part of the picture is outside the picture itself and in the hands of those who have the social power to write socially-determinative texts like laws—and translations. It is important to note that there is more than one meaning to the event of forced penile-vaginal intercourse performed by a male on his female spouse. The *authoritative* decision made as to the meaning of what has occurred will either validate the husband's subjective experience of the event: his perception that he has an unimpeded right to his wife's body or the wife's subjective experience of the event: her sense of having been violated. An interpretation of this event cannot accommodate both perspectives. As Fulkerson notes, "it is not the case that there is no preferred interpretation, because there always is."<sup>29</sup> In terms of biblical interpretation, the truth of Fulkerson's assertion can be seen in Charles Cosgrove's example of one way in which biblical translators handle indeterminate texts. He notes the decision of the translators of the RSV to translate *μᾶλλον χρῆσαι* in 1 Cor. 7.21 as "avail yourself of the opportunity for freedom" and to offer in a footnote "make use of your present condition" as an alternative translation.<sup>30</sup> The translators of the NRSV did the opposite. Thus, it is evident that even

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<sup>28</sup> Ellen van Wolde (*Words Become Worlds: Semantic Studies of Genesis 1-11* [New York: Brill, 1994], italics mine), notes that "exegesis studies previous processes of meaning-giving (142). . . . Both subjects and objects (*experienced reality*) shaped the text (202)."

<sup>29</sup> Fulkerson, *Changing*, 89.

<sup>30</sup> Charles Cosgrove, "Toward a Postmodern *Hermeneutica Sacra*: Guiding Considerations in Choosing Between Competing Plausible Interpretations of Scripture" in *The Meanings We Choose: Hermeneutical Ethics, Indeterminacy and the Conflict of Interpretations* (ed. Charles H. Cosgrove; London, New York:

when translators acknowledge the indeterminacy of a text, they *still* must make a decision as to which translation they prefer. For this reason, in my dissertation, even though I examine both interpretations and translations of Genesis 34 and related texts—and offer my own—I emphasize the *translation* of texts, because translators, like legislators, *must* make decisions: they cannot perpetually celebrate a multiplicity of meanings but actually must choose one<sup>31</sup>—and their choice will be indicative of their subjective construal of the relational/social dynamics depicted in and reflected in the biblical text under consideration.

Fulkerson's example makes evident the social dimension of the subjective construal of meaning in another way as well. In the United States, the legally-elected body, the legislature, determines the content of the laws which those who apply the laws—police officers and judges—must follow when enacting the law. Thus, it is apparent that police officers and judges are answerable to a community for the decisions they make: they must decide in accordance with the law. In this way, the law code is analogous to the methods of interpretation deemed appropriate by the academy. Scholars must make their arguments as to the meanings of biblical texts on the basis of methods

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T & T Clark International, 2004), 40.

<sup>31</sup> Danna Nolan Fewell and David Gunn ("Tipping the Balance: Sternberg's Reader and the Rape of Dinah," *JBL* 110/2 [1991], 194) assert "the possibility of multiple and conflicting "competent" readings." While this may be the case, translation theorists André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett ("Introduction: Proust's Grandmother and the Thousand and One Nights," in *Translation, History and Culture* [ed. André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett; London: Pinter, 1990], 12) recognize the fact that translators do not have the luxury of engaging in "an evermore and ever-lengthening dance around the always-already-not-there," but at some point must make a definite decision about a text. This does not mean that any interpreter totally determines a text, but the decisions as to meaning made by specialist readers become the matrix of the meaning-making possibilities for recipients of the translated text and influence as well the direction of interpretations of specialist readers. It is important to keep this in mind when noting the capacity of the biblical text to elicit multiple interpretations, for, as Chris Boesal ("Rupture and Context: The Ethical Dimensions of a Post-Holocaust Biblical Hermeneutics" in *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible After the Holocaust* [ed. Tod Linafelt; Washington Square, New York: New York University Press, 2000], 50) notes, "to demonstrate that an infinite number of biblical readings are structurally, necessarily possible after the Holocaust is not to argue that they are all ethically equal. Rather, it is to demonstrate the inescapable necessity of making ethical judgments with regard to them."

approved of by the academy, as this is the community who will decide whether or not their decisions as to meaning have been determined on a valid basis. Thus, in the academic world of biblical interpretation, biblical scholars fulfill the role of both legislators and judges: they formulate the rules of interpretation to which they must adhere, enact these rules in the process of the determination of meaning, and determine the validity of interpretations on the basis of how well analysts have followed the rules of meaning-determination.

### **The current method of meaning-determination**

Robert Carroll refers to the current method of meaning determination in the North American academy as “‘deep calling to deep’ (that is, one set of prescribed authorities speaking to another set of prescribed authorities)”<sup>32</sup>—a method which could be termed ‘dialogical.’ There are several ways in which this description fits the current method. First, the method is dialogical in the sense that an understanding of the text is reached via the interpreter’s ‘dialogue’ with the text. Renita Weems describes this dialogical process in this way:

meaning in contemporary discussions is viewed as emerging in the interaction between reader and text; that is, the stimulus of the text (language, metaphors, literary form, historical background, etc.) interacts or enters into exchange with the stimulus of the reader (background, education, cultural values, cosmology, biases, etc.).”<sup>33</sup>

Second, the means available to facilitate an understanding of the content, grammar, and vocabulary of the text consists of recourse to lexicons, theological word books,

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<sup>32</sup> Robert P. Carroll, “Cultural Encroachment and Bible Translation: Observations on Elements of Violence, Race and Class in the Production of Bibles in Translation,” *Semeia* 76 (1996), 49. The question posed by Danna Nolan Fewell and Gary Phillips (“Ethics, Bible, Reading As If,” *Semeia* 77 [1997], 7) —“in what sense is criticism responsible to more than the institution of scholarly discourse”—supports Carroll’s assertion, for it implies that biblical scholars focus on each other when analyzing texts.

<sup>33</sup> Renita Weems, “Reading *Her Way* through the Struggle: African American Women and the Bible,” in *Stony the Road We Trod* [ed. Cain Hope Felder; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991], 64.

commentaries, and analyses in journals, all of which are composed by other scholars. The analyst, then, can be seen as in ‘conversation’ with these other scholars. Third, these conversations with other scholars can take the form of recourse to sociological models and historical information that can inform the analysis of the text under consideration. Fourth, an analyst can engage in actual conversations with other scholars.<sup>34</sup> Fifth, as noted above, the dialogue with the text is undertaken in terms of methods deemed appropriate by the academy. In addition to the other conversations noted above, these authorized methods can be seen as interpreters’ ‘dialogues’ with their fellow specialists.

Because the determination of the validity of interpretations and translations must be made by experts, this means of producing authorized interpretations and translations cannot be changed. What can change, however, is the basis upon which the decisions of these experts are made. The knowledge that is considered authoritative in terms of providing a means of understanding the biblical text can be enlarged to include the knowledge of ‘participants’<sup>35</sup> in the text other than specialist readers and their fellow specialists, ‘participants’ whose perspectives previously have not been taken into account. In order to facilitate specialist interpreters’ taking the knowledge of these other participants into account, a narrative dimension needs to be added to the methods employed when interpreters decide ‘what is going on’ in biblical texts. This dimension is needed because, in connection with each life represented in the text, there is a story to tell. Traditionally, interpreters have made sense of biblical texts in terms of the life stories which they have ‘seen’ and ‘heard’ most clearly. This creates problems in terms of the interpretation of characters who are silenced in the texts under consideration—such as

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<sup>34</sup> For an example of this kind of conversation and its possible shortcomings, see Chapter 3, pp. 94-96.

<sup>35</sup> These ‘participants’ include the various groups outlined in my discussion on subjectivity *supra*.

Dinah in Genesis 34—because, due to their silence, their situations can be misinterpreted<sup>36</sup> or they themselves even may be overlooked.<sup>37</sup> In this way, these characters resemble the archetypal victim, Abel, whose spilled blood cries out to the LORD (Gen 4:10), but whose ‘presence’ ultimately silently subsides in the face of the very vocal protests of his very much alive murderer Cain (Gen 4: 12-14). Cain is alive and well and able to defend himself, and he does so—brilliantly—but Abel vanishes like the breath his name evokes. I invoke the story of Cain and Abel, because I think there is a tendency when reading and interpreting biblical texts to become enthralled with the actors and the talkers, just as the LORD, at first so concerned about Abel, appears to have become enthralled by the loud and loquacious Cain.<sup>38</sup> My point is that it is hard to keep characters like Abel and Dinah in mind, when the words and deeds of more prominent characters command our attention. *Still the ‘blood’ of these ‘minor’ characters cries out to specialist interpreters for, at the very least, accurate representations of them and their situations in these interpreter’s interpretations and translations.* I contend that the means available for attaining more accurate representations of silenced characters is *via accounts of and by people* who have suffered fates similar to those who suffer in silence

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<sup>36</sup> For example: Rose Sallberg Kam (“Dinah, Daughter of Leah: Woman Abused,” ch. 7 in her *Their Stories, Our Stories* [New York: Continuum, 1995], 69) misinterprets Dinah’s situation by failing to note that Dinah does not return to her family. This is indicated by Shechem’s reference to her as “*this אִשְׁתִּי*” in v. 4, when he demands of his father that he get her for him as a wife, thus revealing that she is with Shechem. Verse 26 also indicates that Dinah remained in Shechem’s possession. Kam seems to have viewed the situation as one in which Dinah returned to her family, only to be turned over to Shechem at the conclusion of the marriage negotiations and then to be retrieved later by Simeon and Levi. If it were not for v. 4, this would be a possible reading of the text. Likewise, Calum Carmichael misses the fact that Dinah does not return to her family (see Chapter 3, pp. 101-102).

<sup>37</sup> For example: For Meir Sternberg (“The Art of Persuasion,” ch. 12 in his *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985], 446), Dinah does not qualify as a character in Genesis 34. He refers to the narrator’s leading “the reader by degrees into a complete identification with the brothers at the expense of all the other characters: first Shechem in his role as rapist, then Jacob as indifferent parent, then Shechem and *his* father as suitors.” Dinah does not make Sternberg’s list of characters in Genesis 34.

<sup>38</sup> I refer here to the LORD as a character in this text, not in terms of her/his fullness as the Holy One of Israel.

in the biblical text.<sup>39</sup> Such an approach to the interpretation of biblical texts has the potential to yield more accurate interpretations/translations of the situations not only of silenced characters in the text but also of the entire text under consideration than currently is possible with the dialogical method of interpretation. I make this assertion on the basis of a view of biblical texts as subjectivity-saturated texts; that is, texts which are the ‘meeting place’ where the interpreter encounters the subjectivities of the other ‘participants’ in the text, whose ‘presence’ I discussed *supra*. Such an approach takes into account the fact that the meaningfulness of biblical texts originates in human life. Because meaning arises from the experiences of human beings, taking into account all of the subjectivities of the characters in the text on the basis of the testimonies *of* and testimonies *about* actual human beings provides the interpreter with a more complete view of the situation in the text which the author created. The interpreter’s enlarged vision creates the possibility for her or him to develop a more accurate interpretation/translation of the situation which the author presented to his recipients.

### **The effects of authoritative interpretation**

The importance of the issue of who is heard and who is not can be seen in Fulkerson’s example, for her example reveals that the decisions as to truth and reality which are made by authoritative determiners of meaning have effects in people’s lives. In her example, if the event is validated from the husband’s perspective, then this serves as corroboration of his perceived inalienable right to his wife’s body, to use as he sees fit. Thus the potential for further abuse exists and is sanctioned by law. If the event is validated from the wife’s perspective, then she is taken into account as a person who may

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<sup>39</sup> This correlates with the translator’s task, as defined by George Steiner (*After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992], xvi, italics mine), who asserts that what translators do is “find and seek, in turn, to articulate narrations of *felt* experience.”

not be violated at will and, if her husband does violate her, he is viewed as guilty of a crime and can be prosecuted, thereby creating the possibility that she will no longer be abused by this man. Thus, the determination of what has occurred creates very different realities for the people involved.<sup>40</sup>

The realization that the decisions made by authoritative interpreters have effects in the lives of real human beings can be seen in scientist Donna Haraway's reflections on what constitutes the ethical dimensions of the interpretive task. Haraway suggests that, as analysts approach their subject matter, they should ask themselves: "with whose blood [are] my eyes crafted?"<sup>41</sup> Biblical scholars Danna Nolan Fewell and Gary Phillips' similar reflections on the ethical dimensions of biblical interpretation indicate that their answer to the question posed by Haraway would be that, when biblical scholars ask themselves "with whose blood [are] my eyes crafted," their reply should be 'with the blood of flesh and blood real readers.'<sup>42</sup>

In order to make their point that this is the crucial component of the knowledge that serves as the basis for interpretations of the biblical text, Fewell and Phillips provide

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<sup>40</sup> Fulkerson's (*Changing*, 89, n. 48) scenario includes "the woman's complaint and the non-recognition of the complaint." She notes that in North Carolina up until 1993 the law stated: "Husbands cannot be charged for rape of wife unless parties living apart." Cf. Gravett ("Reading," 279, n. 1), who observes that as recently as 1989 there was "no consistent prohibition against marital rape in the United States. Many states have subsequently changed these laws." Cf. Harold Washington ("Lest He Die in Battle and Another Man Take Her: Violence and the Construction of Gender in the Laws of Deuteronomy 20-22" in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* [ed. V. H. Matthews, B. M. Levinson, and Tikva Frymer-Kensky; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998], 186, n. 3), who notes that "the common law tradition entitled a husband to 'chastise' his wife (i.e. to beat her), to rape her, and to keep her in his home by force. Blackstone distilled the principle in his assertion that a wife's legal existence is suspended during marriage." In the U. S. A., a woman's legal existence is no longer suspended during marriage. Marital rape has been made illegal in every state in the union (*The Oprah Winfrey Show*, July 23, 2008).

<sup>41</sup> Haraway, "Situated," 192.

<sup>42</sup> Fewell and Phillips, "Ethics," *passim*. The terminology "flesh and blood readers" is Fernando F. Segovia's ("And They Began to Speak in Other Tongues," in *Reading from This Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States* [ed. F. F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995], 28, 31). Segovia refers to "flesh-and-blood persons reading and interpreting from different and highly complex social locations."

the following example. In a classroom discussion of Matt 5:38-39<sup>43</sup> a theology student, “who had in her C.P.E. training dealt with many battered women,” assessed this text as one “which has killed more women than any of us here would care to count.”<sup>44</sup> In order to avoid this sort of misreading of biblical texts—the kind of misreading that “may have encouraged some women to stay in abusive relationships “even unto death”<sup>45</sup>—Fewell and Phillips recommend elucidating the intent of Matt 5:38-39 *via reference to its original context*, which they do by posing three questions, in order to indicate a possible context for the writing of this text.<sup>46</sup> *The impetus for their contextualization of Matt 5:38-39 is the needs of current readers*, one of which is the need of “the woman battered by her partner.”<sup>47</sup> She needs to learn that being a good Christian woman has nothing to do with ‘turning her other cheek’ to an abusive man. *This juxtaposition of the ancient text with the particular concerns of current recipients of the Bible* leads Fewell and Phillips to the conclusion that, in the process of their analytical reading, “critical readers” must read with a “*focus upon particularity, upon the particular lives that hang in the balance of the Bible’s writing past and in the balance of our reading present.*”<sup>48</sup> Their recommendation for reading the Bible is, then, that *the experiences of actual people in antiquity and now*

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<sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also” (NRSV).

<sup>44</sup> Fewell and Phillips, “Ethics,” 1.

<sup>45</sup> Fewell and Phillips (“Ethics,” 5) cite the problem of a contextually-unelucidated reading of this biblical text and the confounding of that problem by “the Church’s inconsiderate preaching” of this text.

<sup>46</sup> Fewell and Phillips, (“Ethics,” 8): “What was at stake for the early Christian community that could lead to this injunction not to cause trouble with political authorities? Was it not, literally, a matter of life and death? By admonishing Christian leaders to turn the other cheek, was Matthew not snatching the Christian community back from the brink of political abyss?”

<sup>47</sup> Fewell and Phillips, “Ethics,” 8.

<sup>48</sup> Fewell and Phillips, “Ethics,” 8, 9.



*serve as the defining principle when analysts interpret the sacred text.* They refer to bringing “words of experience from behind the lines” to the interpretive process.<sup>49</sup> Their reference to “words of experience from behind the lines” is a play on the word “lines,” in which they refer not only to the lines of the biblical text but also to the front lines of current human experience, out of which people make meaning in their encounters with the Bible. I make use of Fewell and Phillips’s analogy, but, in a way which is somewhat different from their use of it. In my schema, “the words of experience from behind the lines” of the text refers to the experiences of those in the ancient world whose lives are reflected in the text in some manner. Their experiences need to be taken into account—as much as is possible—in order to make sense of the text. In order to take into account the experiences of contemporary recipients of the biblical text as an aid to making sense of the ancient text, I refer to the possibility of their influence on the interpretive process as scholars taking into account ‘words of experience from *in front of* the lines of the text.’ By this I mean experiences other than those of the authorized interpreters of the biblical text. In this way, the subjectivities of current readers of the Bible other than just those of specialist readers can be drawn into the interpretive mix. The value of this approach can be seen in an examination of a portion of the dialogue of Danna Nolan Fewell<sup>50</sup> and David Gunn with Meir Sternberg concerning what constitutes an accurate interpretation of Genesis 34.

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<sup>49</sup> Fewell and Phillips, “Ethics,” 1, 2, 3.

<sup>50</sup> In both articles to which I refer on which Fewell collaborated, she is concerned, along with her colleague, with the question of what constitutes a “competent reading.” A reference to being “competent readers” is found in “Tipping” on p. 193 and to “competent readings” on p. 194 and to “competent readings” in “Ethics” on p. 2. In “Ethics,” there are also references to “being a good reader” (p. 1), to “reading well” (p. 2) and to “enabl[ing] more responsible readings and readers” (p. 3).

### **Deep calling to deep: Fewell and Gunn in dialogue with Sternberg**

Fewell and Gunn's interpretation of Genesis 34 was undertaken in response to Sternberg's interpretation of the text, in which he claims that the author of Genesis 34 presented Simeon and Levi as the story's heroes. Sternberg defends his interpretation of Genesis 34 on the basis of the artistic genius of the authors of biblical texts like Genesis 34, who he asserts composed their texts in such a way that readers cannot resist seeing the narrative in the way in which the author intended. Sternberg refers to this kind of composition as "foolproof."<sup>51</sup> Even a partial review of Fewell and Gunn's discussion reveals that their interest in countering Sternberg influenced their interpretation of Genesis 34. In his assessment of Fewell and Gunn's argument, Paul Noble also notes the influence of Sternberg's argument on Fewell and Gunn. He observes that "Fewell and Gunn's purpose . . . [is] to refute Sternberg's doctrine of foolproof communication."<sup>52</sup> He asserts that, as a result, their "reading consists, for the most part, of a point-by-point reversal of Sternberg's evaluations of Shechem's original deed, Jacob's passivity,<sup>53</sup> the Hivites' offer, etc. Above all, they are intent upon opposing Sternberg's picture of the brothers as being ideologically motivated."<sup>54</sup> The way in which characters the likes of Dinah fare when this is the method of interpretation can be discerned by focusing on Fewell and Gunn's interpretation of the immediate aftermath of "Shechem's original deed."

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<sup>51</sup> Meir Sternberg, "Literary Text, Literary Approach: Getting the Questions Straight," ch.1 in his *Poetics*, 50.

<sup>52</sup> Noble, "A "Balanced" Reading of the Rape of Dinah: Some Exegetical and Methodological Observations," *BI 4* [1996], 200.

<sup>53</sup> I do not regard Jacob as "passive," but as alert to any possibility to turn the situation to his advantage. See Chapter 6, pp. 282 -285.

<sup>54</sup> Noble, "A Balanced," 188.

Fewell and Gunn concur with the traditional reading of this text that Shechem raped Dinah and that the change engendered in Shechem in the aftermath of his assaulting her sexually was a positive one. Fewell and Gunn explain what is thus perceived as an instantaneous change in Shechem from rapist to lover similarly to the way in which Sternberg explains this miraculous change: by asserting that the author of Genesis 34 created a positive image of Shechem in order “to complicate our response” to him.<sup>55</sup> At this point they then diverge from Sternberg and his conclusion that the traditionally perceived positive force of the verbs in v. 3 does not overcome Shechem’s negative actions in v. 2. Instead, they assert that the verbs in v. 3 “form a powerful sequence in language that is strongly affective and with almost uniformly positive overtones.”<sup>56</sup> They make their case concerning the affective nature of the verbs in v. 3 by referring first to Shechem’s *שָׁפַץ* clinging to Dinah. They cite as a counterpart to *וַתִּדְבַק בְּנֶפֶשׁוֹ בְּדֵינָהּ* a man clinging “to his woman when he leaves his father and mother (Gen 2:24).”<sup>57</sup> However, an analysis of Gen 2:24 reveals that it is not the man’s *nefesh* which clings to ‘his’ woman, but merely the man himself who clings to ‘his’ woman “and they become one flesh.” The situation referred to here is that of the man clinging to ‘his’ woman in reproductive sexual intercourse, for whatever else “one flesh” may refer to, the simple fact is that the offspring resulting from sexual intercourse are the “one flesh” of their

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<sup>55</sup> Fewell and Gunn (“Tipping,” 195) offer no explanation as to why the author of a biblical narrative would want to do such a thing. Sternberg’s explanation concerning what traditionally has been perceived to be a positive portrayal of Shechem in v. 3 appears to arise more out of authorial craft as associated with the modern novel than with the composition of biblical narrative. In contrast to the view put forward by Sternberg, Harold Fisch (*Poetry With A Purpose: Biblical Poetics and Interpretation* [Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988], 2) asserts that the Bible’s authors were “conscious of being involved in an enterprise that called into question, banished, and condemned all merely “literary” effects.” Another aspect of Sternberg’s explanation of the interpretation of Shechem as a rapist/lover that makes such an explanation questionable is the issue of why an author would choose to complicate the response of his recipients to only one character in the text. If one, why not all?

<sup>56</sup> Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping,” 196.

<sup>57</sup> Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping,” 196, n. 4.

parents. That it is the reproductive capacity of heterosexual intercourse which is being emphasized here can be seen in the response of *hā'ādām* when he first sees  $\eta\psi\aleph\eta$ : “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh (Gen 2:23);” that is, ‘this at last is one of my own kind, produced out of my own body.’ The man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to ‘his’ woman not primarily for emotional and spiritual reasons, but in order to produce his own offspring.<sup>58</sup>

As for the next assertion in Gen 34:3—the girl  $\eta\eta\aleph$  that Shechem—Fewell and Gunn accept the word  $\eta\eta\aleph$  as sufficient evidence that Shechem loved Dinah. They cite as parallels Isaac’s love for Rebekah and Jacob’s love for Rachel.<sup>59</sup> The contexts of the situations of Isaac and Rebekah and of Jacob and Rachel make it clear that it was truly love which Isaac felt for Rebekah and which Jacob felt for Rachel. Their stories indicate, in a way that Gen 2:24 does not, that the marital relationship can include deep spiritual and emotional involvement, depending on the people involved. In Genesis 24, Isaac is depicted walking alone<sup>60</sup> in the evening. In the distance, he sees camels and on one of these camels Rebekah, who likewise sees Isaac. Upon learning that he is the man she is to marry, she veils herself. It is then Isaac who removes that veil when they are alone together and, when he does so, she becomes his wife, and he loves her and is comforted for the loss of his mother (Gen 24:67). As for Jacob’s love for Rachel, that his love is

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. Claudia Camp (“The (E)strange(d), 285), who asserts that there were those in antiquity who viewed marriage from the perspective that “the major concern regarding women’s sexuality [was] . . . that she find her proper place as a childbearing wife in her husband’s household.”

<sup>59</sup> Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping,” 196, n. 4.

<sup>60</sup> *HALOT*, 3:1311-1312.  $\eta\eta\psi$  describes what Isaac is doing. It is a hapax legomenon. That it emphasizes Isaac’s aloneness is suggested by several things. First, that it stresses Isaac’s loneliness is indicated by its Arabic cognate (*syh*), which refers to going about “as a pilgrim or pious ascetic.” An ascetic is characterized by her/his aloneness. Second, that this aspect of Isaac’s existence is being emphasized here is indicated by the setting in which Isaac lives: the Negeb, an ‘ascetic’ environment. Third, his personal situation also indicates his isolation: the only parent left to him is the one who almost murdered him. His mother, who had doted on him, is gone. His deep sense of loss as a result of his mother’s death specifically is referenced in relation to the comfort his wife Rebekah brings him.

strong and enduring is made clear by the fact that he worked for Laban for seven years for the right to marry Rachel and these years “seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her” (Gen 29:20). In contrast to Isaac’s feelings for Rebekah and Jacob’s feelings for Rachel, the situation in Genesis 34 indicates that Shechem’s feelings for Dinah do not reflect the kind of spiritual and emotional involvement that these men had with the women they אָהַבּ.<sup>61</sup>

Susan Ackermann’s review of the uses of אָהַבּ in the MT helps to clarify this reality. She found that “the party who is described using the terms *’āhēb* or *’āhābā* is typically the hierarchically superior party in the relationship.”<sup>62</sup> This applies, as well, to those who are described as feeling אָהַבּ. אָהַבּ is not used to describe the feelings of a social inferior for a social superior: women are not described as feeling אָהַבּ for men,<sup>63</sup> nor are children described as feeling אָהַבּ for their parents.<sup>64</sup> The descriptions of Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, and Shechem and Dinah all reflect this social situation: the socially superior male is depicted feeling אָהַבּ for the socially inferior female. However, Ackermann observes that “in a story that describes a crime of domination . . . the “love” that Shechem is said to manifest after the rape has implicit within it the connotations of hierarchical superiority and even dominance.”<sup>65</sup> Such a situation does not bespeak the kind of feelings that Isaac had for Rebekah or that Jacob had for Rachel.

The last assertion in v. 3, וַיִּדְבֹר עַל-לֵב הַיָּעֶבֶר, Fewell and Gunn translate ‘literally’<sup>66</sup> as

<sup>61</sup> Barr’s (*The Semantics*, 55) observation that there needs to be “some real evidence that the context demands the kind of sense” which the interpreter suggests is pertinent here.

<sup>62</sup> Susan Ackermann, “The Personal,” 447.

<sup>63</sup> Ackermann (“The Personal,” 452-3) notes the exception of the young woman in Song of Songs and the exception of Mikal’s love for David, a situation in which “class trumps gender:” as the daughter of the king, she is described as loving the shepherd boy.

<sup>64</sup> Ackermann, “The Personal,” 441, 445.

<sup>65</sup> Ackermann, “The Personal,” 454, 456.

<sup>66</sup> The fact that literal translations are considered to be impossible is exemplified by the translation of the

“he spoke to the young woman’s heart.”<sup>67</sup> Having stated already their assessment that v. 3 depicts Shechem positively, they make no further statement concerning the nature of his speech to Dinah, but move on to a consideration of its effect on her, which they decide was positive.<sup>68</sup> Their decision that Shechem’s speech to Dinah elicited a positive response from her is based on the work of John Austin.<sup>69</sup> They contend that the

expression —“to speak to the heart of”— . . . appears to function as a perlocutionary expression, that is, one describing a speech act that produces consequential effects on the feelings, thoughts, or actions of its hearers—in other words, a successfully completed action. . . . In our present context, the expression, “he spoke to her heart,” indicates both Shechem’s action and Dinah’s positive response.<sup>70</sup>

However, although they base their contention about the success of Shechem’s effort on Austin’s theory of perlocution, they overlook Austin’s caveat that “when a speaker intends to produce an effect, it may, nevertheless, not occur.”<sup>71</sup> In other words, just because Fewell and Gunn think that Shechem attempted to influence Dinah in a positive way, they may not automatically assume that he was successful in doing so.

Significantly, the case which Fewell and Gunn make concerning what they assert was Dinah’s positive response to Shechem, is made entirely on the basis of the feelings that Fewell and Gunn attribute to *Shechem*. They describe *Shechem’s* changed attitude in the following way: “in v. 2, the woman<sup>72</sup> is an object: Shechem sees her, takes her, lies with

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Biblical Hebrew word לֵב as “heart”—because in English the word “heart” is more exclusively related to the emotions than is the word לֵב, which, as representative of the decision-making center of human beings includes heart, mind and will. See Chapter 8, pp. 360-361.

<sup>67</sup> Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping,” 196.

<sup>68</sup> Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping,” 196.

<sup>69</sup> J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

<sup>70</sup> Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping,” 196.

<sup>71</sup> Austin, *How*, 106.

<sup>72</sup> Dinah is not a woman. She is a girl. (See Chapter 7, pp. 335-338). By referring to Dinah as a woman, Fewell and Gunn bestow upon her the status required in our society to legally consent to sexual intercourse; that is, they present her as an adult, with adult desires and decision-making capacities and, on the basis of this suggestion, imply that she might have chosen to stay at Shechem’s house of her own accord.

her,<sup>73</sup> and rapes her.<sup>74</sup> In v. 3, the woman becomes for Shechem a real person: his soul clings to *Dinah*, he loves the *young woman*, and he speaks to *the young woman's heart*.<sup>75</sup> In their discussion of *Shechem's change of feelings in regard to Dinah* they imply that she went from being an object in v. 2 to being a subject in v. 3. But Dinah remained an object, *a grammatical reality* that elicits a different interpretation of Shechem's motivation from Sandra Gravett, who asserts that in v. 3 Dinah remains "simply . . . a location for [Shechem] to act out his desires"<sup>76</sup>—*something which, if he marries her, he can to continue to do without fear of interference by her family*. Fewell and Gunn, however, see Shechem's desire to marry Dinah as a sign of "his commitment to her."<sup>77</sup> This leads them to conclude that "rather than seeing this first portion of the story as accumulating sympathy for the absent uninvolved brothers, we would see the narrator . . . tip[ping] the balance in Shechem's favor."<sup>78</sup> By making this assertion, they are countering Sternberg's claim that in the first twelve verses of Genesis 34, "the narrator lays in a store of sympathy" for Simeon and Levi.<sup>79</sup>

What has happened here is that in the disagreement between scholars concerning the behavior and motives of Simeon and Levi and Shechem, the clues in the text as to Dinah's state of mind get overlooked, even though there *is* information in the text which points to the likelihood of a negative response on her part to Shechem *דָּבַר עַל־לִבָּהּ*. As Fleishman notes, the verbal construction *וַיַּעֲנֶה* conveys the negative effect of Shechem's

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 39-51; Chapter 4, pp. 170-185; Chapter 7, pp. 313-324 for *שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ* as representing rape.

<sup>74</sup> For a different interpretation of *וַיַּעֲנֶה*, see Fleishman *infra* and Chapter 2, pp. 71-87.

<sup>75</sup> Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping," 196-197, italics theirs.

<sup>76</sup> Gravett, "That," 119.

<sup>77</sup> Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping," 197.

<sup>78</sup> Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping," 197.

<sup>79</sup> Sternberg, "The Art," 446.

sexual contact with Dinah on her.<sup>80</sup> Even though this revelation as to what is going on with Dinah comes *prior* to Shechem speaking על-לב הַנֶּעֱרָ, Mieke Bal's description of the psychological aspects of being raped, as well as the *descriptions of the aftermath of rape from victims of rape*, indicate that Dinah would not have responded positively to Shechem.<sup>81</sup> According to Bal,

denying her . . . is the very act of rape. . . . Penetrating the body with *zachar* . . . is inflicting an incurable wound, incurable, precisely because it can never be forgotten: *zachar*, memory is the wound itself. . . . inflicting the memory of maleness, not *on* but *within* her body as the deadly wound that undoes her subjectivity.<sup>82</sup>

Bal's description of rape and its effect on the victim is confirmed by *first-hand accounts of actual rape victims* of the state of their psyches in the immediate aftermath of having been raped. Nancy Venable Raine describes herself as experiencing a sort of "inner stupor."<sup>83</sup> Charlotte Pierce-Baker refers to herself as "a vegetable. . . . I felt absolutely nothing. My spirit was broken. . . . It scared me that I had no emotion. Nothing . . . . *I needed time to process the making of any decision.*"<sup>84</sup> The words of these survivors of rape make it clear that the attribution of a positive response to Dinah relies on an assumption of too rapid a rehabilitation of a self that Shechem has divided—heart, mind, and soul—into before and after.<sup>85</sup> A positive response—or any response at all—would

<sup>80</sup> Fleishman, "Shechem" 28. See n. 97 *infra*.

<sup>81</sup> This is based on the assumption—which I do not share—that Shechem's words to her were positive. See Chapter 4, pp. 185-187, and Chapter 8, pp. 375-380.

<sup>82</sup> Mieke Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 126, 124.

<sup>83</sup> Nancy V. Raine, *After Silence: Rape and My Journey Back* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1998), 31.

<sup>84</sup> Charlotte Pierce-Baker, *Surviving the Silence: Black Women's Stories of Rape* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998) 45, 42, italics hers.

<sup>85</sup> Scientific verification for these rape victims' descriptions of themselves and for my claim based on their descriptions can be found in Patricia Weaver Francisco's (*Telling: A Memoir of Rape and Recovery* [New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999], 78, 79, italics mine) citation of the research of "Dr. Dennis Charney, director of clinical neuroscience at the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder." Francisco relates that Dr. Charney's "research focuses on three locations in the brain involved in mobilizing the body for an emergency. All three, recent research indicates, are *permanently altered* by trauma." Francisco explains that "under extreme stress . . . our mechanisms for self-preservation become



require a sense of self that these women say takes years to restore, not minutes, hours, or even days.<sup>86</sup> Thus, *if analysts of Genesis 34 will allow it to happen*, the words of these women can break into the dialogue between scholars concerning ‘what is going on’ in Genesis 34 with words which indicate *a more likely response* on Dinah’s part to what Shechem has done to her. If the words of these women were to be heard and heeded, then Fewell and Gunn’s interpretation of Dinah’s response to Shechem becomes literally impossible.<sup>87</sup>

This suggests a different way for specialist readers to undertake the analysis of biblical texts—one which includes listening to voices beyond the confines of academia in order to make sense of the texts which they are interpreting. If interpreters/translators were to accept this method of text interpretation then, if these voices from outside academia are to be instructive, at this point the dialogue between professionals has to cease, as does the role of the interpreter as an interlocutor of the text. The interpreter

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overstimulated. After the danger has passed, they do not revert to normal. The exaggerated reactivity persists, as if a switch has been thrown so hard it has become stuck.” Francisco further relates that, according to Freud, “the patient is . . . fixated to the trauma.” Francisco, herself a victim of rape, relates that there is “a sense of being robbed of *a way of being* following trauma.” (For a description of rape robbing one of one’s being, see the description of the girl forced into a sexual relationship in the FLDS, Chapter 5, p. 223-224, n. 95 My use of the self-descriptions of contemporary victims of rape in order to make sense of the experience of a character from an ancient text such as the Bible is validated by the coincidence between these contemporary, scientific observations concerning the damage done to women who have been raped (as well as to others who have had extremely stressful physical, emotional and psychological experiences) and the way in which raped women are described in the Bible—as *דָּשֵׁלָה*, “desolate.” Both Tamar and ‘Lady Jerusalem’ were victims of rape and both are described as “desolate.” For a discussion of Tamar, see Chapter 7, p. 315, and of ‘Lady Jerusalem,’ see Chapter 8, pp. 371-374. For my assertion that in the Bible rape is not romanticized and therefore is coincident with the descriptions of themselves of these contemporary victims of rape, see “Rape is not romantic,” Chapter 5, pp. 215-217. For my assertion that there is no difference in the perception of rape in the Bible (that is, that it is a negative experience for the victims of rape) and the perception in the North American legal system that it is a negative experience for the victim (that is, that it is a punishable crime because it violates the will and the body of a human being), see Chapter 4, pp. 148-149.

<sup>86</sup> Pierce-Baker, *Surviving*, and Raine, *After*, *passim*.

<sup>87</sup> I use the term “literally” here in order to assert that these testimonies constitute valid texts upon which scholars can base their interpretations. The validity of the descriptions of these women of themselves in the immediate aftermath of having been raped is supported by scientific research. The emotional numbness to which Pierce-Baker and Raine refer is attributable to the endorphins which the brain secretes in excess in response to trauma (Francisco, *Telling*, 78).

instead assumes the role of witness to the testimonies of others, to the testimonies of those who have been subjected to *unspeakable* suffering and yet have lived to *tell* about it.

**“Bearers of a narrative of listening”<sup>88</sup> in “the Age of Testimony”<sup>89</sup>**

In his monograph, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*, Lawrence L. Langer, discusses some of the dimensions of being a witness to the testimonies of Holocaust survivors.<sup>90</sup> Langer asserts that the “ability to gain access to these monologues<sup>91</sup> of personal fortune and misfortune depends on *what we are prepared to forsake* in order to listen to them.”<sup>92</sup> In order to ‘hear’ and ‘see’ a character like Dinah, who suffers greatly,<sup>93</sup> but who does not speak and whose actions receive only minimal attention in the text, *biblical scholars have to forsake momentarily their use of the power of speech* and subject themselves to the testimonies of those whose experiences mirror or are similar to the experiences of characters whose suffering traditionally has been overlooked in the process of interpretation. Because testimony is “an utterly unique and irreplaceable topographical *position* with regard to an event,”<sup>94</sup> the testimony of the victim provides the listener with the opportunity to align her or himself with the victim

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<sup>88</sup> Shoshana Felman (*Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* [Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub; New York: Routledge, 1992], 263) describes Claude Lanzmann, the creator of the film *Shoah*, as “the bearer of a narrative of listening,” because of his role in the film as the questioner who not only elicits the testimony from the witness but who also is the one who listens to the resultant testimony

<sup>89</sup> Felman, *Testimony*, 5. For a description of the Age of Testimony, see p. 27, *infra*.

<sup>90</sup> Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

<sup>91</sup> Laub (*Testimony*, 70-71) most likely would disagree with Langer’s characterization of the testimonies of Holocaust survivors as “monologues.” Laub declares that “testimonies are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude. The witnesses are talking *to somebody*. . . . Bearing witness to a trauma is, in fact, a process that includes the listener.” “It takes two to speak the truth—one to speak and another to hear.” (Raine, *After* [118], quoting Henry David Thoreau).

<sup>92</sup> Langer, *Holocaust*, 195, italics mine.

<sup>93</sup> I characterize Dinah’s experience on the basis of the traditional interpretation of the text, in which she is seen to be a raped girl.

<sup>94</sup> Felman, “*Testimony*,” 206, italics hers.

and witness the event from the victim's perspective. Becoming a witness to such testimony enables the interpreter to become attuned to the voices of those characters who are silenced in the text. There are traces of their voices in the text, but these are traces, which, if they are to be apprehended, often have to be tracked to sources outside the text: sources which, if they are to be heard, must be listened to attentively—and silently.<sup>95</sup> Testimony from such sources can serve as a guide to the text, suggesting to interpreters a new and different vantage point from which to view the text and indicating to them “whose call and whose imperative” silently seeks their attention.<sup>96</sup>

As interpreters of a *text*, analysts' primary attention is then directed toward the text in search of traces of the truth to which the content of the testimony has alerted them. In terms of Genesis 34, traces of the truth of Dinah's situation are not available in terms of a full-blown description of Dinah's response to Shechem.<sup>97</sup> However, Dinah has a first-hand perspective on what she experienced at Shechem's hands during her sexual encounter with him and—since she is seen to be in his possession after that encounter—afterwards. Therefore, the author's characterization of Shechem will point to the man whom Dinah experienced and thereby make Dinah's experience available to readers. It is incumbent upon interpreters, then, to seek to understand Shechem as fully as possible.

This understanding is sought via exegesis and interpretation of Gen 34 and related texts.

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<sup>95</sup> I emphasize the silence of the interpreter in order to stress that, when listening to testimony, the interpreter relinquishes the role of determiner of meaning and takes on the role of absorber of meaning. However, this is the case in terms of already-given testimony, which is the kind of testimony—stories from those who have suffered and stories about those who have suffered—which I am recommending here. In the process of *eliciting* testimony, the listener plays a more active role. Laub (*Testimony*, 71) describes this process as one in which “the listener has to be exquisitely responsive” to the cues emanating from the traumatized speaker. “The interviewer has to be . . . both unobtrusive, non-directive, and yet imminently present.”

<sup>96</sup> Felman and Laub, “Foreword” in *Testimony*, xix.

<sup>97</sup> There is one reference to Dinah's response in the verbal construction וַיִּשְׁמַע at the end of v. 2. Fleishman (“Shechem,” 28) notes that “this verb . . . enables a brief, clear and unequivocal sense of Dinah's internal view and status. It points to the mental condition of Dinah.”

If this overall method of interpretation is followed, then testimony can be seen as one of “the methods and techniques of reading, and of listening to, *truths* that are unspoken . . . and that are yet inscribed.”<sup>98</sup> By “lending [their] ear[s]” to what heretofore has not been “presentable under the rules of knowledge”<sup>99</sup> and by extensively exegeting biblical texts from the perspective of the abused, *in their interpretations and translations* biblical translators become bearers of a narrative of listening in the Age of Testimony.<sup>100</sup>

It is Shoshana Felman who designates our time, the time after the Holocaust,<sup>101</sup> as the Age of Testimony. In support of this designation of the time in which we live, she cites Elie Wiesel, who writes, “if the Greeks invented tragedy, the Romans the epistle and the Renaissance the sonnet, our generation invented a new literature, that of testimony.”<sup>102</sup> According to Felman, testimony is the literature of our time because “of the imperative of bearing witness to the trauma” of the Holocaust.<sup>103</sup> And this imperative exists because to live in the time *after* Shoah is to “inhabit[] history . . . as the space of

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<sup>98</sup> Felman and Laub, “Foreward,” xiii, italics mine. Theodore Adorno’s proposal that, “the need to let suffering speak is the condition of all truth” is pertinent here. Adorno is quoted by Timothy Beal, “Matters of Survival: A Conversation” in *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible after the Holocaust* (ed. Tod Linafelt; Washington Square: New York University Press, 2000), 34.

<sup>99</sup> Felman (*Testimony*, 202), quoting François Lyotard, “The Différand,” in *Diacritics*, Vol. 14, no. 13, Fall 1984, last page.

<sup>100</sup> This will be the case in translations less so than in commentary and analysis because of the different conceptual worlds represented in the *parole* of the source text and the *parole* of the translation. There is the issue here, as well, of the ways in which different recipients of the translated text understand the *parole* of their own language.

<sup>101</sup> Tod Linafelt (“Mad,” 263, n. 1) notes the problems with the terms Holocaust and Shoah. Linafelt observes that “the term Holocaust (“whole burnt offering”) impl[ies] . . . the sacrificial nature of the victims. . . . The Hebrew word Shoah (“devastation”) . . . is often associated in the Bible with punishment meted out on “the day of YHWH” (Isa 10:3, Zeph 1:15). In reference to the destruction of European Jewry, this connotation is certainly no more acceptable than the connotation of sacrifice.” In spite of these problems, like Linafelt, I use the terms more or less interchangeably.

<sup>102</sup> “The Holocaust as a Literary Inspiration,” in *Dimensions of the Holocaust: Lectures at Northwestern University* by Elie Wiesel, Lucy Dawidowicz, Dorothy Rabinowitz, and Robert McAfee Brown (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1977), 9.

<sup>103</sup> Felman, *Testimony*, 165.

the annihilation of the Other.”<sup>104</sup> Testimony, first-hand accounts of survivors, bears witness to the unjust suffering and slaughter of that Other and thus establishes the historicity of those who were so cruelly and mercilessly murdered, as well as the historicity of their suffering and of the injustice done to them.

The time itself was characterized by death, overwhelming death, multiform death, death experienced in heretofore unimaginable ways by heretofore unimaginable numbers of people in a heretofore unimaginable short period of time. Because of this, “death has taught a lesson that can henceforth never be forgotten.”<sup>105</sup> It is not humanly possible to address the totality of Shoah, but one way in which interpreters can respond to the enormity of Shoah is to confront further annihilation in whatever form it comes their way. In terms of interpreting the situation of a biblical character like Dinah, this means giving the “gift of discipleship in trauma”<sup>106</sup> to those who know her story: those who know her story because it has been lodged cruelly in their hearts, minds, souls and bodies by the person(s) who raped them.<sup>107</sup> Discipleship refers, of course, to listening to and heeding the lessons their stories provide. Otherwise, “the absence of an *addressable other*, an other who can hear the anguish of one’s memories and thus affirm and

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<sup>104</sup> Felman, *Testimony*, 189. Freida Aaron (“A Handful of Memories: Two Levels of Recollection” in *Burning Memory: Times of Testing and Reckoning* [ed. Alice L. Eckardt; New York: Pergamon Press, 1993], 172) says that she knew even “as a child [that] the wretched ground of history that was my experience [would] later be known as the central event of our century, and perhaps, of all time.” I think of the Holocaust as the central event of all time and think that therefore time should be reconfigured now in the aftermath of *Shoah*. Thus, I have dated this dissertation as “Year 64 After Auschwitz” as one way of suggesting how that might be done.

<sup>105</sup> Felman, *Testimony*, 33.

<sup>106</sup> Felman, *Testimony*, 237.

<sup>107</sup> Francisco (*Telling*, 151, italics mine) describes “*the body’s memory* as [being as] deep and unacknowledged as our dreams. Both fall outside language; their messages carried in image and sensation.” She (73) then describes dealing with this memory when it came “every other night, expressed without words or thoughts, simply through my body. . . . I’m reliving it again and again, but this time experiencing the full terror of it.” She (79) also tells of a victim of rape who is frightened by the sound of leaves “because her assault occurred in the fall.” Likewise, Aaron (“A Handful,” 169) speaks of being “a girl in the ghetto and camps” and, as a result, of *knowing* “certain truths that only the immediacy of experience could yield.”

recognize their *realness*, annihilates the story”<sup>108</sup>—and its teller. To suggest that interpreters take heed of the lesson taught by death in the time of the Holocaust is not to try to make sense out of the Holocaust but, rather, is to implore interpreters to participate “in the infinite task of encountering *Shoah*.”<sup>109</sup>

### **Hermeneutical issues**

As I noted in the introduction, desire is fundamental to the meaning-making process. In terms of this dissertation, I refer specifically to the compositional desire of the author of Genesis 34 and to the interpretive desires that readers bring to their interpretations of Genesis 34 and to texts which they regard as related to the explication of Genesis 34.

As I also noted in the introduction, in the process of analyzing biblical texts, a fundamental decision specialist readers make as they actualize their interpretive desires in relation to the texts they interpret is their decision as to what the text is *about*. This decision is influenced by and also influences the way in which they construe the relational/social dynamics depicted and reflected in the text. These two interrelated decisions then find expression in the interpretation/translation which the analyst develops via the application of different interpretive methods to the biblical texts under consideration.

In the course of this dissertation, I offer my own interpretations of biblical texts and analyze the interpretations of others. As a part of this process, I evaluate some of the current methods used in biblical studies in order to make sense of biblical texts. Two methods upon which I focus are interpreters’ developing social linguistic consciousness

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<sup>108</sup> Laub, “*Testimony*,” 68, first italicized terminology his, second italicized word mine.

<sup>109</sup> Felman, “*Testimony*,” 268.

of Biblical Hebrew by engaging in inter-textual analysis within the Bible<sup>110</sup> and interpreters' contextualization of texts—historically and sociologically—via inner-biblical comparison and sociologically by the application of sociological models to biblical texts. These methods are used by interpreters/translators in order to develop transfer competence. “Transfer competence” refers to interpreters/translators' having developed an understanding of the social world of the text to such a degree that they can convey with accuracy the nuances of meaning of the biblical text.<sup>111</sup>

Two other hermeneutical issues come into play in my dissertation: the issue of the use of the Ancient Versions and of the Targums<sup>112</sup> in order to make sense of the MT and the concomitant issue of the emendation of the MT, which often is recommended on the basis of the ways in which words are rendered in the ancient translations. The issue of emendation is of primary importance in my dissertation because emendation of *שָׁכַב אֵתָהּ* to *שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ* in Gen 34:2 is recommended in *HALOT*<sup>113</sup> and *BHS*, thereby altering the nature of Shechem and Dinah's sexual encounter from rape to mutually-desired sexual relations. Thus, the issue of whether or not to emend the text can be seen to be of fundamental importance in terms of the depiction of Shechem. Throughout this process all the subjectivities I noted *supra* will be in play (including my own), but some subjectivities will be more in evidence than others, depending on the issues under discussion in each chapter.

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<sup>110</sup> The terminology is Barr's (*Semantics*, 159) and refers to biblical interpreters' developing their awareness of the ways in which the language-users themselves used the biblical languages and therefore what the words in these languages meant to them.

<sup>111</sup> Hatim and Mason, *The Translator*, 204. See “Giving words their due,” Chapter 7, pp. 349-351, for an example of the need for interpreters' developing transfer competence.

<sup>112</sup> My reference here to the Targums separately from the Ancient Versions reflects the traditional way of referring to the Targums Neofiti, Onkelos, and Pseudo-Jonathon separately from other translations from antiquity.

<sup>113</sup> *HALOT*, 1: 100-101.

### **The shape of this project**

I pursue this project on the basis of feminist standpoint theory, which asserts that interpreters undertake their analyses from a certain position; that is, that interpreters *stand somewhere* during the process of interpretation.<sup>114</sup> The place where I choose to stand is with victims of rape. I interpret Genesis 34 from their perspective. In order to read Genesis 34 from their perspective, it is necessary to read the text *otherwise*<sup>115</sup> from the way in which it traditionally has been read, because, for women who have been raped, the traditional interpretation of Shechem as a rapist/lover is nonsensical. Rather, the author of Genesis 34 either must have presented Shechem as only a lover or only a rapist, because, according to women who have been raped, he cannot be both. This disjunction between rape and love is very clear in rape victim Julie Pfau's insistence that "rapists are blind to the experiences of their victims; they see only their own desires—sexual and otherwise."<sup>116</sup>

This dissertation is structured around the three possible interpretations of

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<sup>114</sup> Haraway's ("Situated," 188) theory of situated knowledges belongs to the spectrum of theoretical approaches included in feminist standpoint theory. In order to make her point that all knowledge is situated—that is, that knowledge always has been based on the concerns of a particular researcher/interpreter in a particular time and place—Haraway compares the observing eye of the analyst to the machines which human beings have developed in order to enhance their observation of the natural world. She (190, italics hers) asserts that "the 'eyes' made available in modern technological sciences . . . show us that all eyes, including our own organic ones, are active perceptual systems, building in translations and specific *ways* of seeing. . . . There is no unmediated photograph or passive camera obscura in scientific accounts of bodies and machines; there are only highly specific visual possibilities, each with a . . . partial way of organizing worlds." Susanne Scholz ("Through Whose Eyes? A 'Right' Reading of Genesis 34," in *Genesis: The Feminist Companion to the Bible* (Second Series) [ed. Athalya Brenner; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998], 151) asserts that the feminist understanding of the 'right' way to undertake such a partial investigation of biblical texts is "from the perspective of the subjugated, that is the raped victim-survivor."

<sup>115</sup> Fewell and Phillips, "Ethics," 6, italics theirs. Reading otherwise is the only way that Genesis 34 can "correlate with the reader and provide [her] with just the information [she] needs and is prepared to receive," Mc Knight (*Postmodern*, 168). McKnight claims that "a notable characteristic of the biblical text" is its ability "to correlate with the reader and provide him with just the information that he needs." The traditional translation of Genesis 34 does not do this for women who have been raped, so Genesis 34 must be read otherwise.

<sup>116</sup> Julie Pfau ("Dinah Is Still Silent: Trauma and the Unrealized Potential of Midrash [Master's Thesis, Emory University, 2002], 221) identifies herself as a victim of rape, 8.



Shechem: Shechem as only a lover; Shechem as rapist/lover; and Shechem as only a rapist. The goal of my analysis of Genesis 34 is to clarify how Shechem is depicted in this text. The goal of this clarification is to enable recipients to see and understand the man whom Dinah experienced and, in that way, to do justice to Dinah's experience and to readers who identify most closely with Dinah's experience: women who have been raped. Because of the importance of all of the references to Shechem in Genesis 34 to discerning how he is depicted in the text, it is not possible to confine the investigation of these references to one chapter in my dissertation. In order to understand these references as fully as possible, my investigation of them is distributed throughout my dissertation, in connection with issues which I address in a particular chapter.

Because of the importance of the issue of the emendation of *אֶתֶּן אֶת־בְּתוּלָתִי* Gen 34:2, I investigate all of its occurrences in the MT in order to determine the viability of the recommendations for emendation in each place where emendation is recommended; that is, in Genesis 34, Numbers 5, and Ezekiel 23. I begin this investigation in Chapter 2 by exegeting Num 5:11-31 and follow this exegesis with a critique of the JPS translation of Num 5:13 as a means of investigating the issue of emendation further. My critique of the JPS translation of Num 5:13 is also the first of my demonstrations of how the way in which interpreters construe the relational dynamics in a biblical text influences their translations of that text. In connection with this, the subjectivities of the translators of the JPS come partially into view in my discussion of their possible reasons for making the interpretive decisions they made in regard to Num 5:13.

In Chapter 2, in addition to my analysis of Num 5:11-31, I analyze Deut 22:13-29 in its entirety, because parts of it are adduced by some of the scholars whose

interpretations of Genesis 34 support an interpretation of Shechem as not a rapist. The validity of their adductions can be determined only after becoming familiar with Deut 22:13-29 as a whole. The hermeneutical concern in connection with this approach is the necessity of examining biblical texts in their entirety independently of each other in order to make sense of each text on its own before texts are compared to each other. The subjectivities which come into view in connection with my exegesis of Num 5:11-31 and Deut 22:13-29 are those of the compilers of these texts, those who benefited from the rules and regulations set forth in these texts, and those who were the victims of the rules and regulations set forth in these texts.

The last analysis I undertake in Chapter 2 is that of the word  $\text{הַנָּעִר}$ , for it has been interpreted as representing Shechem's rape of Dinah. Therefore, whether or not it signifies this needs to be determined. In order to do this, I look at all of the uses of  $\text{הַנָּעִר}$  in the *pi'el* with a female as the object, as this is the form in which it is found in Gen 34:2. As a part of this investigation, I critique Ellen van Wolde's analysis of Genesis 34, as she is one of the ten scholars whose interpretations I analyze in connection with the issue of whether or not Shechem is depicted as a lover in Genesis 34. The hermeneutical issue which arises in connection with my examination of the use of  $\text{הַנָּעִר}$  in Genesis 34 is the means by which interpreters develop social linguistic consciousness. I close Chapter 2 with the recommendation that the way to make sense of Genesis 34 is by a 'return' to the text; that is by exegeting and analyzing the text the way it is found in the MT.

#### **Shechem as lover: Chapters 3 and 4**

In Chapters 3 and 4, I analyze the arguments of nine scholars whose textual analyses indicate in some way that Shechem was not a rapist. By comparing their

analyses of Genesis 34—or their conclusions regarding the text—to the content, grammar and vocabulary of Genesis 34, I demonstrate that the author of Genesis 34 did not depict Shechem as only a lover. Again in these chapters, the influence of interpreters' construal of the relational/social dynamics in the text on their determinations of meaning is evident, as are their interpretive desires. It is this latter issue which comes to the fore in Chapter 3, whereas I focus in Chapter 4 on the role in the interpretive process of interpreters' construal of the relational and social dynamics depicted in the text—in this case, in relation to the application of sociological models to a biblical text in order to make sense of it. The other hermeneutical issue that comes to the fore in Chapter 4 is the role in the interpretive process of inner-biblical comparisons. The subjectivities which are in view in these two chapters are those of the interpreters themselves—in the form of the interpretive desires which they bring to their interpretations.

#### **Shechem as a rapist/lover: Chapter 5**

In Chapter 5, I address the role that presuppositions play in the determinations of meanings for biblical texts by first presenting five sociological constructs that can aid in the interpretation of Genesis 34. These sociological constructs are meant to counter some of the cultural presuppositions that we, as contemporary readers, bring to our readings of this ancient text and, as such, these constructs inform my analysis of Genesis 34 in Chapters 6 and 7. Second, I look at the translation of Gen 34:2-3 in the Septuagint, the Old Latin, and the Vulgate, and the translation of Gen 34:1 in Targum Onkelos, Targum Neofiti, and Targum Pseudo-Jonathon, as a means of explicating the origins of some of the presuppositions which many contemporary readers bring to their readings of Genesis 34 because of these traditional interpretations of this text. As a part of this process, the

origins of the view of Shechem as a rapist/lover come into view. The subjectivities in this chapter which are emphasized are those of the ancient translators and those of present-day interpreters who appear to have been influenced in their interpretations of Genesis 34 by these translations from antiquity.

### **Shechem as rapist: Chapters 6 and 7**

In Chapter 6, I discuss the author's creation of the text as an integrated whole, before focusing in Chapter 7 on the character of Shechem specifically. In Chapter 6, I analyze Genesis 34 in terms of its relation to 2 Samuel 13 and to Second Temple literature to which it can be seen to have affinities. As a part of this process, the subjectivities of the author and of his proposed recipients partially come into view. The subjectivity of the author of Genesis 34 is on display, as well as those of his proposed recipients, because my analysis of Genesis 34 is undertaken with the view that the author of this text created this narrative for a particular group of recipients. Therefore, he constructed his text in a particular way in order to get his message across to the people to whom he wished to convey his ideas. As I noted in the introduction, this means that the subjectivities of both the author and his recipients are 'present' to some degree in the resultant text.<sup>117</sup> The hermeneutical issue that comes to the fore in this chapter is the role that the literariness of a biblical text can play in an analyst's determination of a meaning for it.

In Chapter 7, I focus on the author's depiction of Shechem. In connection with this, I investigate traditional translations of some of the key words in Genesis 34 in order to demonstrate that these translations are not reflective of the way in which these words

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<sup>117</sup> I realize that these are only my suppositions as to what characterized—in part—the subjectivities of my proposed author and his ideal readers.

were conceptualized in Biblical Hebrew and that this has made a difference in the way in which Shechem has been perceived. Again, the value of taking the literariness of a biblical text into account in order to make sense of it is asserted, as is the importance of an interpreter/translator developing social linguistic consciousness and, concurrently, transfer competence, in order to render an interpretation/translation of the source text which is as reflective as possible of it. And again, the value of inner-biblical comparisons as an aid to interpretation is affirmed.

In Chapter 8, I look at the role of institutionalized knowledge in perpetuating the traditional interpretation of Shechem as a rapist/lover. In order to do this, I look at the way in which the interpretation of the idiomatic expression דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in a theological word book and two lexicons reinforces this image of him. I then undertake an explication of the uses of דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in nine of the ten places in which it appears in the MT in order to suggest other possibilities for the interpretation of this idiom. The subjectivities which are most on display in this chapter are those of the scholarly community which produces interpretive aids.

By engaging throughout my dissertation in exegesis and analysis of texts relevant to developing an understanding of Genesis 34, by analyzing Genesis 34 itself, and by undertaking word studies of terms in Genesis 34 which are relevant to the depiction of Shechem, I gather together the building blocks of the exegesis. I then exegete the text at the end of this dissertation. As a part of the process of exegeting the text, I refer readers to other parts of the dissertation where I have undertaken exegetical investigations, in order to present an exegesis of the entire text at this point.

## **Two: Necessary groundwork**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I undertake three different analyses that are pertinent to the explication of Genesis 34: an exegesis of Num 5:12b-31, followed by a critique of the emendation of *שָׁכַב אֶתְהָא* in the JPS translation of this pericope; an analysis of Deut 22:13-29; and an analysis of *עָנָה* in the *pi'el* with a female as its object. I exegete Num 5:11-31 because of the importance of the issue of the emendation of *שָׁכַב אֶתְהָא* to the determination of how Shechem is depicted in Gen 34: 2. Both *HALOT* and *BHS* recommend emendation of *שָׁכַב אֶתְהָא* in Gen 34:2. This necessitates an investigation of all of the uses of *שָׁכַב אֶתְהָא* in the MT as part of the determination of whether or not the emendation in Gen 34:2 is called for. One place where *שָׁכַב אֶתְהָא* is found is Num 5: 13, where *BHS* also recommends emendation. *BHS* recommends, as well, emendation for *שָׁכַב אֶתְהָא* in Num 5:19. In order to make sense of these two grammatical forms, it is necessary to exegete the entire pericope, because a part cannot be made sense of apart from the whole of which it is a part. My critique of the emendation of *שָׁכַב אֶתְהָא* in the JPS translation serves to reinforce my conclusion that emendation of *שָׁכַב אֶתְהָא* is not called for in this pericope. It also makes evident the kinds of adjustments translators often have to make to texts as a result of having made an unnecessary emendation.

After exegeting Num 5:12b-31, I analyze the content and grammar of the sexual offense laws in Deut 22:13-29 in order to become familiar with the sense and meaning of this pericope, because this pericope is compared to Genesis 34 in several of the arguments of the scholars whose work I analyze in Chapters 3 and 4. The hermeneutical issue brought to the fore by this approach is the need to become familiar with what a text

is ‘about’ before it is used for comparative purposes with another text. The hoped-for result of such an approach is the ability to determine whether or not inner-biblical intertextual comparisons which are made are apt—that is, when portions of two pericopes are compared to each other, whether or not it is like situations which are being compared.

I also undertake an explication of the word  $\text{הָנַעַץ}$  in the *pi'el* with a female as the object because this is the grammatical situation which exists in Gen 34:2.  $\text{הָנַעַץ}$  has been interpreted by some as representing Shechem’s rape of Dinah, so it is necessary to determine whether or not this is the case. A word with a broad application,  $\text{הָנַעַץ}$  must be examined in all of its uses in the same form in which it is found in Genesis 34 in order to be able to discern its specific meaning there. This approach to the determination of meaning reflects Barr’s recommendations concerning how to discern meanings of words in the Bible. Barr asserts that “generally speaking, it is not possible in any text, in any language to make even basic identifications of words without some attention to their contexts, which is the sole resource available to select between multiple possible values of the signs.”<sup>1</sup> By ‘attention to context,’ Barr means “independent checking for each form and occurrence”<sup>2</sup> of the word in the biblical text and noting “the specific contributions which the word ma[kes]”<sup>3</sup> to the contexts in which it is found. My conclusions in regard to the meaning of  $\text{הָנַעַץ}$  in Genesis 34 serve as the basis for comparisons in Chapters 3 and 4 to other analysts’ determination of its meaning there.

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<sup>1</sup> Barr, *The Typology*, 22. This is especially true in Biblical Hebrew, because of its relatively small vocabulary stock. This means that some words can have very broad applications, thus making the context in which they are used particularly crucial to the determination of their meaning in each location where they are found.

<sup>2</sup> Barr, *Semantics*, 163-164.

<sup>3</sup> Barr, *Semantics*, 71.

### **Numbers 5: Summaries of verses 1-10 and translation of verses 11-31 with notes**

Num 5:1-4: The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: command the people of Israel to put lepers, those with a discharge and those who had touched a corpse outside of the camp.

Num 5:5-10: The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: say to the people of Israel that when a man or a woman commits any of the sins that people commit—thus being unfaithful (ma ‘al) to the LORD—that person incurs guilt (then instructions for confession and restitution follow).<sup>4</sup>

11) The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

12)a Speak to the Israelites and say to them,

b if (יָ) the wife of any man turns aside and is unfaithful (ma ‘al) to him

13)a or (וְ) a man rapes her (וְאֵת אֶתְּ) [with] an ejaculating erection (וְשֵׁבֶט־זָרָע)<sup>6</sup>  
 aa and it is hidden from her husband’s eyes  
 aβ and she is undetected and she (וְהִיא)<sup>7</sup> is defiled (וְטִמְאָה)<sup>8</sup>  
 b and there is no witness against her  
 ba and she (וְהִיא)<sup>9</sup> was not abducted (וְלֹא־נִשְׁבְּטָה)<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Jacob Milgrom (*The JPS Torah Commentary: Numbers* [Philadelphia, New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 5750/1990], 302) notes that “this law assumes and supplements the law of Lev. 5:20-26.” The injuries listed in Lev 5:20-26 which constitute being unfaithful to the LORD are deceiving a neighbor, committing robbery or fraud, keeping property that does not belong to one or swearing falsely.

<sup>5</sup> For the references to my discussions of אֶתְּ וְשֵׁבֶט as representing rape, see Chapter 1, p. 21, n. 73.

<sup>6</sup> For this translation, see n. 20 *infra*.

<sup>7</sup> The use of the independent pronoun here helps to point out the substantive nature of the wife’s situation as it is perceived to be by the husband, even though he cannot prove it. See n. 14 *infra*.

<sup>8</sup> Traditional versions translate the *nip’al* of *tamméin* in this passage as “she has defiled herself.” To do so is to adopt the view of the suspicious husband, whose fears about his wife’s fidelity are given vent in this text. However, it is not necessary for the translator to re-inscribe that perspective at every place that the *nip’al* of *tamméin* is used in this text. Merely stating the condition—“she is defiled”—is adequate to represent the situation laid out in vv. 12-14 and 28: whether or not the woman has been defiled either through her own choice or as the result of having been raped. Since I contend that the text includes rape as one of the two conditions which resulted in ‘defilement’ as far as patriarchal Israel was concerned, I have chosen to translate the *nip’al* of *tamméin* in vv. 12-14 and 28 as “she is defiled.” Where the focus of the text is on the husband’s fear that the woman has chosen to have sex with a man other than him, I have translated the *nip’al* of *tamméas* “she has defiled herself,” in that way representing the feared agency on her part. The decision as to whether or not to translate this *nip’al* form in the reflexive at every place in the text where the *nip’al* of *tamméas* appears represents the predilections of the translator. Not to do so represents my choice—at any place that it is possible—not to “join the author in a critique” of the accused wife (Alice Bach, “Good to the Last Drop: Viewing the Sotah (Numbers 5.11-31) as the Glass Half Empty and Wondering How to View it Half Full” in *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader* [ed. Alice Bach; New York: Routledge, 1999], 505). *The rationale for my choice here is the attempt on my part to represent the reality that is reflected in this text not only in terms of its devisers and utilizers, but also in terms of those whose lives were restricted and defined by the threat of being made to undergo the ritual.*

<sup>9</sup> The independent pronoun here reinforces what the actual situation of the wife might be: she—that one—was not defiled. See n. 14 *infra*.

<sup>10</sup> See pp. 48-49 and n. 48 *infra*.



- 14)a and a jealous<sup>11</sup> fit<sup>12</sup> comes upon him and he is suspicious<sup>13</sup> of his wife  
and she (אִרְיָ) <sup>14</sup> is defiled (אִטְּוָה)  
b or (אִרְ) a jealous fit comes upon him and he is suspicious of his wife  
bα and she (אִרְיָ) is not defiled,
- 15)a then the man shall bring his wife to the priest  
aα and he shall bring the offering required for her:  
aβ a tenth of an ephah of barley flour.  
b He shall not pour oil on it and he shall not put frankincense on it,  
bα for it is a grain offering for suspicions,<sup>15</sup>  
bβ a grain offering of remembrance: remembrance of guilt.
- 16)a Then the priest will bring her near  
b and stand her before the LORD.<sup>16</sup>
- 17)a And the priest will take holy water in an earthen vessel  
b and the priest will take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle  
bα and put it into the water.
- 18)a And the priest will stand the woman before the LORD  
aα and dishevel the woman's hair  
aβ and place in her hands the grain offering of remembrance:

<sup>11</sup> Milgrom (*Numbers*, 38) states that “Hebrew *kin’ah* connotes possessive emotion.”

<sup>12</sup> Milgrom, (*Numbers*, 38) suggests this translation for *ruach* here, based on a comparison with Isaiah 19:14 and Hosea 4:12; 5:4. “Fit” aptly conveys the irrationality of the husband’s suspicions, since he has no evidence at all against his wife, which v. 13 amply makes clear.

<sup>13</sup> I have adopted H.C. Brichto’s (“The Case of the *Sōtā* and A Reconsideration of Biblical “Law,”” *HUCA* 45 [1975], 58) suggestion of the translation “suspicion” here, rather than “jealousy.” Brichto’s translation seems apt to me, for the husband’s suspiciousness, as well as his jealousy, needs to be pointed out to English speaking recipients of this text. Anthony P. Ceresko (“The Function of Antanaclysis (ms’ “to find”// ms’ “to reach, overtake, grasp”) in Hebrew Poetry, Especially in the Book of Qoheleth,” *CBQ* 42 [1982], 553, n.6) asserts the necessity in translation of the use of a variety of English words in order to express “the nuances intended by the author,” when the author has used the same Hebrew word in different ways within the same text. I am applying this principle here. *Since my desire is to express as much as possible the experience of the woman depicted in the text, I have attempted to express as fully as possible the kind of attention which is directed toward her.*

<sup>14</sup> The use of the independent pronoun here and in hemistiches 13aβ, bα and 14a refers to the actual substantive situation of the wife: either she—that one—actually was ‘defiled’ or she—that one—actually was not (v. 14bα).

<sup>15</sup> The heading for this pericope in *The HarperCollins Study Bible NRSV* (209)—“Concerning an Unfaithful Wife”—coincides with the assumption in the text that the woman has been unfaithful to her husband. However, a more accurate title for this pericope is found in *The Good News Bible: Today’s English Version*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Nashville/Atlanta: Thomas Nelson Publishers [1992], 131) which names this pericope: “Cases of Wives with Suspicious Husbands.” This title is more fitting because hemistiches 13aα-bα make it clear that the issue of the wife’s faithfulness is unknown, but one thing that is certain in this text is that the husband is suspicious. This is verified by the fact that he brings an offering for suspicions, not for infidelity.

<sup>16</sup> Milgrom (*Numbers*, 39) notes that the woman is stood before the LORD *before* the priest prepares the potion in order to “heighten its psychological effect.”

- aγ it is a grain offering for suspicions.  
 b And in the hand of the priest  
 βα shall be the curse-bearing revelation water.<sup>17</sup>
- 19)a And the priest will make her swear an oath and say to the woman,  
 “If a man has not raped you (אִשָּׁה לֹא נִשְׁכַּחַתָּ)  
 aα or (וְ) if you have not turned aside to defilement (אִמְצָה) from under your  
 husband,<sup>18</sup>  
 b be free from the curse-bearing revelation water.
- 20)a But (וְ) you!<sup>19</sup> If you have turned aside from under your husband  
 and if you have defiled yourself (אִמְצָה)  
 b and a man has put his erection in you<sup>20</sup>  
 βα other than your husband
- 21)a (and the priest shall make the woman swear to the oath—the oath of the curse—  
 aα and the priest shall say to the woman)  
 aβ the LORD put<sup>21</sup> you as an execration and a swear word in the midst of your people  
 b when (וְ) the LORD makes your uterus<sup>22</sup> drop<sup>23</sup> or (וְ) your belly swell<sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> This translation is based on Brichto’s (“The Case,” 59) suggestion that מִיַּד הַמָּוֶה “might be traced to *yrh* (cf. *tōrā* = oracle). . . . Analogous to such a noun formation from a *pē yodh* verb are *maddā*, *massād*.” He further notes that “bitter water” normally would be expressed in Biblical Hebrew as *mayīm mārīm*.” (As in Exod 15:23: see n. 65 *infra*). According to Brichto, the potion operates “in an oracular manner to point to guilt or innocence respectively.” The translation “revelation water” is Tikva Frymer-Kensky’s (“The Strange Case of the Suspected Sotah (Numbers V: 11-31)”, *VT* 34, 1 [1984], 26) rendering of Brichto’s suggestion.

<sup>18</sup> I have maintained the graphic language of the MT, which conveys, as Bach (“Good,” 509) notes, a “vivid verbal portrait of sexual activity:” an image of the wife rolling over in the marriage bed out from under her husband in order to have sex with another man.

<sup>19</sup> I put an exclamation point here in order to represent the shock felt by the suspected woman when the priest—and all that he represents (God, husband, and community)—focuses in on *her* in particular. See pp. 50-51 *infra*.

<sup>20</sup> The use of the verb *natan* with the following instances of *\*shekobet* indicates that what is referenced is the man’s erection and where he is putting it. There are two uses of *\*shekobet* in Leviticus 18. Both occurrences are part of a list of forbidden sexual relations. Lev 18:20 admonishes a man not to “put his erection into (לְ) his neighbor’s wife in order to ejaculate.” Lev 18:23a admonishes a man not to “put his erection in (בְּ) any beast.” This admonishment is paralleled with an admonishment in hemistich 18:23b to a woman not to stand before any beast in order to copulate. These parallel admonishments indicate that what is referenced is the positioning of each sex in terms of copulating. The use of *\*shekobet* in Lev 20:15 repeats the admonishment of Lev 18:23a. Lev 20:15 is paralleled by an admonishment in v. 16 to a woman not to “draw near to a beast in order to copulate.”

<sup>21</sup> I prefer this translation to “the LORD *make* you an execration and a swear word *among* your people.” To be *among* one’s people suggests the possibility of anonymity in a crowd. That is not the picture presented in the MT. In the MT the woman is envisioned being placed by her God in the midst of her people, from whom she is conspicuously separated because of what she has done. This image is recreated in v. 27 and made even more intense there by the use of *qereb* to describe the woman’s location in the “very midst” of her people. The image is one of a woman who cannot live elsewhere, but who must live out her days trapped in the midst of people who despise her. Another reason for using “put” in hemistich 21aβ is the parallel use of “put” in hemistich 20b. The LORD’S “*putting* the woman as an execration and a swear word among her people” is part of the vindictive language in this text and is payback for her allowing a man other than her husband to *put* his erection in her.

- 22)a and this curse-bearing water shall go into your inward parts  
 αα in order to cause your belly to swell or (ṭ) in order to make your uterus drop.”  
 b And the woman will say, “So be it. So be it.”
- 23)a And the priest will write these curses in a book  
 b and wash them off into the revelation water.
- 24)a And he will make the woman drink the curse-bearing revelation water  
 b and the bitter<sup>25</sup> curse-bearing revelation water will go into her.
- 25)a And the priest will take the grain offering for suspicions<sup>26</sup> out of the woman’s hand  
 b and will elevate the grain offering before the LORD and bring it to the altar.
- 26)a And the priest will take a handful of the offering as its memorial portion  
 αα and burn it on the altar  
 b and afterward he will make the woman drink the water.
- 27)a And [as] he makes her drink the water, it will happen—if she has defiled herself (אָמָץ) and has been unfaithful to her husband (la’ma)—  
 αα that the bitter curse-bearing water shall go into her  
 aβ and her belly will swell

<sup>22</sup> Brichto (“The Case,” 62, n. r) notes that “*BDB* lists Gen. 24:2, 9; 46:26; 47:20; Exod. 1:5; and Judg. 8:30 as instances of *yārek* standing for “thigh—loins, as seat of procreative power.” Brichto sees the same reference here and I concur, though my translation differs from his (shriveled pubis), based on Frymer-Kensky’s description of a prolapsed uterus. See the next note.

<sup>23</sup> Milgrom (*Numbers*, p. 303, n. 64) notes that “both symptoms can be understood as pointing to a prolapsed uterus caused by dropsy.” Tikva Frymer-Kensky (“The Strange,” 20-21) makes a convincing case that this is what is described here: a condition which can result from bearing too many children and doing no exercises to prevent the uterus from falling down and either lodging in the vagina or actually falling out of the body through the vagina.

<sup>24</sup> The grammatical indications are that these two effects of the woman’s ingestion of the water are seen as two different occurrences. In this verse, this is indicated by the fact that the imprecation that the woman’s belly swell comes after the imprecation that her uterus drop; that is, they are not presented sequentially, as would be expected if the swelling belly was perceived as leading to the dropping of the uterus. In hemistich 22a, when the two effects are presented sequentially, each effect is set off separately from the other by a *ḥ* before each *hip ‘il* infinitive construct that names the effect (“in order to” or “in order to”). In the last place that the physical effects of the imprecation are declared—v. 27—they are separated from each other by being in different hemistiches. Cf. G. R. Driver (“Two Problems in the OT Examined in the light of Assyriology,” sec. II, *Syria* 33 [1956], 75) who asserts that “the processes . . . are alternative: either one or the other but not both may befall the woman.”

<sup>25</sup> The *lamed* of *lemarimis* a *lamed* of specification (Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 206, 11.2.10d) and therefore *lemarim* should be rendered as an adjective. Waltke and O’Connor (207, n. 19) cite Gen 41:19 as an example of a *lamed* of specification. The NRSV translates Gen 41:19 as “Never had I seen such *ugly ones* in all the land of Egypt.” Recognizing that מַי הַמְרִימִים does not mean “waters of bitterness,” but rather “revelation water” makes it possible to see that the construction *lemarim* describes the unpalatability of the water.

<sup>26</sup> Milgrom (*Numbers*, 42, n. 25) states that the plural is the preferred translation here, “for plural *kena’ot* (cf. vv. 15, 30).”

- aγ or (ו) her uterus drop  
 b and the woman will be an execration in the very midst of her people.
- 28)a But (ו) if the woman is not defiled (טמא)  
 aα and she is pure,  
 b then she will be free and ready to bear seed.
- 29)a This is the law in cases of suspicions  
 b When (אָפֶשֶׁר)<sup>27</sup> a wife turns aside from under her husband and defiles herself
- 30)a or (או) when (אָפֶשֶׁר) a jealous fit comes upon a man and he is suspicious of his wife,  
 b then he shall stand the woman before the LORD  
 bα and the priest will apply to her all of this law.
- 31)a And the man will be free from guilt,  
 b but (ו) that woman will bear her guilt.<sup>28</sup>

### **Comments on translation of Numbers 5:12b-31**

Jacob Milgrom asserts that Numbers 5 is a chapter devoted to prescriptions designed to maintain the ritual and moral purity of the community.<sup>29</sup> I agree with Milgrom to the extent that I can envision a redactor putting these materials together with such a principle in mind. However, I do not agree with Milgrom that vv. 11-31 are about maintaining the moral purity of the community, which my discussion of these verses will make clear. Verses 1-4 are devoted to issues concerning ritual purity, verses 5-10 to a description of the means by which an Israelite who has been unfaithful (ma'al) to the LORD can make restitution, and verses 11-31 to a woman whose husband suspects her of having been unfaithful (ma'al) to him. Milgrom asserts that ma'al, "as the only term used

<sup>27</sup> The fact that אָפֶשֶׁר is used in vv. 29 and 30 rather than "כִּי" as in vv. 12 (the verse to which v. 29 corresponds) and 20 suggests that vv. 29-31 may be an addendum to the original description of the ritual. Milgrom (*Numbers*, 347) refers to vv. 29-30 as a "resumptive summation of vv. 12b-14" which functions only as "a summary of the case" (351).

<sup>28</sup> Milgrom (*Numbers*, 354) refers to v. 31 as a "postscript [which] encourages the suspicious husband to bring his wife to the ordeal by promising him complete exoneration if his suspicions are proved unfounded." Cf. Frymer-Kensky ("The Strange," 18), who notes that the man can accuse his wife with impunity, knowing that even if she is acquitted by the trial, he will not be charged with false accusation

<sup>29</sup> Milgrom, *Numbers*, 33.

in common in the laws of oath violation (5:6-8) and the laws of adultery (5:11-31) . . . provides the link between these two otherwise unrelated cases.”<sup>30</sup> He also acknowledges that vv. 11-31 are not about ritual impurity.<sup>31</sup>

Numbers 5:11-31 describes a ritual formulated to address male fear and anger<sup>32</sup> about a wife’s assumed defilement:<sup>33</sup> defilement either from having chosen to have sex with another man or from being forced to have sex with another man. The ritual served several purposes. One purpose was to allow the husband—and those in the patriarchy who supported his position—to vent his/their anger toward the wife by frightening<sup>34</sup> and

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<sup>30</sup> Milgrom, *Numbers*, 37.

<sup>31</sup> Milgrom, *Numbers*, 28.

<sup>32</sup> I agree with Bach (“Good,” 506, italics mine) that reading Num 5:11-31 as “a *political* text expressing the *fears* of its male authors toward women” is an illuminative way to approach this text. As for the anger toward women expressed in this text, Milgrom’s (37) reference to the “irate husband” indicates that he has picked up on this anger. For more on the anger which is evident in this text, see notes 52, 71, and 73 *infra*.

<sup>33</sup> That male fear and anger about a wife’s assumed defilement are the focus of Numbers 5:11-31 is indicated by the fact that hemistiches 20b and βα fall in the center of this text. Thirty-one hemistiches precede this statement and thirty-one follow it. This suggests that the negative focused attention directed toward the woman at hand is in the center of the text by design. (For v. 20 as reflective of the negative focused attention directed at the woman at hand, see pp. 50-51 *infra*). Milgrom (352) notes that “the middle section (vv. 19-24), the oath, is the pivot of the entire structure and hence its most important section.” (See p. 351 for his structuring of the text). The middle section includes not only the oath, but also its application. This is the point at which the angry husband gets his revenge. Cf. Milgrom (38), who asserts that “the purpose of this offering is to expose her sin and exact revenge.” The focus on the wife’s assumed defilement also is indicated by the number of times that the woman/wife is referred in this text either nominally or pronominally: sixty-five times in comparison to the references to the man/husband (twenty-three times) and the priest (fourteen times) and the number of times that defilement in connection with the wife is referred to in the text (eight in all: in hemistiches 13aβ, 14a, 14bα, 19aα, 20a, 27a, 28a, 29b). In my discussion of Num 5:11-31, I would have liked to put the words “defiled” and “defilement” in singular quotes in order to indicate that I do not concur with this way of labeling the suspected wife, which was applied to her by the society which this text reflects. However, I have not done so because of the descriptions of rape victims of themselves as feeling defiled; that is, in my discussion of Num 5:11-31, I cannot distinguish adequately between my references to defilement from rape (which is an accurate description of the result of rape according to those who have themselves been raped) and ‘defilement’ from chosen sexual intercourse on the part of women, who most likely would not describe themselves as defiled by sex which they themselves chose to engage in. I do not mean to imply that women within the society reflected in this text would necessarily have made those distinctions, as they most likely would have accepted the label applied to them by the society in which they lived, but I do not. I would have liked to indicate that graphically and cannot.

<sup>34</sup> The threats to the wife can be seen as more psychological and social than physical—though she was made to drink the fouled water, which could not have been a pleasant experience. However, the threat of being condemned by her God and the threat of being shunned and condemned by her community must have been particularly chilling. Beyond these threats, the threat to her reproductive capacity—beyond the physical discomfort it would have caused if either of the impairments were to occur—was the direst threat

humiliating her. As a corollary to this, the triple threat to the wife of humiliation, self-condemnation and permanent sterility which the performance of the ritual occasioned (humiliation and self-condemnation) or threatened to cause (damage to her reproductive organs) served to circumscribe women's activities.<sup>35</sup> A third purpose served by the ritual was reassurance about the husband's paternity. The woman who did not suffer any debilitating effects from the curse-bearing revelation water was seen (by him and by the community) to be ready to 'bear seed;' his, that is, and no one else's.<sup>36</sup>

Of the two purposes of this ritual that most directly affected the husband—fear of his wife choosing to sleep with another man and fear concerning his paternity—the one which seems to be at the root of this ritual is the fear that a wife might choose to have sex with a man other than her husband. I base this assertion on my contention that there are two sources of defilement which the husband fears: infidelity and rape, either of which is defiling in the sense that defilement is used in Num 5:11-31; that is, defilement by penetration (וַיִּתֵּן אִישׁ בְּדֶ אֶת־שִׁכְבָּתוֹ, v. 20). However, as the text progresses, the possibility that the wife might have been raped fades into the background and the fear that she might have “turned aside” to another man takes center stage. This suggests that the main concern in this text is not uncertainty about paternity, but uncertainty about a wife's fidelity.

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of all, especially if she had not borne a son to look after her in her old age. E. Gerstenberger (“עֲנָה II,” *TDOT* 11: 230-252) notes that in antiquity “childlessness threaten[ed] the very essence of a woman's life.”

<sup>35</sup> In terms of the circumscription of their activities, in addition to not wanting to be raped due to the trauma associated with being assaulted, since women were held accountable for being raped (see Otto on the next page and my discussion of Deut 22:13-29, pp. 63-71 *infra*), women had to be careful about ever being in a situation where there was any possibility of assault. This limited their freedom of movement. In addition, the threat of being made to undergo the ritual with its dire social and psychological consequences for the woman was meant to prevent a woman from engaging in chosen sex with a man other than her husband. Milgrom (*Numbers*, 348) recognizes that the threat of having to undergo the ordeal was meant to deter the wife from engaging in extra-marital sex.

<sup>36</sup> See n. 79 *infra*.

Traditionally, vv. 12 and 13 have been read as representing one situation—the situation of the unfaithful wife—but that situation is covered adequately in v.12, which describes the defilement of a wife who chooses to have sex with a man other than her husband. Hemistich 13a describes another way in which a wife could be defiled; that is, if she is forced to have sex and her rapist ejaculates in her, the specific reference to ejaculation evidencing the concern about paternity that such an occurrence could engender in the woman’s husband. Michael Fishbane notes that “verses 12-13 state decisively that the woman is guilty”<sup>37</sup>—and this was the case even if a woman were raped. Eckart Otto’s observations about Deut 22:22 help to explain this reality. Otto notes that “in Deut. 22.22a extra-marital intercourse is at any rate a capital offence, if it is detected *in flagrante delicto*, irrespective of whether the woman has been forced to engage in intercourse or not—it is simply a matter of *Erfolgshaftung* (responsibility for results) irrespective of subjective aspects of intention.”<sup>38</sup> The same holds true in Num 5:12-13, though the Numbers passage addresses the situation where the husband does not have the option of calling for the execution of his wife because he has no witnesses.<sup>39</sup> In

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<sup>37</sup> Michael Fishbane, “Accusations of Adultery: A Study of Law and Scribal Practice in Numbers 5:11-31” in *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader* (ed. Alice Bach; New York: Routledge, 1999), 489. Fishbane’s perception that the wife is seen as guilty from the outset finds support in the preponderance of attention which is focused on the ‘guilt’ of the wife in vv. 12-14. In these verses there are two assertions concerning the sources of the wife’s defilement, a full discussion of that possibility in v. 13, and the statement—twice—in vv. 13aβ and 14a that “she is defiled.” In contrast to this, there is only one reference (in v. 14bα) that “she is not defiled.” For further evidence that, from the beginning of the pericope, the wife is viewed as guilty, see n. 78 *infra*.

<sup>38</sup> Eckart Otto, “False Weights in the Scales of Biblical Justice? Different Views of Women from Patriarchal Hierarchy to Religious Equality in the Book of Deuteronomy” in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* [ed. V. H. Matthews, B. M. Levinson, T. Frymer-Kensky; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998], 138. Carolyn Pressler (*The View of Women Found in the Deuteronomistic Family Law* [New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993], 37, n. 46) concurs with Otto that “sexual intercourse with a married or betrothed woman is a capital offense whether or not the woman has consented.”

<sup>39</sup> Alice Bach (“Introduction to a Case History,” in *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader* [ed. Alice Bach; New York: Routledge, 1999], 461, italics hers ) notes this connection between Num 5:11-31 and Deut 22: 22. Bach refers to the *Sotah* as “the biblical prescription for a woman who may have committed adultery.

hemistich 13a, translating ך as “or” clarifies the fact that distinctions are being made between the situations represented in hemistiches 12b and 13a.<sup>40</sup> In their discussion on coordination, Waltke and O’Connor note that “insofar as ’ô . . . ha[s a] defined role, [it] can everywhere be replaced by w;”<sup>41</sup> in other words, ך can be translated as “or.” The complexity of the presentation of the situation presented in vv. 12b, 13 and 14 requires that the two situations of possible defilement be set off from each other by the multi-purpose ך in hemistich 13a.<sup>42</sup> In hemistich 13a ך means “or” and then “and” in the remainder of v. 13.<sup>43</sup> The effect of this method of coordination is to indicate that vv. 12b, 13, and 14a together represent a situation that is all of a piece; that is, vv. 12b and 13 address the two situations in which the woman is perceived of as having been defiled—either by choice or by force; that is, they describe the situations in which there is a basis for the husband’s suspicions regarding his wife: hemistich 14a declares that she is defiled. ך, then, is reserved for setting off the possibility of the husband’s charging his wife with defilement, when he has a basis for doing so—that is, she is defiled (hemistiches 12b, 13a, and 14a)—from the possibility of the husband charging his wife

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One uses the conditional *may* because if there had been witnesses to the act of adultery, both the adulteress woman and her adulteress partner would have been put to death, according to . . . Dt. 22:22.”

<sup>40</sup> The fact that distinctions are being made here is supported by the use of the plural in hemistiches 15b $\beta$ , 18a $\beta$  and 25a. It is an offering for suspicions, because there are two different suspicions concerning the way in which the wife might have been defiled: either by force or by choice.

<sup>41</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 646: 39.2a.

<sup>42</sup> Waltke and O’Connor (649, 39.2.1c) state that “although Hebrew relies heavily on *waw*, other indicators in the text’s surface grammar sometimes mark out more precise logical values.”

<sup>43</sup> Fishbane (“Accusations,” 500, n. 24) cites a grammatical situation which is similar to the one here, in which ך needs to be translated as “and” and “or” in the same verse. In Hag. 2:12: “If one carries consecrated meat in the fold of one’s garment and (ך) the fold touches bread or (ך) stew or (ך) wine or (ך) any kind of food, does it become holy?”



when he has no basis for doing so: that is, she is not defiled (hemistich 14b), in order to certify that, in either case, he may have the ritual applied to her.<sup>44</sup>

*If read from the perspective of the suspicious husband,*<sup>45</sup> hemistiches 13aα, aβ, b, and bα can be seen as the man ruminating in frustration over his situation.<sup>46</sup> He is just sure that his wife has had sexual contact with another man. It is just that he did not see it for himself (“it is hidden” from his eyes: v. 13a), nor has anyone else told him about it (“she is undetected:” v. 13aα). Yet, “she—she *is* defiled” (v. 13aβ). At this point in the text it is as if the husband’s conviction that his wife has had sexual contact with another man breaks through—as though he is saying, “but she *is* defiled;<sup>47</sup> I just know it—even though I did not see it for myself and even though no one has told me about it” and, as v.13 continues, even though “there is no witness against her” (no one else saw it; she was not caught in the act: v. 13b) and even though “she was not abducted” (שָׁבְתָהּ: v. 13bα); that is, carried away, in which case he would know for certain that she had been with another man.<sup>48</sup> The use of שָׁבְתָהּ to denote taking someone captive has contributed to my

<sup>44</sup> Bach (“Good,” 507) notes that “in Numbers 5. . . no crime at all need be committed. The vivid images in the husband’s imagination are all that is necessary to bring his wife to the tabernacle to drink the bitter water.”

<sup>45</sup> See n. 32 *supra*.

<sup>46</sup> In his translation, Brichto (“The Case,” 57) finds it necessary to depart here “from the Hebrew word-order for the sake of emphasizing four virtually synonymous expressions for adultery,” but he does not account for why the devisers of this text would go to such lengths to include four virtually synonymous expressions for adultery. In his summary interpretation, Brichto (66-67, italics mine) again refers to the four expressions for infidelity in hemistiches 13aα, aβ, b and bα. However he then correctly identifies these four expressions as establishing “*the fact of the total lack of evidence.*” These hemistiches do not refer to “four virtually synonymous expressions for adultery,” but to the four different ways in which the husband lacks any evidence against his wife.

<sup>47</sup> The use of the independent pronoun here, which makes this asseveration different from the previous two, temporarily stops the flow of references here to the husband’s lack of evidence against his wife in order to focus on the husband’s conviction that his wife is defiled.

<sup>48</sup> Carolyn Pressler (“Sexual Violence and Deuteronomic Law” in ed. Athalya Brenner, *A Feminist Companion to Exodus and Deuteronomy* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994], 104) notes that “the verb *tps* has to do with coercion or violence whenever its direct object is a human being.” The glosses given in *HALOT* (4:1779) along with the references given there, bear out the accuracy of Pressler’s observation. According to *HALOT*, the *qal* of תִּפְסֵהוּ means to “lay hold of, to seize.” A survey of the use of תִּפְסֵהוּ *qal* with the accusative of person in Deut 21:19; 1 Sam 23:26; 1 Kgs 13:4, 18:20; 2 Kgs 14:13, 25:6;

decision to translate *שִׁפְטָה* as “abducted” here. The connotation of the wife having been abducted is necessary because this is the kind of certainty about his wife having had contact with another man that the husband wishes that he had, but he does not. This last condition in v.13 coincides solely with the possibility of the woman having been raped<sup>49</sup>—the possibility with which v.13 opened—as with the girl in Deut 22:28-29, who is captured (*שִׁפְטָה*) by a man and raped.<sup>50</sup> This is the second of the three references to the possibility that the woman might have been defiled by a rapist, the third and last reference coming in hemistich 19a.

In hemistich 19a the possibility of the wife having been raped is set off from the other source of defilement by *וְ*, which once again means “or.” In this verse, unlike in hemistiches 12b and 13a, the reference to rape is mentioned first—in the priest’s initial declaration of the oath that the woman must agree to: “if a man has not raped you, (*שָׁכַב אִתְּךָ*)<sup>51</sup> or, if you have not turned aside to defilement from under your husband, be free from the curse-bearing revelation water.”

The formal distinction between hemistiches 12b and 13a and 19a and 19aα helps to clarify that the primary concern of Num 5:12b-31 is fear of a wife choosing to have sex with another man. Standing at the beginning of this text, hemistich 12b introduces the topic of the text: fear on the part of men that their wives might be unfaithful to them.

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Jer 26:8, 34: 3, 37:13, 52:9; Ps 71:11; 2 Ch 25: 23 confirms the accuracy of the glosses given in *HALOT* for *שִׁפְטָה*: that it refers to “laying hold of,” “seizing,” or “capturing” someone.

<sup>49</sup> Brichto (“The Case,” 57) sees the use of the independent pronoun in hemistich 13aβ as a “switch to the nominal form” which “suggests an additional nuance of result.” Rather than seeing the effect that Brichto sees in its presence there, I see this effect in hemistich 13bα, which addresses a situation that applies only to the possibility of rape and thus is set off from the other ruminations on the part of the suspicious husband by the use of the independent pronoun in order to refer to the one situation which would have provided him with the substantive evidence that he needed that his wife had been with another man: if she had been abducted by a rapist. See n. 14 *supra*.

<sup>50</sup> For an interpretation of Deut 22:28-29 as a depiction of rape, see Chapter 3, p. 127, n. 153 and Chapter 4, pp. 156-159.

<sup>51</sup> For *שָׁכַב* with the object pronoun as denoting rape, see Chapter 1, p. 22, n. 73 where the references to my discussions of this grammatical construction are listed.

However, since this introductory statement is followed by a reference to the wife possibly having been raped, it is not clear whether their fear concerning their wives' having sexual contact with another man is more closely connected to a concern about paternity (which would be equally threatened by infidelity or rape) or to a concern that a wife would choose to sleep with a man other than her husband. In hemistich 19a, when the priest begins the intonation of the oath in the sanctuary, rape again is mentioned, because it needs to be taken into account as a source of defilement that will be addressed by the ritual.<sup>52</sup> The concern about voluntary sexual involvement with another man is referred to secondarily in this verse. Coming second in this verse, hemistich 19a $\alpha$  introduces the direction that the text now will take: focusing in on the wife's feared infidelity. In this way hemistich 19a $\alpha$  serves to reintroduce the primary concern of the text: the feared permitted penetration itself. That this is the issue and not the possibility of impregnation can be seen in the fact that penetration alone is referenced in v. 20; there is no mention of ejaculation.<sup>53</sup>

At v. 19 the abstract "wife of any man" with which this pericope begins in hemistich 12b has become particularized in the person of the actual woman standing before the priest, as he addresses her directly.<sup>54</sup> After stating the conditions under which

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<sup>52</sup> This is a view of defilement as representative of another man's 'seed' being in her. There is the possibility that, since the curse-bearing revelation water was regarded as going directly into the woman's womb, the water was viewed as cleansing her womb of any unwanted 'seed' (See n. 79 *infra*). However, since defilement was viewed as any sexual contact—forced or not—between a man's wife and any man other than her husband, it is not clear how the ritual addressed the defilement incurred by any sexual contact, since it was unlikely that the threatened physical results would actually happen. What the ritual does is give the angry husband an outlet for his anger and the opportunity to frighten, humiliate, and disgrace the woman he was angry at. As such, the ritual appears to have been intended more as a deterrent rather than as addressing in any manner the defilement of the memory in the woman's mind of another man's erection.

<sup>53</sup> I do not mean to imply that they thought that ejaculation in the woman did not take place (unless the couple practiced *coitus interruptus*), but, rather, that the fundamental issue here is not ejaculation but penetration and the fear of the wife's memory of another man's erection.

<sup>54</sup> Verse 19a: "And the priest will . . . say to the woman, "If . . . *you* or if *you* . . . ."

the wife would not be affected adversely by the curse-bearing revelation water, the priest focuses in on the woman, as he states the conditions under which she *would* be found ‘guilty.’ That the priest is directing his focused attention toward the accused wife is indicated by the presence of אָתָּה at the beginning of v. 20. According to Waltke and O’Connor, when כִּי comes “directly after the subject” (as in v. 20), this indicates that the subject functions as a *casus pendens*<sup>55</sup> or “focus marker.”<sup>56</sup> In v. 20, אָתָּה coming at the beginning of the verse before כִּי אֲשַׁטֵּיתָ indicates that the priest is honing in on the woman at hand. When v. 19—with its statement concerning the conditions under which the wife would be considered innocent—is compared to vv. 20-27 (the verses where not only the accusatory part of the oath is given, but also the particulars of the ritual are outlined and reiterated), v. 19 comes across as a pro forma statement that the priest must make before he gets to the real ‘meat’ of the issue at hand:<sup>57</sup> the woman in his ‘hands,’ whom he has the power to frighten and humiliate, as he makes her undergo the ritual directed at physically and socially disabling her.<sup>58</sup>

### **The experience of the suspected wife**

The first thing that happens to the suspected wife when she enters the sanctuary is that the priest stands her before the LORD (v.16), who may appear, then, *to her*<sup>59</sup> to be in

<sup>55</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 637, §636, 38.2d5.

<sup>56</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 692, under “nominative absolute.”

<sup>57</sup> See n. 33 *supra* for Milgrom’s comments in regard to the importance of this section of the text.

<sup>58</sup> The fact that אָתָּה comes before כִּי אֲשַׁטֵּיתָ in v. 20 is not taken into account in the JPS, the KJV, the RSV, the NRSV, the TEV, or the NAB. Instead, the independent personal pronoun is subsumed under אֲשַׁטֵּיתָ in these translations and thus the focused attention that the priest directs toward the woman before him does not appear. This translation decision on the parts of these translators is significant because their translations then fail to represent the force of the negative attention directed toward the woman at this point in the text.

<sup>59</sup> As I stated in notes 8 and 13 *supra*, my desire is to read this text from the perspective of the accused wife wherever this is possible.

league with his male minions against her: her God will judge her,<sup>60</sup> just as her husband already has judged her. Then, in v.17, we see the priest begin the process that will foul the water that the woman will be made to drink: he adds dust from the floor of the tabernacle to “holy water in an earthen vessel.” In v.18, it is *repeated* that the priest shall stand the woman before the LORD. *If this text is read as the patriarchal mind fuming about a woman being unfaithful to her husband,*<sup>61</sup> then the repetitions in the text do not seem that disruptive.<sup>62</sup> Rather, they seem like the insistent actions of an angry man: “if my wife dares to *lie* with any other man, I will see to it that she *stands* before the LORD” —and ‘seeing to it’ may mean saying it twice, just so any woman hearing this text would think twice before sleeping with a man other than her husband. Standing now before the LORD, the woman’s appearance is altered by the priest, who dishevels her hair, evoking the image of a woman caught in an intimate act.<sup>63</sup> And then the priest picks up the curse-bearing revelation water and begins the intonation of the oath against the woman that she must swear to. However, right in the midst of the priest’s delivery of the oath, there is a

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<sup>60</sup> Even though the ritual most likely will vindicate the wife since it is highly unlikely that some water with dirt and ink in it would actually cause physical harm—at least of the kind described—there is not an emphasis in this text on God as deliverer and vindicator. Since the wife is vindicated—delivered by her God—this ritual *could have been described from that perspective*, but it is not. The wife’s deliverance is not emphasized; the emphasis in this text is on God as judge.

<sup>61</sup> See n. 32 *supra*.

<sup>62</sup> Milgrom (*Numbers*, 351) asserts that Fishbane and Brichto “have shown convincingly that this text is a logical and unified composition.”

<sup>63</sup> Bach, “Good,” 505. Bach (“Good,” 507) observes that the priest’s disheveling of the wife’s hair “evokes a picture of female sexuality unbound: the loosed hair of a loose woman.” Milgrom (303, n. 55) notes that “this rendering is confirmed by the cognate idiom in Akk., *pè-ra-s`a wašarat*, “her hair is unloosed.” According to Milgrom, “the Akk. text continues: *daduša šahtu*, “her breast . . . is bared.” Milgrom continues, “The Bible also records that part of the punishment of an adulteress (Ezek. 16:38) was to strip off her clothes (cf. Ezek. 16: 39; Hos. 2:5). Thus the rabbinic claim that the breast of the suspected adulteress was bared as part of her humiliation . . . though not explicit in Scripture, may be based on ancient precedent. Two probable reasons account for the rabbinic addition to her humiliation: to motivate her voluntary confession if she was guilty and to discourage her from resorting to the ordeal (*sic*: it is not *her* choice to resort to the ordeal).” A third reason for the rabbinic addition of exposing the breast of the woman was the erotic arousal of the men involved (either those actually involved in the application of the ritual or those who just were speculating about it) in an act that was the equivalent in antiquity of ‘a wardrobe malfunction:’ the purposeful disrobing of the woman.

repetition that he must make the woman take the oath. Like the repetition of the instruction that the priest stand the woman before the LORD, the repetition that the woman take the oath appears like the words of an angry, insistent man: “be sure that she takes that oath”—for it is not enough that the woman’s God will judge her or that the priest and her husband threaten and humiliate her or that her community may shun her, the woman must condemn herself.<sup>64</sup> She must wish for herself that her God punish her by making her drink fouled water that is meant to damage her physically and that the priest and her husband frighten and humiliate her and that her community shun her. And even beyond that, it is not enough that the woman must swear to the self-condemning curses, she must swallow them as well, so the priest writes the curses in a book and washes them off into the curse-bearing revelation water, now described as bitter,<sup>65</sup> which he then makes the woman drink—the water that is meant to make her an execration in the midst of her people and to make her belly swell or her uterus drop.

### **The devisers and utilizers of Numbers 5:11-31**

The curse-bearing revelation water was important to the devisers and utilizers of this text. It is mentioned ten times in all: in hemistiches 17a, 18ba, 19b, 22a, 23b, 24a, 24b, 26b, 27a, 27aa—more than any other item in the text. The woman’s *drinking* of that water was important to the devisers and utilizers of this text as well, because it is referred

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<sup>64</sup> Milgrom (*Numbers*, 41) notes that “the double “amen” is found at the end of doxologies . . . and in solemn acknowledgement of guilt.” The latter meaning would be the one which applied here.

<sup>65</sup> Brichto (“The Case,” 59), Driver (“Two,” 73,74), and Milgrom (*Numbers*, 40) all comment that putting dirt and ink in water would not make it bitter. However, it might make it bad-tasting and it would not be particularly palatable. The best parallel to *hammarim lemarim* in Num 5:24 and 27 is the bitter water of Marah (Exod 15:23). It is not clear what was wrong with the water of Marah, but it is clear that the Israelites did not want to drink it. Whether the bitter water in Numbers 5 is “bitter” because it is unpalatable or because of the woman’s being made to drink it in the midst of an experience of being humiliated, *lemarim* modifies *hammayimas* something unpleasant that the woman is made to drink, so whether or not the water actually would have been bitter is not really the point. The point is that the devisers and utilizers of this text wanted her to have an unpleasant experience. The description of the fouled water as “bitter” is not off the mark.

to three times in the text (in hemistiches 24a, 26b, and 27a). But why was it important—so that it might cause her belly to swell or her uterus to drop? That also is mentioned three times in the text (in hemistiches 21a, 22a, 27aβ and αγ). Or was it because the suspected wife was going to be made to swallow something that was unpleasant: water with dirt and ink in it, water described in the text twice as “bitter,” like the waters of Marah, which made the Israelites cry out in complaint? I think it was the latter, for I share Bach’s skepticism “that a husband would deprive himself of a fecund wife on the basis of his suspicions.”<sup>66</sup> She further notes that “a sterile woman in a culture in which women function as childbearers does not have a salutary future.”<sup>67</sup> I agree with Bach that the threats directed against the wife’s reproductive capacity were not meant to be successful.<sup>68</sup> What I see, instead, in these threats directed against the wife’s reproductive organs, is the expression of male fear and anger that a wife might have considered another—as Daniel Murray puts it—“superior in *l’amour*.”<sup>69</sup> As a result of a wide-ranging survey of laws against adultery, Murray reaches the conclusion that “probably the tacit underlying reason in all legal systems [for laws against adultery] was that adultery was a blow to a man’s pride.”<sup>70</sup> The ritual described in Num 5:11-31, then, is rooted in the male ego that fears it has been wounded. The ritual provides the opportunity for a man who fears he has been wounded to strike back at the one whom he perceives as having inflicted the wound. This accounts for the vindictiveness directed toward the wife

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<sup>66</sup> Bach, “Good,” 516—especially since money would have been paid for the right to her sexual function.

<sup>67</sup> Bach, “Good,” 515.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Driver (“Two,” 76), who observes that “the treatment prescribed would not of itself produce the physical results described.”

<sup>69</sup> Daniel E. Murray, “Ancient Laws on Adultery – A Synopsis,” *Journal of Family Law* 1 (1961), 89.

<sup>70</sup> Murray (“Ancient,” 89) surveyed Accadian law, the Hammurabic Code, Assyrian law, the Hebrew Bible, the Hindustani laws of Manu, Greek law, Roman law, English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh law, Germanic, French, Spanish, and Italian law.

in this text.<sup>71</sup> When the priest makes the suspected wife drink the bitter curse-bearing revelation water, this is what the devisers and utilizers of this text thought *ought* to happen to her: when the bitter curse-bearing water *went into her*, her belly *ought* to swell or her uterus *ought* to drop.<sup>72</sup> This is what *should* happen to a woman who has allowed a man other than her husband to penetrate her: if you allow another man to *go into you*, then just see what happens when the curse-bearing revelation water *goes into you!*<sup>73</sup>

But most likely nothing physically drastic at all happened to the wife—except that she might have choked on the gritty, inky water. This is about the worst physical reaction on the part of the wife that an angry husband could have expected from this ritual that Brichto refers to as a charade.<sup>74</sup> However, in terms of inflicting negative *social* effects on the wife, the ritual most likely was more successful. In addition to the already mentioned circumscription of women’s freedom of movement, the application of the ritual probably would have caused the woman to be disgraced in the community. As Bach notes, “having been revealed in the community, even an innocent wife will have difficulty regaining status and respect, since the husband’s suspicion has been transmitted to the

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<sup>71</sup> Bach (“Good,” 505) notes “the implicit threats to women in this text.”

<sup>72</sup> Milgrom (*Numbers*, 350) notes that the threats to the wife’s procreative powers constitute “poetic justice.”

<sup>73</sup> The kind of anger that this text reflects and can evoke can be seen in Milgrom’s (303, n. 64) notation that “the rabbis clearly posited that the effects of the waters were immediate: ‘Hardly had she finished drinking before her face turns yellow and her eyes bulge and her veins swell and they (the priests) say; ‘Take her away! Take her away! That the Temple court not be defiled.’” (Mish. Sot. 3:4).”

<sup>74</sup> Brichto, “The Case,” 67. Bach (“Good,” 517) notes that “the readings of Milgrom and Brichto defend the practice of the ritual of Sotah as a strong means of protection of the woman against her irate husband.” It is possible to see the ritual as a socially-managed outlet for violent emotions; that is, as a way of protecting the wife against physical abuse much worse than being made to drink fouled water. In the MT a husband is not permitted to beat his wife. He is allowed to divorce her, to have this ritual applied to her, or to have her executed should she be found by at least two witnesses having sexual contact with another man (Deut 22: 22). I am assuming that any application of capital punishment would require two witnesses as stipulated in Deut 17:6 and Num 35:30. However, it is possible that these laws in Deut 17:6 and Num 35:30 would not have been operative at the same time as those described in Deut 22:13-29.



community.”<sup>75</sup> While the angry husband is exonerated from any guilt in connection with bringing his wife to have the ritual applied to her and her not having been found ‘guilty,’ *she* really is not exonerated from anything. The parting shot in Num 5:11-31 (v. 31b) is in line with the opening hemistich (v. 12b): “*that* woman [the one excoriated and assumed guilty in the text] will bear her guilt.” As Bach notes, the wife’s vindication does not get equal time in this text.<sup>76</sup> The emphasis in the text is not on the wife’s not having an adverse reaction to the ingestion of the bitter curse-bearing revelation water. The declaration that if she is not defiled then the water will not harm her and she will be ready to bear seed appears almost as an after-thought, coming as it does after the culminating diatribe against her in v. 27.<sup>77</sup> The final word in Num 5:11-31 suggests that the devisers and utilizers of this text remained convinced of it—her guilt<sup>78</sup>—and, if she had managed to fool all of them and the Almighty as well this time,<sup>79</sup> she had better watch herself because eventually her guilt would catch up with her.

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<sup>75</sup> Bach, “Good,” 507. There is no indication in the biblical text that anyone was present at the application of the ritual beyond the suspected wife, her husband and the priest. However, even if there were no witnesses, the fact that a woman had been taken to the sanctuary for this purpose would not have remained a secret, if the ritual ‘worked’ as I assert that it did: that is, to assure the husband and the rest of the community that the bitter water had, in fact, washed away any ‘alien’ seed that was perceived to have been in the wife’s womb (see n. 79 *infra*). In addition, the fact that the woman is threatened twice in the course of the ritual with becoming “an execration” in the midst of her people (vv. 21aβ and 27b) indicates that her husband did not wish to keep the application of the ritual to her a secret.

<sup>76</sup> Bach, “Good,” 511.

<sup>77</sup> Milgrom (303, n. 73) notes that “the vocabulary of v. 27 is borrowed from vv. 24, 13, 12, 24, 22, 21 in that order but with slight changes.” Because of this, v. 27 incorporates many of the elements of vengeance directed toward the wife elsewhere in the text.

<sup>78</sup> In addition to the emphasis in vv. 12-14 on the wife’s assumed guilt (see n. 37 *supra*), v. 15 also indicates that the wife was *assumed* to be guilty. Milgrom (38) asserts that the prohibition in v. 15b against putting oil and frankincense on the offering “is a sign that the occasion is one of *real* or *suspected* wrongdoing.” In v. 15bβ, the offering which the husband is to bring is described as an “offering of . . . remembrance of guilt.” Milgrom (39) relates that the “Hebrew *hizkir ‘avon* means “exposes” wrongdoing so that punishment is inevitable.” Thus the form of offering itself (*hizkir ‘avon*), as well as the prohibition against adding oil and frankincense to it, indicate that the wife is assumed to be guilty *before* she undergoes the ritual. Cf. Driver (76, italics mine), who observes that “the purpose of the ritual was as much to *punish* an *assumed* crime, as to prove that it had been committed.”

<sup>79</sup> Bach (“Good,” 508) notes that, “according to traditional interpretations, the father God enters the bitter waters to determine the woman’s guilt or innocence. The physical evidence confirming her innocence is a

### **To emend or not: that is the question**

One of the primary claims which I make concerning the interpretation of the MT is that the most accurate way to interpret the MT is to interpret the text as it is presented in the body of *BHS*.<sup>80</sup> Such a claim is not based on an assumption that there is any way to demonstrate that the body of *BHS* represents some sort of original text, but, rather, my claim is more closely related to the conclusion by translation committees of current major translations that *BHS* is currently the best available representation of the MT. It is the standard text that serves as the basis for interpretive work. Since interpreters must stand somewhere and work from some location, then the body of *BHS* is the location where I choose to stand—with the recognition that emendation of the text might be necessary on occasion. However, as I have argued *supra* in relation to Num 5:11-31, I do not think that the emendations recommended for שָׁכַב with the objective pronoun in vv. 13a and 19a are needed. Rather, I have demonstrated that it is possible to make sense of the text as it is. In order to reinforce my claim, I critique the emendation of Num 5:12b-13 in the JPS translation of these verses via recourse to Milgrom's commentary on the JPS translation of Numbers.

### **Jacob Milgrom's commentary on the JPS translation of Numbers 5:12b-13**

The JPS translation of Num 5:12b-13 which serves as the basis of Milgrom's commentary is as follows: "If any man's wife has gone astray and broken faith with

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clean functional womb revealed to the community of witnesses after the deity's inspection." There may have been a sense that even if the woman was 'guilty' and she was carrying around another man's seed in her that the water washed away that seed, making her ready to bear only her husband's seed, so that any child born within months of the woman having the ritual administered surely could be regarded as the husband's. Milgrom (*Numbers*, p. 303, n. 61) notes that "in the Mesopotamian ordeal, the river "cleansed" . . . the innocent." Milgrom does not comment on the fact that if one were innocent, then there would be no need for one to be cleansed. Perhaps the same sort of 'logic' is at work here.

<sup>80</sup> J. J. Stamm ("Introduction to the third edition of *HALOT*, XCIX) relates that the approach of the lexicographers was to place their "basic trust in the text in its traditional form." This is my position as well.

him<sup>13</sup> in that a man has had carnal relations *with* her unbeknown to her husband, and she keeps secret the fact that she has defiled herself without being forced, and there is no witness against her.”<sup>81</sup> One of the first things that is evident in this translation is that *וְשָׁכַב אִישׁ אֶת־הָאִשְׁתּוֹ שְׁכִיבָתָהּ-זָרָע* is translated as “a man has had carnal relations *with* her,” a translation that serves as a continuation of hemistich 12b—and of the mutuality implied in that hemistich by a wife *seeking* sexual relations with a man other than her husband. The fact that the verbal construction *וְשָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשְׁתּוֹ* does not reflect the interactive, cooperative sense of the preposition “with”<sup>82</sup> is not commented on by Milgrom.<sup>83</sup>

The other thing that is evident in this translation is that the translators have not retained the sequencing of the information as it is given in vv. 12b-13 in the MT. The fact that there is no witness against the wife is not the last bit of information given about her but, rather, the last information given about the wife is the fact that she was not “forced:” tps (or “abducted”).<sup>84</sup> Milgrom recognizes “Hebrew *nitpasah* as “*forced*”” and relates this rendering to Deut 22:28. However, he also considers the possibility that *וְשָׁכַב* could be rendered ““apprehended”.”<sup>85</sup> His support for this interpretation comes from the “Targums, Ibn Ezra, Karaites, Shadal . . . . [and] Hammurabi, [where] the concept is also attested . . . par. 132, e.g., “apprehend PN’s [proper name] wife there . . . and the witnesses should make their deposition”.”<sup>86</sup> The implication in Milgrom’s ruminations

<sup>81</sup> Milgrom, *Numbers*, 37, italics mine.

<sup>82</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 21, n. 73, for the references to my discussions of *וְשָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשְׁתּוֹ* as rape. For my claim that vv. 12b-14a represent *two* situations: that of an unfaithful wife or of a wife who has been raped, see pp. 45-48 *supra*.

<sup>83</sup> It is noted in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (eds. A. Alt, O. Eißfeldt, P. Kahle, R. Kittel, K. Elliger, W. Rudolph, H. P. Rüger, G. E. Weil; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft [1990], 219) which has “*וְשָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשְׁתּוֹ*” in the Critical Apparatus. Barr (*Semantics*, 83, n. 1) denies “the assertion that a grammatical difference has no conceptual relevance.”

<sup>84</sup> My translation.

<sup>85</sup> Milgrom, *Numbers*, 37. The quotation marks within the quotation are Milgrom’s.

<sup>86</sup> Milgrom, *Numbers*, 302, n. 37. The quotation marks within the quotation are Milgrom’s.

about *תִּפְּשׂ* meaning “apprehended” in Num 5:11-31 is that what the translation “she was not apprehended” would convey is that the wife had not been “caught in the act.” Being “caught in the act” is part of the legislation in Deut 22:13-29 and is denoted by *אָצָף* in vv. 22 and 28 in that pericope.<sup>87</sup> Being “caught in the act” means, of course, that there would be witnesses to the sexual contact. This leads Milgrom to assert that if the translation “apprehended” is accepted, then the next clause, “there is no witness against her,” is tautologous.<sup>88</sup> But the next clause is not “there is no witness against her.” This clause precedes the statement that she was not abducted. In other words, neither Milgrom nor the JPS translators make sense of the text as it is. It appears that in order to make sense of the text along the lines of what is depicted in Deut 22:22 and 28, the JPS translators rearranged the text. By making *וְהָיָה לֹא נִתְפָּשָׂה* (“and she was not abducted”) come directly after *וְהָיָה נִטְמָאָה* (“and she is defiled”) instead of last in the verse (where it is placed in the MT), they create the translation: “she keeps secret the fact that she has defiled herself (their rendering of *וְהָיָה נִטְמָאָה*) without being forced (their rendering of *וְהָיָה לֹא נִתְפָּשָׂה*), and there is no witness against her”—placed last in their translation rather than next to last, where it is in the MT. By rearranging the text in this way, they have created a situation which resembles those in Deut 22:22 and 28, except that in the scenarios in Deuteronomy there are witnesses. Due to their textual rearrangement, the translators were able to make sense of *תִּפְּשׂ* and to include as well the statement that “there is no witness against her” in a way that made sense to them. The problem is that this does not represent what is in the MT. The information about the man’s fears concerning his wife is given in the following way in the MT:

<sup>87</sup> See the discussion of Deut 22:13-29, pp. 63-71 *infra*.

<sup>88</sup> Milgrom, *Numbers*, 37.

If the wife of any man turns aside and is unfaithful to him (12b)  
 or a man forces her with an ejaculating erection (13a)  
 and it is hidden from her husband's eyes (13a $\alpha$ )  
 and she is undetected and she is defiled (13a $\beta$ )  
 and there is no witness against her (13b)  
 and she was not abducted (13b $\alpha$ ).

The rearrangement of the verses in the JPS translation of vv. 12b-13 is as follows:

If any man's wife has gone astray and broken faith with him  
 in that a man has had carnal relations with her (13a)  
 unbeknown to her husband (13a $\alpha$ )  
 and she keeps secret the fact that she has defiled herself (13a $\beta$ )  
 without being forced (13b $\alpha$ )  
 and there is no witness against her (13b).

Milgrom accepts the translation of “forced” for *tps*—with the reservation that if that meaning is accepted, “then one would expect the clause to be included in the curse formula of verse 19.”<sup>89</sup> But, once he has stated his reservation, Milgrom proceeds with the translation of “she has defiled herself without being forced” and asserts, in support of this translation, that “the terminology presumes that she was not forced but willing, for example, “has gone astray,” “breaking faith with him,” “she keeps secret.”<sup>90</sup> However, it is not the terminology in hemistiches 13a $\alpha$ -13b $\alpha$  that presumes that the wife was not forced but rather was willing, but, instead, it is the JPS translators, who read with the dominant perspective in the text: the one with which the text opens and which prevails with some vehemence from vv. 20-31 (with the exception of v. 28). Milgrom's examples of the wife's willingness come first from hemistich 12b, which does state that the wife “turned aside” and “was unfaithful” to her husband. However, his third example—“she keeps secret”—comes from the list in hemistiches 13a $\alpha$ -b $\alpha$  of the ways in which her husband does not have evidence against her. The translation of נִסְתַּתֵּרָה as “she keeps

<sup>89</sup> Milgrom's (*Numbers*, 302, n. 39) assertion here is based on a Karaite rendering of Numbers 5.

<sup>90</sup> Milgrom, *Numbers*, 37-38.

secret” convicts the wife of having information which she purposely keeps from her husband. However, while the emphasis in hemistiches 13a $\alpha$ -13b $\alpha$  is on the wife, it is not on her as an active agent, but rather on her as the object of her husband’s suspicions. Milgrom asserts that if the *nip’al* of סָתַר is taken as a reflexive—as he claims that it is—the translation would be literally “she keeps herself secret.”<sup>91</sup> סָתַר in the *nip’al* is used in the reflexive sense in several places in the MT: in I Sam 20:5, 19, 24; Isa 28:15; Jer 23:24, 36:19; Amos 9:3; Prov 27:12; Prov 28:28; and Job 34:22.<sup>92</sup> These occurrences of סָתַר in the *nip’al* refer to a person or persons hiding himself or themselves. But the suspected wife is not hiding herself from her husband. Rather, וְנִסְתַּתְּרָהּ in v. 13a $\beta$  refers to the state that the husband fears that his wife is in: that of having had sexual contact with another man, sexual contact which remains unrevealed. This sense of the *nip’al* of סָתַר—that of reflecting a situation or state of being—*also* is found in the MT: in Gen 31:49; Deut. 29:28; Pss 19:13, 38:10; Isa 40:27; Hos 13:14; Zeph 2:3; and Job 3:23, 28:21.<sup>93</sup> This is the sense of the *nip’al* of סָתַר in Num 5:13a $\beta$ . It reflects the husband’s fears about his wife’s state of being: of having the sexual memory of another man.

What is indicated by the hemistiches 13a $\alpha$ -13b $\alpha$  is not the activity of the wife but the activity of the husband’s mind, as he turns over in his mind the ways in which he does not have evidence against his wife. *If the hemistiches are read from this perspective,*<sup>94</sup> a picture develops that makes sense of the text as it is—without rearranging the sequencing of the hemistiches in v.13 or being unable to account for the verb תִּפְשֵׁת. First, hemistich 13a $\alpha$  indicates that the husband did not see anything himself; second, hemistich 13a $\beta$

<sup>91</sup> Milgrom, *Numbers*, 302, n. 33.

<sup>92</sup> A. Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible* (Jerusalem: “Kiryat-Sefer” Ltd., 1990), 816. *Hitpa’el* also is used to convey the reflexive sense in 1 Sam 23:19 and 26:1 and in Ps: 54:2.

<sup>93</sup> Even-Shoshan, 816.

<sup>94</sup> See n. 32 *supra*.

indicates that there is no secondhand information about his wife that has come his way; third, hemistich 13b indicates that there is no eye witness against her; and fourth, hemistich 13b $\alpha$  indicates that she was not even abducted—in which case the husband would have incontrovertible evidence that she had been with another man. This last eventuality is connected solely with the possibility of the wife having been forced, an eventuality that makes sense of the use of *tps* in hemistich 13b $\alpha$ , as well as the presence of *אֶתְּכָבֵד אֶתְּהָ* in hemistich 13a—and of *אֶתְּכָבֵד אֶתְּהָ* in 19a; that is, of the curse formula where Milgrom asserts that a reference to being forced should be included. What the hemistiches 13a $\alpha$ -13b $\alpha$  confirm is that the husband’s bringing of his wife to the sanctuary for the ritual to be performed is based entirely on his suspicions, and his right to bring her under these circumstances is something which the text asserts he has every right to do (vv. 14a and 30a). If *כָּבֵד* with a feminine pronoun as its object is not emended in hemistiches 13a and 19a to make it the preposition “with” with a pronominal suffix, then the fact that rape also is being addressed in this text can be seen and the use of *tps* in hemistich 13b $\alpha$  makes sense; that is, the possibility that the wife might have been abducted and raped is taken into account.<sup>95</sup>

The problems for Milgrom associated with the JPS translation of Num 5:12b-13 appear to arise from the translators of the JPS translation having applied the dominant perspective of the text—that the wife willingly has engaged in sexual relations with a man other than her husband—to the entire text. If this assumption is then coupled with the contemporary view that if the wife were raped she would not be guilty of having “defiled herself”—which is the way in which *הִטְהַרְתָּ* is translated in the JPS—then the

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<sup>95</sup> For my argument that rape, as well as infidelity, is addressed in Num 5:11-31, see pp. 45-50 *supra*. For references to where I argue that *כָּבֵד* with the object pronoun signifies rape, see Chapter 1, p. 22, n. 73.

combining of these two assumptions leads to the assumption that אִתְּךָ שָׁכַב really must mean שָׁכַב אִתְּךָ; that is, that mutuality is indicated in hemistich 13a as well as in hemistich 12b, because that is the only way that the wife could have defiled herself: by having chosen to have sex with a man other than her husband. However, as I indicated in my comments on Num 5:11-31, in the society reflected in Num 5:11-31, the wife was considered ‘defiled’ whether she had engaged in consensual sex or had been engaged in non-consensual sex. It was just that the thought that she might have *chosen* to engage in sex with a man other than her husband that caused a greater degree of discomfort to the male devisers of the ritual outlined in Num 5:11-31 than the thought of her having been raped did, and so it is the fear that a wife might have engaged in consensual sex that comes to dominate the text.<sup>96</sup> It is the emendation of אִתְּךָ שָׁכַב to שָׁכַב אִתְּךָ—which results from the JPS interpreters failing to recognize that both consensual and non-consensual sex are addressed by the ritual in Num 5:11-31—that has caused interpretive problems for them with this text. To emend or not? In this case, no.

### **Analysis of Deuteronomy 22:13-29**

According to Carolyn Pressler, Deuteronomy 22:13-29 “is widely recognized” as a unit within this chapter of Deuteronomy. Pressler notes that

the laws are unified at a redactional level by similarities of content, form,<sup>97</sup> and wording.<sup>98</sup> Each law has to do with a sexual offense. In contrast to the apodictic laws which precede and follow [this] passage, each of the laws is casuistic in form. . . . Moreover, the passage is defined by an inclusio. It begins with a case of pre-marital sexuality (22:13-19) and ends with a case concerning pre-

<sup>96</sup> For the basis of my claim here, see n. 33 *supra*, concerning Milgrom’s claim that the most important part of the text is vv. 19-24, thus indicating that this part of the text is most reflective of the primary concern reflected in the text. This is where the priest focuses in on the suspected wife in terms of her having been unfaithful to her husband. For the claim that the priest focuses on her in this way, see pp. 50-51 *supra*.

<sup>97</sup> Pressler refers here to the fact that the laws in Deut 22:13-29 are casuistic in form rather than apodictic. The difference in the length of the laws also attests to their being a collection brought together by redactors.

<sup>98</sup> However, the *differences* in wording also indicate that these laws are a collection.



marital sexuality (22:28-29). The penalties in both the first and last cases consist of a fine paid to the girl's father and the mandate that "she shall be his wife; he may not divorce her."<sup>99</sup>

Michael Fishbane agrees with Pressler regarding the unity of Deuteronomy 22:13-29.<sup>100</sup> For Fishbane, the most significant unifying feature is the repetition of the word נִצְּנָה, which is present in some form in each of the six laws in this unit. In the law outlined in vv. 13-19, נִצְּנָה is used twice: in vv.15 and 17. In the law described in vv. 20-21, נִצְּנָה is used once. All three of these references concern whether or not a bride was *found* to be a virgin at the time of her marriage. In the law in v. 22 the reference is to a man *found* lying (*qal* active participle) with the wife of another man. Both the man and the woman are subject to the death penalty. In the next law, נִצְּנָה refers to a man *finding* a contracted girl in the city and engaging in sexual congress with her. They, too, both are to be executed even though there is no specific reference to their having been found *in flagrante delicto*. However, the fact that she is known not to have cried out indicates that they were found together. The scenarios in the next two laws outlined indicate as well that the man described in vv. 23-24 was discovered during the commission of the crime, because the law in vv. 25-27 deals with a man who *finds* a contracted girl in the country and rapes her, but there are no witnesses, so she is not to be executed, only he. Then the last law (vv. 28-29) deals with the rapist of an uncontracted girl. They are *found* together and, because of this, he can be held accountable. This is an additional indication that the man who is held accountable in the law outlined in vv. 23-24 is able to be held accountable because he was found during the commission of the crime, even though that part of the

<sup>99</sup> Pressler, *The View*, 21, n. 1.

<sup>100</sup> Michael Fishbane, "Biblical Colophons, Textual Criticism and Legal Analogies," *CBQ* 42 (1980), 447.

scenario is not specified in this passage. Like Fishbane, Ceresko sees in these various uses of נָפֵץ in Deut 22:13-29 a thread that runs through this pericope, creating an “underlying unity in a diversity of experiences.”<sup>101</sup>

### **Deut 22:13-19, 28-29**

The situations addressed in vv.13-19 and 28-29 are both concerned with the financial interests of the legal guardian of the girl in each of these scenarios. Verses 13-19 address the possibility of a groom slandering his bride with charges that when he consummated the marriage he found that she was not a virgin. Since the girl’s father was the custodian of the bed clothes of the marriage bed, the success of such charges against the girl was entirely in his hands. Thus the effect of the law was that such charges by a groom would be pointless, for the groom did not have in his possession the means to make his case. If the girl were not a virgin due to incest or some other form of rape or even if she had been promiscuous, this law provides no leeway for the groom to protest that he had been sold ‘damaged goods.’ The two references to the groom’s not liking his bride (vv.13,16) highlight the possible reason for a groom bringing such a potentially fruitless case against the girl and her family. The imposition of a steep fine and no possibility of a divorce should his case be disproved serve as strong deterrents against the groom’s bringing such a charge against his bride. The net effect of the law is that fathers could sell ‘damaged goods’ at any time, there being no real recourse for the groom.<sup>102</sup> As for the situation addressed in vv. 28-29, the main concerns of this law are financial compensation to the father for his property loss and the establishment of the

<sup>101</sup> Ceresko, “The Function,” 558.

<sup>102</sup> Don Carlos Benjamin, Jr. (*Deuteronomy and City Life: A Form Critical Study of Texts with ‘IR in Deuteronomy 4:41-26:19* [Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1982], 385) notes that Deut 22:13-19 “is concerned with the question of fraud.”

lifetime maintenance of the female whose prospects on the marriage market now were reduced due to her having lost her virginity.<sup>103</sup> This situation is reflected in the terminology נִפְּצָה: the rapist<sup>104</sup> has נִפְּצָה her; that is, he has “ruined” her by sexually using her, thus reducing her market value. The law outlined in vv. 28-29 is complementary to the one in vv. 13-19 in that it covers the situation of a rapist who is caught in the act and, as a result, can be made to marry his victim—there then being no need for the father to sell the now non-virgin to another man—whereas the law in vv. 13-19 covers the situation where the rapist is not caught and the father has a non-virgin on his hands whom he must marry off to some unsuspecting man.<sup>105</sup> However, the first law, in vv.13-19, is similar to the laws that follow it in vv. 20-27 in that all of these laws appear to have been designed to prevent the offense from occurring, while the law in vv. 28-29 addresses a situation that is more likely actually to have occurred.<sup>106</sup> Benjamin’s designation of Deut 22:13-27 not as law but as “legal instruction” takes into account the difference of vv. 28-29 from the rest of the pericope.<sup>107</sup>

### **The background of the sexual offense legislation in Deut 22:13-27**

Benjamin’s specification of Deut 22:13-27 as “legal instruction” is apt in light of Raymond Westbrook’s discussion of the cuneiform law codes of the ANE.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>103</sup> The pertinent thing about virgins is that they have not known a man. (Gen 19:8, 24:6; Num 31:17, 18, 35; Judg 11:35, 21:12).

<sup>104</sup> See Chapter 3, pp. 124-129 n. 142 and Chapter 4, pp. 156-159 for Deut 22:28-29 as a depiction of sexual assault.

<sup>105</sup> The law in vv. 13-19 covers as well the possibility that the bride had engaged in consensual sex.

<sup>106</sup> Pressler (*The View*, 21-22, n.2) notes the difference of the law outlined in vv. 28-29 from those that precede it and asserts that the biblical (Ex.22:15-16) and cuneiform parallels of this law “indicate that the redactors have incorporated into their series on adultery a law which was earlier considered separate from the sexual offense laws.”

<sup>107</sup> Benjamin, *Deuteronomy*, 372, 396. Weinfeld’s (“Humanism,” 283) observation that “the slave ordinance in Deut 15:12-18 reads more like a moral exhortation than the pronouncement of a law” indicates that there are portions of Deuteronomy which are characterized by this approach to social control.

<sup>108</sup> Raymond Westbrook (“Punishments and Crimes,” ABD 5:546) asserts that, “with the possible exception of Egypt, . . . the societies of the ANE shared a common legal tradition.”

According to Westbrook, these “law codes were not legislation in the modern sense. Although they may have had diverse secondary uses . . . *initially* they were scientific treatises, which *described* the law rather than *prescribed* it.”<sup>109</sup> Westbrook relates how these descriptive law codes were developed:

A judgment in a legal case was taken, stripped of all extraneous detail so that only the bare precedent remained, and then cast into a hypothetical form. . . . *The case was then elaborated by considering various alternatives . . . so that a multifaceted legal problem was constructed through which the principles of the law could be taught.* . . . Eventually there came into being a canon of classic scholarly legal problems which could be drawn upon in order to draft a written law code.<sup>110</sup>

According to Westbrook, even though “biblical Israel lay outside the sphere of cuneiform writing, its law was pervaded by the same tradition.”<sup>111</sup> Westbrook points to the Covenant Code in Exod 21:1-22:19 and to the Deuteronomic Code (principally Deut 21:15-22:29), as drawing “from the same canon of scholarly problems as the cuneiform codes.”<sup>112</sup> Awareness of this background to the sexual offense laws found in Deut 22: 13-29 will help to make sense of the ‘law’ outlined in Deut 22:25-27, which I discuss below after reviewing the laws which precede it.

### **Deut 22:20-27**

The law in Deut 22:20-21 is linked to the law concerning the situation of the accusation by a husband that his bride was not a virgin at the time of his marriage to her.<sup>113</sup> According to Deut 22:20-21, if she is found guilty of not being a virgin, the sentence is death by stoning. While the law in vv.13-19 is directed at controlling the

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<sup>109</sup> Westbrook, “Punishments,” 546, italics mine.

<sup>110</sup> Westbrook, “Punishments,” 547, italics mine.

<sup>111</sup> Westbrook, “Punishments,” 547.

<sup>112</sup> Westbrook, “Punishments,” 547.

<sup>113</sup> Benjamin (*Deuteronomy*, 385, 396-398) refers to this law as the “companion instruction” to the one preceding it.

actions of the groom, this law is aimed at controlling the actions of the female. It may be possible for her father to sell the rights to her sexual function even if she is not a virgin, but this does not mean that she should ever put herself in a situation where she might be forced into sexual contact with a man nor could she take it upon herself to have sexual relations outside the purview of her father. Since he is the one in possession of the bed clothes from the marriage bed, it is his decision whether or not he wants to display bed clothes with blood on them.<sup>114</sup> Thus the bride's father and husband have the power of life and death over her: the husband, if he brings charges against her, is taking a chance with her life; the father, since it is his decision whether or not to convict her of the charge of not having been a virgin at the time of her marriage. The 'crime' committed by the bride is described as: עֲשֵׂתָהּ נְבִלָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. She has created *nebalah* in Israel—disarray of societal order<sup>115</sup>—because she is accused of having acted as though she were in charge of her own self: in terms of her right to move about freely in society and in terms of her right to control her own sexuality.

Death is also the punishment in the case of the law of the adulterated wife, outlined in v. 22. The crime is described as that of a man lying with the wife of (another) man. This law includes being caught in the act and thus whether or not the wife was a willing partner could be determined, yet she is still subject to the death penalty.<sup>116</sup> The crime does not receive a specific legal designation, as in the cases of the other laws with which this law is linked in terms of the mandate attached to each of these three laws: that

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<sup>114</sup> This aspect of the law protects the father in case she is not a virgin due to incest.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Frymer-Kensky ("Law," 243), who notes that "stoning... is a very special penalty, reserved for those offenses which completely upset the hierarchical arrangements of the cosmos."

<sup>116</sup> See the quote from Eckart Otto *supra*, p. 46.

is, in “sweeping the evil from the midst of you.”<sup>117</sup> The man is subject to the death penalty because he has ‘adulterated’ another man’s wife with the sexual memory of himself (as in Num 5). The death penalty was imposed to serve as a deterrent to any thought on the part of men of having sexual contact with a married woman, who equally was meant to be deterred from having sexual contact with anyone other than her husband.

Death was also the punishment in Deut 22:23-24—by stoning, as with the bride convicted of not being a virgin at the time of her marriage. Verses 23-24 address the case of a contracted girl who is found in the city by a man and raped (שָׁכַב עִמָּה).<sup>118</sup> Since the young woman did not cry out in a situation where she might have been heard, she is guilty of a capital crime. So is the man. The man who has had sexual contact with “his neighbor’s woman” has הָרַץ her by sexually using her, because, just as with the married woman, he has ‘ruined’ her with the sexual memory of himself. The man who has contracted for the ownership of the female’s sexual function has been humiliated by what has occurred because he appears before the community as one who cannot control the female whose sexual function he owns: she should not have been out and about where such a possibility could arise—and since she did not cry out, maybe she was out ‘looking for it.’ Since the three laws in vv. 20-24 not only are linked by the imposition of the death penalty but also by the admonition, “so shall you sweep the evil from Israel” (v. 22), this raises the question as to what is the evil in Israel that must be swept away through the imposition of death. The answer in all three cases is the possibility of a female choosing her sexual partner, rather than having that decided for her.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>117</sup> This is the mandate in vv. 20-21 and 23-24. The mandate in v. 22 is that the evil be swept from Israel.

<sup>118</sup> I address the meaning of shakab imm’ah in Deut 22:22-29 in Chapter 4, pp. 167-168.

<sup>119</sup> The proverb “the honourable woman: locked in the house with a broken leg” found in Julian Pitt-Rivers’ (*The Fate of Shechem: or, the Politics of Sex: Essays in the Anthropology of the Mediterranean*

While the law in vv. 25-27 describes the rape of a contracted female, the death penalty is not imposed on the female and the purging phrase is not used. In the scenario outlined in vv. 25-27, a man overtakes a contracted girl in the countryside, seizes her and rapes her (שָׁבַע עָמָּהּ). However, only the man is to be executed, for the girl had no one to come to her aid. This makes her case like the case of a man who is murdered by his neighbor, who likewise had no one to come to his aid. The result is that a murder victim is found and there is no one to prosecute. So it is with the girl who is raped in the countryside: there is no one to prosecute. Why mention capital punishment then? The way in which the scenario is set up, the man is depicted as guilty of the theft of the virginity of a contracted female, a crime punishable by death, so even though there is no way to prosecute him,<sup>120</sup> he still must be described as having committed a capital crime. This ‘law’ is akin to the tree falling in the forest with no one to hear it. It is hypothetical.<sup>121</sup> As Benjamin has noted, it is the companion instruction to Deut 22:23-24. Having covered the “what if” of a girl who was accosted in the city, the legists engaged in the construction of legal theory needed to cover the “what if” of a girl who was accosted in the countryside. The victim of rape to which there were no witnesses is not described as having been נֶאֱרָפָה as a result of having been misused sexually, because this terminology was used in laws that were prosecutable. This indicates that in the sexual

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[Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977], 23) study of the shame/honor culture of Andalusia also expresses this same fear; that is, if his wife or betrothed or daughter is at home, the owner of her sexual function feels assured of her sexual purity. She is not out and about. He knows where she is. This aspect of the concept of the right of men to the sexual ownership of women is expressed in one of the hallmarks of abusive husbands: their attempts to keep track of their wives at all times.

<sup>120</sup> Num 35:30, Deut 17:6, and Deut 19:15 all specify that no one could be executed on the testimony of one witness (cf. 1Kgs 21:10; Isa 8:2). Even if these laws were not in place at the same time as Deut 22:13-29, it is highly unlikely that in a patriarchal culture such as the one reflected in Deut 22:13-29 that a man would be executed on the basis of the testimony of a lone woman.

<sup>121</sup> The sense that this was not a real law also is indicated by the fact that it does not answer the question of who would be responsible for the lifetime maintenance of the contracted נֶאֱרָפָה who had been assaulted in the countryside: the man who had contracted for her or her formerly responsible male relative.

offense legislation in Deut 22:13-29, the verb עָנָה functions as a technical legal term for the prosecutable offense of the ‘ruination’ of a virgin, a ‘despoilment’ punishable by death if the ‘ruination’ were of a contracted virgin (vv. 23-24) or by the lifetime maintenance of the victim of rape by her rapist via the institution of marriage, if the ‘ruination’ were of an uncontracted virgin (vv. 28-29).<sup>122</sup> That this was the case can be seen in the following investigation of all the uses of עָנָה in the *pi ‘el*, with a female as the object: the form in which עָנָה is found in the Deuteronomic legislation, as well as in Genesis 34.

### **An examination of עָנָה in the *pi ‘el* with a female as the object**

עָנָה appears in the *pi ‘el* with a female as the object twelve times in the MT: in Genesis 16, 31, and 34; Exodus 22; Deuteronomy 21 and 22 (2 x); Judges 19; 2 Samuel 13; Lamentations; and Ezekiel 22 (2 x).<sup>123</sup> Ellen van Wolde, whose study of עָנָה in the *pi ‘el* with a female as the object includes all of the Genesis texts, as well as the Deuteronomic, Judges, and 2 Samuel texts, asserts that, “although the verb ‘*innâ* is very often used in a context of sexual intercourse, it does not exclusively function in such a context, as Gen xvi shows.”<sup>124</sup> I agree with van Wolde concerning the occurrences of עָנָה<sup>125</sup> and will argue that, in addition it occurrence in Genesis 16, in both Genesis 31 and Exodus 22, עָנָה represents abuse or oppression. As for Genesis 34, the Deuteronomic texts, Judges 19, 2 Samuel 13, Lamentations 5, and the two Ezekiel texts, עָנָה occurs in these texts in the context of coitus, yet its meaning varies according to the larger textual

<sup>122</sup> Pressler (*The View*, 26) notes in her discussion of the meaning of the word בְּתוּלָה, that “words often acquire technical meanings when they are used in a legal context,” as can be seen in the use of עָנָה in Deut 22.

<sup>123</sup> Even-Shoshan, 902.

<sup>124</sup> van Wolde, “Does,” 542.

<sup>125</sup> I am referring to the occurrences of עָנָה in the *pi ‘el* with a female as an object, as is van Wolde, even though she does not say so specifically at this point in her argument. This particular occurrence of עָנָה is the focus of her study.



context in which it is found. A comparison of the uses of עָנָה in these texts to its use in Genesis 34 helps to make sense of it there. Because of the thoroughness of her study of עָנָה in the *pi'el* with a female as the object, van Wolde's analysis of עָנָה informs my own.

In his explication of עָנָה in *TDOT*, E. Gerstenberger states that עָנָה reflects a “basic *experience* [that] appears to be “affliction” in its various forms [but that] it is impossible to identify a neutral basic meaning.”<sup>126</sup> In light of Gerstenberger's conclusion concerning the association of affliction with the word עָנָה, it is necessary to discern in each of the texts listed above in what way עָנָה reflects the affliction which Gerstenberger sees as associated with its usage.

### **עָנָה as reflective of abuse or oppression**

#### **Genesis 16**

In Gen 16:6, Abram gives Sarai permission to treat her servant Hagar as she pleases, after Hagar had vaunted herself over her mistress once she became pregnant with Abraham's child. Van Wolde does not see abuse in Sarai's subsequent treatment of Hagar (וַתַּעַנֶּה), but merely the process of “bringing the maidservant back under her mistress's hand.”<sup>127</sup> However, the fact that Sarai dealt harshly with Hagar is indicated by the fact that Hagar fled from Sarai into the wilderness: Hagar would rather take her chances in the wild than live with Sarai's abuse. But Hagar becomes convinced that she must return, and return she does—to live “under Sarai's hands.” It is no wonder that the child whom Hagar bore and who observed his mother living “under Sarai's hands” grew up to be “a wild ass of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him” (v.12). Hands in

<sup>126</sup> Gerstenberger, *TDOT* 11: 234, italics mine. Quotations within the quotation are Gerstenberger's.

<sup>127</sup> van Wolde, “Does,” 533.

this text bespeak violence and  $\text{הָרַץ}$  bespeaks the abusive means by which Sarai “bow[ed] Hagar down again.”<sup>128</sup>

### **Genesis 31**

In Gen 31:50 Laban warns Jacob not to abuse ( $\text{הָרַץ}$ ) his daughters and not to take other wives besides his daughters. Van Wolde reads this text as Laban issuing not two separate warnings, but rather one warning about not downgrading his daughters by taking other wives.<sup>129</sup> However, the grammar of the text indicates that Laban is issuing two different warnings: “If ( $\text{אִם}$ ) you abuse my daughters or ( $\text{וְאִם}$ ) if ( $\text{אִם}$ ) you take wives in addition to my daughters, though no one else be about, see (here)! God is witness between you and me.” It appears that by addressing Jacob in this way Laban is doing the best that he can in the situation in which he finds himself. Having been warned by God in a dream not to accost Jacob (Gen 31:24, 29) and apparently realizing that his daughters have left of their own accord (“what can I do today about these daughters of mine?” [v. 43, NRSV]), he has no recourse other than to warn Jacob that Jacob will be subject to God’s judgment if he abuses Laban’s daughters—for “there is no one else about” (v. 50, NRSV) who can provide the protection which he and his sons have provided Leah and Rachel from the moment they each married Jacob. Such a warning from a father whose daughters will no longer be living near their family of origin is entirely within the realm of possibility.<sup>130</sup> Laban warns Jacob about the two ways in which he might possibly harm

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<sup>128</sup> van Wolde, “Does,” 533.

<sup>129</sup> van Wolde, “Does,” 534.

<sup>130</sup> The story of Padmasri, who emigrated from India with her husband, reflects the reality that wives may face the possibility of spousal abuse once they no longer reside near their family of origin. Padmasri relates that on the flight over from India her husband informed her “that he could do anything to me he wanted to and no one would help me.” Upon arrival in the U.S., he locked away her cell phone so she could not contact her family. Padmasri turned for help to neighbors who allowed her to use their cell phone to call home. When Padmasri’s husband found out, he pushed her into the wall, punched her in the head and beat her. Padmasri ran to the neighbors’ house and called 911. Her husband was arrested. Padmasri’s family sent

Leah and Rachel (actual physical abuse) or the diminution of their wealth and well-being if Jacob were to take other wives (as Jacob's wherewithal, both material and physical, would be shared with other women). Laban cautions Jacob that he will be answerable to God, should he go against either of these admonishments.

### **Exodus 22:21**

The admonition in Exod 22:21 not to **עָנָה** the widow or the fatherless is part of a series of miscellaneous laws which bring Exodus 22 to a conclusion.<sup>131</sup> The nature of the oppression is not delineated in this particular admonition. However, since it follows on the admonition not to mistreat resident aliens (v. 20), it can be seen as part of an expression of concern for those in Israelite society who were deprived in some manner of the full rights and protection enjoyed by the socially advantaged. The message of the two admonitions in Exod 22: 20-21 is that those with power are not to take advantage of those who are weaker than they are. Rather, their power is to be mobilized on behalf of those in need.<sup>132</sup>

### **עָנָה in the context of coitus**

#### **Ezekiel 22:10: עָנָה as "to have intercourse"**

Gerstenberger contends that in Ezek 22:10, **עָנָה** means simply "to have intercourse."<sup>133</sup> Verse 10 heads up a list of sexual offenses which, according to Ezekiel, pollute the land. There is no indication in the text that force of any kind is involved. Rather, the prophet is listing sexual behavior which he claims is repugnant to God and

her airline tickets so that she and her son could return to India, but she was shunned there for having left her husband, and she returned to the U.S., where she received help in a PADV shelter. "On Common Ground," *Partnership Against Domestic Violence* 2008 Annual Report (Atlanta, Georgia), 6.

<sup>131</sup> Walter Brueggemann, "Exodus." *The New Interpreter's Bible*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 867.

<sup>132</sup> Brueggemann ("Exodus," 685) asserts that in the Book of Exodus "in law and command the God of Sinai . . . mobilizes the strong for the sake of the weak."

<sup>133</sup> Gerstenberger, *TDOT* 11:237. The quotations within the quotation are Gerstenberger's.

thus should be repugnant to the Israelites. In v. 10, the offense is having intercourse with a menstruant.

It is not clear why *עָנָה*, with its connotations of ‘affliction,’ would be used as a description for heterosexual intercourse in Ezek 22:10.<sup>134</sup> One possibility is that there was a perspective on sexual relations which is reflected in the MT that viewed penetration as humiliating; that is, the woman, as the penetrated one, was, in the very act of having sex, humiliated. That such a view was possible is indicated by Washington’s discussion of the construction of masculinity in ancient warrior cultures such as those which are reflected in certain portions of the MT. Quoting Harry A. Hoffner, Jr.,<sup>135</sup> Washington notes that “the masculinity of the ancient was measured by two criteria: (1) his prowess in battle, and (2) his ability to sire children.”<sup>136</sup> Washington adds that “Hoffner adduces from Hittite the example of the noun *LÚ-natar*, which denotes ‘masculinity’ both in the sense of ‘military exploit’ and ‘male genitalia’” and then goes on to add that “to this may be compared Hebrew *גִּי*, which, like Ugaritic *gd*, can denote both military might (Exod 13.3; Isa 10.32) and the penis (Isa 57.8).”<sup>137</sup> Washington concludes that

in such contexts, ‘manhood’ entails the capacity to exert violence. The Philistines, for example, facing the Israelite threat at Ebenezer, exhort one another with the words *הָיוּ לְאִנְשִׁים*, literally, ‘become men . . . and fight’ (1 Sam 4.9). Conversely ‘woman’ signifies *one who succumbs to violence*; hence men who are defeated in combat are

<sup>134</sup> Gerstenberger (*TDOT* 11:237) sees this use of *עָנָה* as “possibly the etymological source of ‘*ōnā* in Ex. 21:10.” Etan Levine’s (“On Exodus 21,10 ‘*Onah* and Biblical Marriage,” *ZABR* 5 [1999], 133-164) investigation of the term ‘*ōnā* indicates that Gerstenberger’s connection of the two passages is apt; that is, that ‘*ōnā* most likely refers to a wife’s conjugal rights.

<sup>135</sup> Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., “Symbols for Masculinity and Femininity: Their Use in Ancient Near Eastern Sympathetic Magic Rituals,” *JBL* 85 (1966), 327.

<sup>136</sup> Washington, “Lest,” 196.

<sup>137</sup> Washington, “Lest,” 196-197. Washington cites as his references for this conclusion *HALAT* II: 370; *UT* no. 102; Joseph Aistleitner, *Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 3rd edn, 1967) no. 1139.

reckoned as women.<sup>138</sup>

In such situations the defeated men often were treated as women and sexually penetrated. Schwartz notes that the “act of male anal intercourse [was] usually . . . an act of force associated with *humiliation*, revenge or subjection.”<sup>139</sup> Thus, Samson is made to “grind” (טחן) in the Philistine prison (Judg 16:21). And the young men of the defeated population of Judah in the aftermath of the Babylonian destruction also are made to “grind” (Lam 5:13). That טחן in these settings refers to intercourse is indicated by its use in Job 31:10 to refer to Job’s wife “grinding” for another: this reference is paralleled with “other men kneel[ing] over her” and to the fact that in both the Judges reference and the Lamentations reference the settings are those of defeat at the hands of an enemy.

It is important to note that the fact that שָׁכַב עִם and שָׁכַב אֵת *can* reflect mutuality in sexual relations<sup>140</sup> reveals that, if the use of עָנָה in Exek 22:10 does reflect a view of female sexuality as characterized by humiliation, this was not a view universally held in all of the social settings which gave rise to the texts that now make up the MT. Since the Song of Songs acknowledges and gives voice to the enjoyment of sexual relations by both sexes, it serves as an example of an alternative view of female sexuality.

#### **Judges 19:24, 20:5: עָנָה as reflective of rape (and ruination)**

In Judg 19:24, the host of the Levite offers his unmarried daughter and the

<sup>138</sup> Washington, “Lest,” 197. Washington (198) further notes that “a key aspect of the gendered discourse of war in the Hebrew Bible is the figurative portrayal of a city under attack as a woman sustaining sexual assault. . . . The Hebrew prophets develop this personification into an elaborate metaphorical picture where the objects of military attack (cities and land) are depicted as feminine, the attack itself is figured as sexual assault, and the soldiers in their military advance . . . are portrayed as rapists.”

<sup>139</sup> Baruch J. Schwartz, “Leviticus” in the Jewish Study Bible (ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Brettler; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) 251, n. 22, italics mine. See Chapter 7, pp. 320-321, for the humiliation of men defeated in battle.

<sup>140</sup> This is the case where no violence is part of the *situation* depicted in the text and where אֵת is II אֵת (“with”): HALOT 1:101. See “Taking contextual variables into account” in Chapter 4, pp. 168-170 for an instance in which עִם שָׁכַב denotes rape.

Levite's *pilegesh* to the unruly mob who has gathered around the house, beating on the door and demanding that the host relinquish the Levite to them so that they might rape (יָדַעַ) him (v. 22). The host offers the two females instead, saying to the mob, "rape (עֲנוּ) them and do as you please with them" (v. 24). Van Wolde contends that עֲנוּ does not refer to rape here, but rather is restricted "to the dimension of debasement, of bringing into a lower social position."<sup>141</sup> Van Wolde reasons that "the term *innâ* is not used here to describe the sexual abuse and violence, as this is twice marked by "knowing sexually" (יָדַעַ) and by עָלַל."<sup>142</sup> However, it is clear that the host is recommending to the mob that they rape the females instead of raping the Levite. The host uses the verb עֲנוּ when referring to the rape of females, because, as is evident in the sexual offense laws in Deut 22: 13-29, when females were raped they were *viewed by the community* as being 'ruined,' so this aspect of the consequence of the rape of females is indicated by the host in his use of עֲנוּ when referring to the rape of females.<sup>143</sup> However, since the men have demanded that the Levite be handed over to them for violent sexual purposes, it does not follow that the action that the host is recommending—that they take the females and עֲנוּ them and do to them whatever they want (Judg 19:24aα)—would refer primarily to the 'ruination' that the females would suffer as the result of being raped. Rather, עֲנוּ in

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<sup>141</sup> van Wolde, "Does," 539.

<sup>142</sup> van Wolde, "Does," 538.

<sup>143</sup> This view of the use of עָלַל here assumes that the values of shame/honor culture similar to those reflected in Deut 22:13-29 are reflected in this text as well, even though the use of עֲנוּ here applies not only to the virgin daughter of the host but also to the *pilegesh* as a contracted woman. The punishments inflicted in both Num 5:11-31 and Deut 22:22-24 indicate that a contracted woman also was regarded as 'ruined' by the memory of a man's erection other than the one to whom she was married or contracted. עֲנוּ carries these juridical implications in the narrative in Judges 19-21 in a way that it does not in Genesis 34, because there are other tribes *within the entity Israel* by whom the situation can be *judged*. (See my discussion of Genesis 34 *infra*). These tribes are interested in addressing the 'affront' to the Levite occasioned by the sexual misappropriation of 'his' woman by the men of Gibeah.

Judges 19 refers to violent sexual assault. Once the *pilegesh* is put out to the men, they are described as raping (רָדַע) her and abusing (עָלַל)<sup>144</sup> her (v. 25). רָדַע is used to describe the actual rape of the *pilegesh*, as the narrator, unlike the perverse host, does not point to the social dimensions of the crime, but rather emphasizes the effects on the *pilegesh* personally. Even though רָדַע can refer merely to “knowing sexually,” in this context a translation of “rape” is appropriate for both instances of רָדַע as well as for עָנָה.<sup>145</sup>

Likewise in Judg 20:5, when the Levite reports the assault to the gathered tribes of Israel, translating “and my *pilegesh* they raped” also is appropriate, though in this context, the Levite would be referring more to the fact that his *pilegesh* had been ‘ruined’ by sexual contact with men other than himself. It is on this basis that he hopes to gain the attention of the tribes of Israel so that they will address the ‘affront’ to him. Even so, just as the reality that Sarai returned Hagar to her lower position of servant by harsh means needs to be visible in the translation, so does the reality<sup>146</sup> that the *pilegesh* was ‘ruined’ by harsh means need to be visible in the translation.

### **Lamentations 5:11: עָנָה as reflective of rape (and ruination)**

In Lam 5:11 עָנָה is used to refer to the violation of Judean women in the context of their being a subject people. It is possible that עָנָה is used to describe the assaults on the wives of Zion and on the virgins of Jerusalem—rather than נָשַׁב אֶת־הָאִמָּה or another word that

<sup>144</sup> Gravett (“Reading,” 284) notes that “the verb עָלַל in the Hebrew Bible receives limited use. Often defined as God’s severe or dramatic action towards Israel, as in Lamentations (1.12, 22; 2.20; 3.51) or towards the Egyptians in Exodus (see Exod. 10.2 and 1 Sam. 5.6), it also describes the fears of both Saul and Zedekiah that enemy troops will deal harshly with them (1 Sam. 31.4 and Jer. 38.19, respectively).”

<sup>145</sup> For more on the influence of context on the determination of meaning, see “Taking textual variables into account” in Chapter 4, pp. 168-170.

<sup>146</sup> I do not mean “reality” in terms of either the story of Sarai and Hagar or the story of the Levite and the *pilegesh* being reflective of historical reality, but rather I mean “reality” in terms of the reality created within the story world of the text.

can be used to convey rape<sup>147</sup>—in order to convey the ruination associated with their being assaulted; that is, it is not the violence against the women that is being emphasized in this text, but their ‘ruination.’ In Midrash Rabbah to Numbers (s. 9), עֲנָה refers to a violation of married women that “caused them to be forbidden to their husbands.”<sup>148</sup> Even though this use of עֲנָה is from literature which was composed much later than Lamentations, it suggests a perspective on rape which is consonant with a meaning of עֲנָה which is found in the MT—in Deut 22:23-29—and, if I am correct about the distinction made between יָדַע and עֲנָה in Judges 19-21, it is found there as well;<sup>149</sup> that is, that rape ‘ruined’ a woman.<sup>150</sup> Thus, it is within the range of semantic possibilities of עֲנָה within the MT for it to reflect ‘ruination’ in Lam 5:11. However, since Lam 5:11 is part of a list of abuses suffered by the subjected people of Judah, a translation of “rape” or “violation” is still appropriate here. Similarly to the situations reflected in Genesis 16 and in Judges 19, the violence that is indicated by the context in which עֲנָה is used should not be covered over in the translation.

### **2 Samuel 13: עֲנָה as designating force (vv. 12 and 14) and ruination (vv. 22 and 32)**

In 2 Samuel 13, עֲנָה is first found on the lips of Tamar, as she seeks to stop Amnon from raping her. In v.12, she protests, “No, my brother, do not force (הֵעֲנֵה) me.” That עֲנָה in v. 12 refers to the physical force which Amnon is using against Tamar is

<sup>147</sup> See Chapter 7, pp. 319-324.

<sup>148</sup> Jastrow, “עֲנָה, עֲנִי,” 1093.

<sup>149</sup> See n. 143 *supra* for a discussion of עֲנָה as denoting ‘ruination’ in settings which are not juridical in the same sense as in Deuteronomy 22; that is, in situations which are not legislative in intent, but where judgment concerning a female’s ‘ruination’ is possible. See my discussions of Deut 21:11-14 and Genesis 34 pp. 82-87 *infra* for examples of situations in which this sort of *social* evaluation of a female’s sexual status is not possible in the social situation reflected in the text.

<sup>150</sup> This view is expressed in Num 5:11-31 in the concern in that text with the ‘defilement’ (‘ruination’) of a wife as a result of her having been raped.



indicated by the fact that, when she had come to him to feed him, he had seized her (וַיִּתְּקֵן אֹתָהּ בְּיָדָהּ, v. 11). She then immediately objected to the force he was using against her.

As for the use of עָנָה in v. 14, van Wolde sees its use there as different from all of the other uses which she has investigated. She notes that “only once is the verb *‘innâ* used to describe a physical act, namely, in 2 Sam. xiii 14, where also the word order differs from all other cases. Here the sequence is: 1. *hāzaq*, 2. *‘innâ*, and 3. *šākab* *’et*. . . Here the verb *‘innâ* refers to the purely physical and spatial act of pressing down.”<sup>151</sup> Van Wolde’s assessment of the significance of syntax in determining the meaning of עָנָה in v. 14 is reflective of Robert Alter’s observation that in Biblical Hebrew prose “the richly expressive function of syntax . . . often bears the kind of weight of meaning that, say, imagery does in a novel by Virginia Woolf or analysis in a novel by George Eliot. Attention to such features leads not to a more “imaginative” reading of biblical narrative but to *a more precise one*.”<sup>152</sup> Van Wolde’s conclusion as to the meaning of עָנָה in v. 14 reflects that sort of precision. As the central verb in the description of Amnon’s rape of Tamar, it depicts one of the physical actions that Amnon takes against Tamar: “He overpowered her<sup>153</sup> (וַיִּתְּקֵן מִמֶּנָּהּ) and he pressed her down (עָנָה) and raped her.” However, I disagree with van Wolde that this is the only place in which עָנָה refers to the physical act of forcing. As my analysis of v.12 indicates, I think that עָנָה also refers to the force which Amnon is using against Tamar there. This understanding of עָנָה in vv. 12 and 14 is consonant with van Wolde’s conclusions that עָנָה has a “basic

<sup>151</sup> van Wolde, “Does,” 541.

<sup>152</sup> Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* [New York: Basic Books, 1981], 22, italics mine.

<sup>153</sup> van Wolde, “Does,” 540. This is her translation.

meaning . . . [that] is of a spatial character, denoting a causative movement downwards.’<sup>154</sup>

However, *הָנָה* also denotes ‘ruination’ in 2 Samuel 13.<sup>155</sup> *הָנָה* with this meaning is found in vv. 22b $\alpha$  and 32b $\alpha$ —where the social effects of Amnon’s sexual misuse of Tamar are referred to. It is via these effects that Absalom would be justified in the eyes of his followers in murdering Amnon. Those to whom Absalom desired to be justified may not have known the means by which Tamar had been ‘ruined,’ only that Amnon had used her sexually and then refused to marry her. As is evident in the sexual offense laws in Deut 22:13-29, whether a female was ‘ruined’ as a result of rape or as a result of consensual sexual relations, she was just as ‘ruined.’<sup>156</sup> Therefore, *הָנָה* in vv. 22 and 32 does not refer to the force which Amnon used against Tamar. It refers only to his ‘ruination’ of her.

**Ezekiel 22:11 and Deuteronomy 22:24 and 29: *הָנָה* as reflective of the ‘ruination’ that can be occasioned by coitus**

In Ezekiel 22:11, the prophet continues listing the sexual offenses which pollute the land, a list which he initiated in v. 10. In v. 11, there are three offenses listed: sodomizing a neighbor’s wife (v. 11a),<sup>157</sup> committing incest with a daughter-in-law (v.

<sup>154</sup> Van Wolde’s (“Does,” 530) conclusion is based on the following analysis: “the verb *anâ* occurs eighty times in the Hebrew Bible, of which seven are in the *Qal* in the meaning of “be put down,” “become low,” four times in the *Niph’al* meaning “be bowed down,” “humble oneself,” and fifty-seven times in the *Pi’el*, which is the topic of our research; then another four times in the *Pu’al* (“be bowed down”, be humbled”), six times in the *Hitpa’el* (“bow oneself down”, “humble oneself”) and only twice in the *Hiph’il* (“afflict” in discipline). Van Wolde’s numbers are based on Even-Shoshan, 902.

<sup>155</sup> See n. 13 *supra* for the necessity of sometimes using different words in translation when the author of the biblical text has used the same Hebrew word in different ways in the same text.

<sup>156</sup> Tamar’s ‘ruination’ is what is referred to in these two verses even if the legislation in Deut 22: 13-29 might not have been in effect at the time that 2 Samuel 13 was written. Both pericopes reflect the emphases and thought processes of a shame/honor culture. See Chapter 7, pp. 311-312 for 2 Samuel 13 as reflective of a shame/honor culture.

<sup>157</sup> תַּעֲבֹדָה. *HALOT* (1703) notes that in Lev 18:22 and 20:13, sodomy is specifically termed תַּעֲבֹדָה.

11b),<sup>158</sup> and ‘ruining’ a half-sister by having sex with her (v. 11b $\alpha$ ). That עָנָה refers here to ‘ruination,’ rather than to incest, is indicated by the fact that the prophet already has referenced incest as a part of his catalogue of offenses. In addition, since, as I noted above, there is no indication of force in this text, the unfortunate aspect to the sexual relations between half-brother and half-sister is not that she has been forced but rather that she has been ‘ruined’ socially.

As for עָנָה in Deut 22:23-29, as I noted in my discussion of this text *supra*, עָנָה refers in vv. 24 and 29 to the ‘ruination’ of a virgin: a punishable crime. The crime that is punished is not the rapes depicted in these texts.<sup>159</sup> From the point of view of the Deut 22:23-29 the criminal aspect to the events depicted in these verses is, in the case of vv. 23-24, the humiliation of the man who had purchased the sexual function of the girl who has been raped and, in the case of vv. 28-29, the financial loss to the owner of the sexual function of an uncontracted girl.

#### **Deuteronomy 21:10-14: עָנָה as reflective of traumatization**

עָנָה occurs as the final word in a pericope about the regulations that a man and a female captive of war must follow when he takes her home with the intention of making her his wife. He may not go into her and in this way make himself her husband (v. 13b) until one month has passed.<sup>160</sup> During that time, she is to shave her head, pare her nails, discard the clothing she was wearing when taken captive, and lament her father and

<sup>158</sup> אֶת-כַּלְתּוֹ טָמֵא בְזָמָה. HALOT [272] notes that טָמֵא is “a technical expression in religious law,” referring to either fornication or incest. The family relationship noted here indicates that the offense is incest.

<sup>159</sup> For vv. 23-24 as depicting rape, see Chapter 4, pp.151-153. For vv. 28-29 as depicting rape, see Chapter 4, pp.169-171.

<sup>160</sup> Washington (“Lest,” 206) is correct that this stipulation has to do with waiting “long enough for the woman’s menstrual cycle to be completed [so that] the man is assured his paternity of any children resulting from intercourse with her.”

mother.<sup>161</sup> The actions required of the captive woman can be seen as her putting her past behind her in order to become an Israelite wife. However, once the union has been consummated the man can terminate the relationship if he is not pleased with her. Unlike the groom in Deut 22:13-19, this man will not be stuck with a woman who is not sexually satisfactory to him (in both Deut 21:13-14 and Deut 22:13, the displeasure with the woman arises immediately after the man has “gone into her”).<sup>162</sup> But, even though he is terminating the relationship, her erstwhile husband may not treat her as a slave by selling her and making a profit off of her. The reason for this is because “you have traumatized (עָנָה) her” (“enough already” is implied).

This is not the way in which van Wolde views the meaning of עָנָה in this text. Van Wolde interprets Deut 21:14 as “when you no longer want her, you must release her and not sell her for money. You must not drop her since you have already lowered her.”<sup>163</sup> Van Wolde is correct that this law refers to not lowering the woman’s status from ‘captive who was meant to be a wife’ to ‘captive who now will be sold as a slave,’<sup>164</sup> but this is not what עָנָה refers to in Deut 21:10-14. When עָנָה functioned juridically, it referred indirectly to the diminishment—either social or financial—of the man who owned the sexual function of the girl who had had sexual contact, either chosen or not, with a man not authorized by the owner of her sexual function. עָנָה cannot function in this manner in

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<sup>161</sup> In her analysis of this law, Pressler (*The View*, 11) concludes that the reason that the absence of the parents is mentioned is to indicate that the man is not able to arrange a marriage by contracting with the father. Diane Wolfthal (*Images of Rape* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 66) observes in regard to the mention of the captive’s parents that this indicates that “the captive was presumed to be a virgin, since she wept for her father and mother rather than for her husband.” Wolfthal’s observation coincides with the desire on the part of warriors to take only virginal females as captives in war, as in Judg 21:11-12.

<sup>162</sup> Benjamin (*Deuteronomy*, 384) notes that the situation addressed in Deut 22:13-19 is one which results from “a change in [the] husband’s sexual attraction.”

<sup>163</sup> Van Wolde, “Does,” 535.

<sup>164</sup> Similarly, the master described in Exod 21:7-8 cannot sell the woman he acquired as a slave to a foreign people if she does not please him. He must let her be redeemed because he has not maintained the original terms of the transaction.

Deut 21:10-14, because there is no man to whom the woman is connected who can be diminished by her social/sexual status: neither her father nor a man to whom she might have been contracted is present. Thus the use of  $\text{הָנָצַח}$  in Deut 21:14 does not reflect a juridical use of the term, as van Wolde claims. The admonition “you shall not treat her as a slave” reflects the juridical aspect of Deut 21:14.

In Deut 21:11-14,  $\text{הָנָצַח}$  refers to the entirety of the devastation experienced by the captive, due to the loss of her entire previous world, to the loss of status and rights that were hers in her prior community, as well as to the loss of the potential of regaining status and rights which the Israelite was removing from her by deciding not to keep her as his wife. There was also her “subjugation to ritual denigration . . . followed by compelled penetration.”<sup>165</sup> In such a situation  $\text{הָנָצַח}$  refers to the woman’s traumatization, which the Israelite cannot exacerbate further by selling her into the hands of an unknown master.

Gerstenberger’s observations concerning  $\text{הָנָצַח}$  indicate that it is possible for  $\text{הָנָצַח}$  to refer to the war captive’s traumatization. He observes that “the verb usually expresses the notion that someone is depreciating . . . the life of another”<sup>166</sup> and that “physical or psychic force is used to alter the status of someone for the worse.”<sup>167</sup> Since the captive’s Israelite captor participated in “the destruction of her home, killing of her family, and [her] forcible removal,”<sup>168</sup> he can be seen as having altered her status for the worse. And, since his acquisition of her in the aftermath of battle carried the potential of once again providing her with protection and status, his decision not to keep her most likely resulted in further psychic devastation for her, because she, a non-Israelite woman, was to “be

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<sup>165</sup> Washington, “Lest,” 207.

<sup>166</sup> Gerstenberger, *TDOT* 11:234.

<sup>167</sup> Gerstenberger, *TDOT* 11:237.

<sup>168</sup> Washington, “Lest,” 207.

released as a ‘free citizen’ in a patriarchal society where a woman’s safety depend[ed] on her secure attachment to a male head of household.”<sup>169</sup>

It is possible to enter the captive’s traumatized psyche—even if only slightly—through recourse to the testimony of *Shoah* survivor Eva K.<sup>170</sup> As a result of the Holocaust, Eva, like the war captive, had lost her entire previous world. Everyone Eva had known was gone: only she had survived. Eva’s stark appraisal of her situation brings home what it feels like to be in such a situation. Eva described herself in this way, “At this moment I realize that I am alive and I have nobody and I am living.”<sup>171</sup> Such a *Situation* reflects what Gerstenberger asserts characterizes “the words associated with the root ‘ana II: [they] belong to a negatively charged domain of knowledge and *experience*. The nouns and adjectives refer to *situations* inimical to human life.”<sup>172</sup> Gerstenberger further notes that the adjective *‘nāwīm* “appears occasionally in parallel with “broken-hearted”.”<sup>173</sup> Thus, נָפַץ in Deut 21:14 exposes us to the interiority of the released captive. As we view her stepping out into a world characterized by a matrix of deprivation and isolation similar to that of Eva’s situation in a post-Holocaust world, we can imagine her uttering Eva’s very words: “At this moment I realize that I am alive and I have nobody and I am living.”

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<sup>169</sup> Washington, “Lest,” 207. The negative psychic force exerted here is the situation she now faces because of her captor’s disregard for her well-being.

<sup>170</sup> Langer (*Holocaust*, 177) asserts that the insights gained from the catastrophic circumstances of the Holocaust “need not be restricted to [application to] Holocaust reality alone.”

<sup>171</sup> Langer, *Holocaust*, 175. Eva’s situation was more extreme than that of the war captive, because nothing in her prior life could have prepared her for what she experienced as a victim of the Holocaust. In contrast, the war captive knew that, in the world in which she lived (one of frequent warfare) what she faced was a possibility. In this sense, she was more prepared to face what she had to face than Eva was.

<sup>172</sup> Gerstenberger, *TDOT* 11: 234, italics mine.

<sup>173</sup> Gerstenberger, *TDOT* 11: 247.

### Genesis 34:2: עֲנָה as reflective of traumatization

As with the captive in Deut 21:10-14, עֲנָה in Gen 34:2 refers to Dinah's personal traumatization. That עֲנָה functions in Genesis 34 as a reflection of Dinah's interiority is noted by Fleishman. He observes that "this verb . . . enables a brief, clear and unequivocal sense of Dinah's internal view."<sup>174</sup> However, this is not what van Wolde asserts עֲנָה reflects in this text. She states that "'*innâ* in Gen xxxiv 2 . . . evaluates Shechem's previously described actions ("take" and "sleep with"<sup>175</sup>) as a debasement of Dinah from a social-juridical point of view."<sup>176</sup> עֲנָה does not represent a social/juridical perspective in Genesis 34 because the social world in which עֲנָה functions *juridically* is not the social world that is depicted in Genesis 34. The social world in which עֲנָה represents the 'ruination' of a female and the concomitant humiliation of her betrothed (Deut 22:23-24) or concomitant financial loss for her father (Deut 22:28-29) is that of an *intra-societal urban*<sup>177</sup> agonistic shame/honor society in which male heads of households—*who view themselves as belonging to the same social entity*—compete with each other for status in order to maintain and/or enhance the well-being of their families. In contrast to this situation, there is no encompassing entity in Genesis 34 to which the Canaanites, Perizzites, the Shechemites, and Jacob and his family view themselves as belonging. The larger<sup>178</sup> relational setting in Genesis 34 reflects an *inter-societal* agonistic situation. The Canaanites, Perizzites, Shechemites, and Jacob and his family are

<sup>174</sup> Fleishman, "Shechem," 28.

<sup>175</sup> This is not how I translate עֲנָה אֶתְּכֶם. Chapter 1, p. 22, n. 73 for the places where I discuss עֲנָה אֶתְּכֶם as representing rape.

<sup>176</sup> van Wolde, "Does," 544. For literary structural reasons that עֲנָה does not refer to Dinah's *social* debasement, see Chapter 4, pp. 163-164.

<sup>177</sup> Benjamin (*Deuteronomy*, 388) notes that "the setting of Dt. 22:13-21 is urban." In addition, Deut 22:23-27 presupposes one case taking place in the city (vv. 23-24) over against a corresponding case taking place in the country (vv. 25-27), thus revealing an urban setting for these laws as well.

<sup>178</sup> The relationships other than the interpersonal.

not competing with each other for social status, but rather are focused on maintaining the well-being of their tribal group vis-à-vis the other tribes in the area. In this situation what would capture the attention of the tribes round about Jacob and his family is the apparent permeability of their boundaries, which Shechem's sexual encounter with Dinah has exposed.

Dinah's *situation* and the *situation* of the war captive both reflect their personal traumatization, because neither of their situations has *all* of the requisite elements of the shame/honor system in which נָפְץ functioned juridically. In the case of the war captive, there is no man to whom she belongs who can be diminished in the eyes of the community. In the case of Dinah, there is no community for her and her family to be shamed in front of: Jacob and his family constitute the entirety of 'Israel' in Genesis 34.

### **The influence of interpreters' subjectivities on their translation decisions**

One thing that is evident in the JPS translation of Num 5:12b-13, my reading of Num 5:11-31, and van Wolde's reading of נָפְץ was the way in which our subjectivities entered into the decision-making process. Each of us made our translation decisions based on what we thought the text was about. Viewing these chapters in Numbers as *about* impurity, Milgrom does not question that Num 5:11-31 is entirely *about* a wife who has defiled herself by willfully engaging in extra-marital sex. Not focused on impurity, but rather on demonstrating that אִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר לַאֲדֹנָיָהּ did not need be emended, I developed my interpretation of Num 5:11-31 on a different basis from the JPS translators: by focusing on the meaning of אִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר לַאֲדֹנָיָהּ in this text. However, my interpretation also was influenced by the anger that is evident in this text.<sup>179</sup> To me, that anger is what this text

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<sup>179</sup> Milgrom (*Numbers*, 37) refers to the "irate husband [who] suspects that his wife has been unfaithful." See notes 33, 52, 71, 73 *supra* for other references to the anger reflected in this text.



is *about*, because the ritual does not really address the wife's feared 'defilement' by providing a means for it to be expiated or done away with. By this, I mean the 'defilement' which results from the wife having the sexual memory of a man other than her husband. It is possible that the feared physical 'defilement' of another man's 'seed' in the wife's womb could have been seen as addressed by her drinking the bitter water, but the ritual does not address the 'defilement' brought about by extra-marital sex. It only provides a means for it to be exposed—or not. This indicates that this text is *about* what it *does* do and that is to address the man's feelings by allowing him a way to express his vengeful feelings toward his wife and by reassuring him—and the community—*about* his paternity; that is, even if the perception was that the wife had somehow 'gotten away with' having sex outside her marital bonds, there was a concomitant perception that the bitter water would wash away the other man's 'seed.' In addition, fear of being made to undergo the ritual was meant to prevent a wife from having sexual contact with a man other than her husband.<sup>180</sup>

When undertaking my exegesis of Num 5:11-31, my feeling as to what the text is about was intertwined with my interpretational desire to demonstrate that *שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ* need not be emended in order to make sense of this text. This interpretational desire was informed by my larger interpretational desire to provide an accurate reading of Dinah's experience for readers who have had similar experiences to the one that traditionally has been attributed Dinah; that is, that she was raped. This means that I will have to make sense of *שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ* in each of the locations in which it is found in the MT, in order to be able to compare its usage elsewhere in the MT to its usage in Gen 34:2. Bringing these interpretational desires to my reading of Num 5:11-31 meant that I wanted to take *אִתָּהּ*

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<sup>180</sup> See notes 35, 52 *supra* for the threat of having to undergo the ordeal as a deterrent,

שׁכב into account in that text as it is and see if it was possible to make sense of the text as it is rather than first emending the text and proceeding from the basis of an emended text.

As for Milgrom’s purpose in interpreting Num 5:12b-13, as a commentator on a translated text, he had to make sense of the text that he had been given—so the interpretational decisions that he had to work with were not necessarily ones that he himself would have made. The effort he expends in making sense of the translation that he had in hand indicates that his interpretational desire was directed toward making sense of the way in which the JPS translators had translated the MT.

As for van Wolde, she subordinates consideration of what each of the texts she analyzes is about to her focus on demonstrating her understanding of what הַנָּעוּ is about—“debasement from a social-judicial point of view.”<sup>181</sup> Her purpose in analyzing the texts which she interprets is to demonstrate that הַנָּעוּ does not mean “rape.” Her interpretational desire is fueled by a concern that some of those who view הַנָּעוּ as denoting “rape” in Gen 34:2 use Shechem’s rape of Dinah to justify her brothers’ slaughter of the Shechemites, as well as the sack of the city, and she is opposed to this view.<sup>182</sup> For each of us, our views as to what the text—or the word, in van Wolde’s case—is about, along with our interpretational goals, shaped our interpretations of the texts we analyzed.

With this recognition of how the interpretive desires which interpreters bring to their readings shape their interpretations of texts, on what basis can a reading be viewed

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<sup>181</sup> van Wolde, “Does,” 544.

<sup>182</sup> Van Wolde’s (“Does,” 530) comments on the presence of הַנָּעוּ in Genesis 34 are indicative of her interpretive desire in regard to the interpretation of הַנָּעוּ in this text. She asserts that “if ever words can change one’s view of a text, this word can. If the verb *innâ* denotes “rape,” then the murder of the Shechemites can be defended, or is often defended, because of this unacceptable deed. If this word refers to something else, the murder of the Shechemites is to be judged as unacceptable, and the history of Jacob and his sons contains an ink-black page. The differences in the view of the text show that a profound semantic study of the word *innâ* is asked for. The present article offers such a semantic analysis.” Van Wolde (544) concludes that in Genesis 34 that Dinah is not raped, thus, according to van Wolde, undoing the justification for the actions of Simeon and Levi.

as an accurate reading of the MT? One standard by which to judge the accuracy of a reading is the degree to which an interpretation leaves the MT text intact; that is, a reading which does not emend the text by omission<sup>183</sup> or emend words in the text or change the sequencing of information in the text. Moshe Greenberg's advice in this regard is helpful. He notes that the task of the exegete "is to interpret the text in hand."<sup>184</sup> What he means by this is that the interpreter is to *focus* on the primary text that he/she is interpreting and not 'dip into' other texts—specifically the other Ancient Versions<sup>185</sup>—in order to make sense of a text from the MT. Greenberg asserts that texts are to be made sense of independently of each other before comparisons among them are made.<sup>186</sup>

In order to interpret the text in hand, according to Greenberg, the exegete is to "work on the hypothesis that every element in [the] text has significance—contributes to the meaning of its context. Only such a hypothesis keeps [the exegete] alert to discover significance and design if it is there and [the exegete] will cling to it until he/[she] is baffled (at which point [the exegete] may be inclined to think that some flaw exists in the text."<sup>187</sup> Greenberg's advice is sound, particularly in relation to the contextualization of texts, since how interpreters contextualize texts influences how they read the text they have "in hand." An example of a textual contextualization which put translators on the wrong track is the JPS translators' apparent contextualization of Num 5:13 in terms of

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<sup>183</sup> See pp. 50-51 *supra*.

<sup>184</sup> Moshe Greenberg, "The Use of the Ancient Versions for Interpreting the Hebrew Text," in *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, 29 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), 147. "The text in hand" is the primary text that the interpreter is analyzing.

<sup>185</sup> Shemaryahu Talmon ("Textual Study of the Bible: A New Outlook" in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975], 382, n. 3) uses the term "version" "in reference to all witnesses of the Bible text, including the MT which, *sensu stricto*, is but a version of the now unattainable Hebrew text." I think that this is a useful way to think about the relationship of the MT to what usually are referred to as the Ancient Versions; that is, the other ancient witnesses which have been influential particularly in the Christian tradition.

<sup>186</sup> Greenberg, "The Use," *passim*.

<sup>187</sup> Greenberg, "The Use," 147.

contemporary Western perceptions of who is guilty when a woman is raped. Their thinking in this regard appears to have led to the “premature text-alteration”<sup>188</sup> of Num 5:13. Then their emendation of *שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ* in this verse led to their having to undertake further emendation. These unneeded alterations to Num 5:13 highlight the wisdom of Greenberg’s advice of stringently seeking for the sense of the text in hand before deciding to emend it.

I adopt Greenberg’s standards for exegesis in order to allow the text as objective a role as possible in the meaning-making process. The goal of such an approach is to try to take the intent<sup>189</sup> and the efforts of the author into account. The ethical intent of this goal is not primarily to defer to the artistic efforts of a dead author who is not present to defend his work, but, rather, it is to try to take into account the lives behind the lines in the text—not only those lives that inspired the author’s work, whose experiences he sought to represent in his work, and to speak to in his work, but also those lives whose realities are reflected in some manner in the written artifact that reflects the world in which it was composed.<sup>190</sup> As Fulkerson’s example of marital rape demonstrates,<sup>191</sup> the subjectivities of those who are part of an event are ‘located’ in the objective data of the event.<sup>192</sup> In terms of a biblical narrative, the objective data consists of the content,

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<sup>188</sup> Greenberg, “The Use,” 147.

<sup>189</sup> Greenberg’s (“The Use,” 137, italics mine) analysis of Ezek 2:1-3:11 indicates his recognition that authors of biblical texts *intended* to create them in a particular manner in order to convey a particular point or points. Greenberg states that “the chiasmic reversal of the adjectival parts of the phrases in ii 4a and in ii 7 shows that the two are indeed interrelated, and that the interrelation was *intended* to be felt.”

<sup>190</sup> Bach’s (“Good,” 505) comment that “the Sotah . . . reveals a lot about what women had to put up with” is an example of an interpreter seeing those whose realities are reflected in the written artifact that reflects the world in which it was composed. The Sotah does not represent an idealized desideratum that was never put into practice. Milgrom’s (*Numbers*, 348) notation that the Sotah was suspended around the time of the destruction of the Second Temple indicates that it had been practiced prior to this time.

<sup>191</sup> See Chapter 1, pp. 6-10.

<sup>192</sup> In Fulkerson’s example *the fact that the husband forced the wife to have sex is a given*. The question raised in her example is not whether or not the husband raped the wife but whether or not he had the right to treat her in this way. See Chapter 1, p. 8 for a description of the subjectivities of the husband and wife.

grammar and vocabulary of the text. Just as the subjectivities of the husband and wife are present in the objective data in Fulkerson's example of marital rape, so are the subjectivities of those whose lives formed the matrix within which the authors of texts now found in the MT composed their texts. *This is why accuracy in biblical interpretation matters*: in order to take into account the realities of 'those lives then:' not only those lives whose reality is overtly represented in some manner in the text but also those lives behind the scenes in the text, whose realities are discernable there—even if only slightly.<sup>193</sup> As Norma Rosen insists, "the past extracts a debt from us. We are not permitted the use of certain words or associations without giving them their due, and their due is what devolves upon them from their original context."<sup>194</sup> It is incumbent upon interpreters/ translators, then, to make every effort to take that original context<sup>195</sup>—and the lives reflected therein—into account, in order to give them "their due."

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No matter whose subjective experience of the event is validated by the legal system, both husband and wife *know* that he forced her. This is the subjective knowledge which remains in both of their hearts, minds, souls, and bodies. For a description of embodied knowledge, see Chapter 1, p. 28, n. 107.

<sup>193</sup> For an earlier statement concerning the goal of accurate interpretation, see Chapter 1, p. 5, n. 19.

<sup>194</sup> Norma Rosen, *Accidents of Influence: Writing as a Woman and a Jew in America* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 53.

<sup>195</sup> This is not to claim that the MT necessarily represents that original context, but it is the text which we have "in hand" and interpreting it as though it represents an original context can help to make sense of it.

## **Chapter Three: The effects of interpretive desire on interpretations of Genesis 34**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I look at the role of interpretive desire in interpretive decisions by analyzing the arguments of eight scholars whose interpretations indicate in some way that Shechem is not a rapist. The scholars whose work I examine in this chapter are part of the larger group of twelve scholars of whom I am aware whose work in some way presents Shechem as not a rapist. I examined van Wolde's work in this regard in the last chapter. I examine Bechtel's work in this regard in the next chapter.<sup>1</sup>

The scholars whose work I analyze in this chapter can be divided generally into two groups: those whose interpretation of Genesis 34 is part of a larger argument they are making and those who are focused on Genesis 34 itself. However, since Camp and Sheres do not fit into these categories in quite the same way as the other analysts, I put them in a third category: that of analysts whose concerns in relation to Genesis 34 influence their arguments concerning Genesis 34, rather than the argument they mount influencing their conclusions about Genesis 34, as is the case with the other scholars whose work I review in this chapter. I elaborate further on what Camp's and Sheres's concerns are in my explication of each of these analysts' work. Strictly speaking, Camp belongs with those analysts whose interpretation of Genesis 34 is part of a thematic argument they are making. Sheres' argument bridges the two categories because she focuses on Genesis 34, but in the service of a larger agenda. Others who are focused on Genesis 34 itself are Wyatt, Fleishman, and Gruber. Those whose interpretations of Genesis 34 are part of a larger argument they are making are Weinfeld, Frymer-Kensky, and Carmichael. I begin

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<sup>1</sup> I do not examine the work of the remaining two scholars, Ararat and Zakovitch. For the reasons why, see Chapter 1, p. 2, the end of n. 7.

my analysis of all of these scholars with this category. My interest in relation to all eight scholars is how their interpretive desires influence not only where they direct their attention when analyzing biblical texts but also what they see there when they look.

### **Group One: Making sense of Genesis 34 as part of a larger interpretive agenda**

#### **Moshe Weinfeld**

Weinfeld's treatment of Genesis 34 is part of the chapter, "Humanism," in his monograph, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*. His interpretive desire in this chapter is to demonstrate the "humanistic character of Deuteronomy" vis-à-vis the Book of the Covenant.<sup>2</sup> This desire is evident in his interpretation of Deut 22:28-29 in comparison to Exod 22:15-16. According to him, the author of the law in Exodus "is not concerned with the personal plight of the maiden," whereas the Deuteronomistic author is.<sup>3</sup> The problem for Weinfeld with this construal of the two laws is that the Exodus law allows the father to refuse to marry his daughter to her *seducer*,<sup>4</sup> while the Deuteronomistic law *requires* the daughter to be married to her *rapist*. The Deuteronomistic law, then, does not appear to be more humanistic than the Exodus law. Weinfeld addresses this problem by asserting that, like the situation in Exodus, Deut 22:28-29 also refers to seduction. He contends that "there is . . . nothing in the two verses of this law that necessarily points to rape. The word *וּתְפֹשָׁה* means 'held' and not necessarily 'attacked'."<sup>5</sup> His support for this claim is Jer 40:10, which refers, according to him, not to towns "which you have conquered' but 'which you have . . . held as your own'."<sup>6</sup> However, Pressler's

<sup>2</sup> Weinfeld, "Humanism," 282.

<sup>3</sup> Weinfeld, "Humanism," 285.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of *קָטָה* as denoting seduction in this verse, see D. J. A. Clines and D. M. Gunn, "You tried to persuade me" and "Violence! Outrage!" in Jeremiah XX 7-8," *V T*, [1978], 20-23.

<sup>5</sup> Weinfeld, "Humanism," 286.

<sup>6</sup> Weinfeld, "Humanism," 286, n. 3.

recognition that, whenever *tps* is used with a human being as an object, coercion or violence is indicated, is applicable to Deut 22:28-29, since the reference is to a human being and not to a town.<sup>7</sup> Thus Weinfeld's application of Jer 40:10 to the situation in Deut 22: 28-29 does not fit the situation represented there.

Weinfeld's further assertions concerning Deut 22: 28-29 include his reference to Genesis 34. He contends that

when dealing with rape, the author of Deuteronomy employs the verb תפס (22:25) and not תפס.<sup>8</sup> The phrase תחת אשר ענה in v. 29 does not prove that the case deals with a maiden who was attacked. Verse 24 of the same chapter, which treats of a betrothed maiden who did not cry out for help, employs the same verb, ענה, though the maiden is assumed not to have been raped. Nor is the same phrase (תחת אשר עניתה) in Deut 21:14 to be understood as referring to rape, for the woman was taken sexually only after her marriage to the Israelite and after she had dwelled in his household for a month.<sup>9</sup> . . . When used in connection with women the verb ענה appears, then, to connote sexual intercourse in general rather than rape, and it is to be rendered accordingly in . . . Gen 34:2; Judg 19:24; 2 Sam 13:12; Ezek 22:10-11.<sup>10</sup>

As for this last conclusion, Weinfeld adds that “the verses may be interpreted more satisfactorily if we assume that they that they refer not strictly to rape, as Professor M. Greenberg suggested to me privately, but to other instances of sexual intercourse, which are innocent but which involve an element of imposition upon the woman. It might then still refer to seduction.”<sup>11</sup> This statement reflects Weinfeld's desire that these texts fit

<sup>7</sup> Pressler, “Sexual,” 104.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 63-65, for a discussion of Deut 22:13-29 as a redacted text containing a *collection* of laws. The significance of this in terms of the argument that Weinfeld makes is that, since this is a collection of laws, there is no *one* verb in this pericope which represents the force used in order to rape someone.

<sup>9</sup> Washington (“Lest,” 205) rightly sees the taking of the woman sexually in Deut 21:14 as rape. He states that “the provision for treatment of the war-captive woman can be viewed as a prohibition of rape only under the premise that women possess no personhood or bodily integrity apart from the determination of men. The fact that the man must wait for a month before penetrating the woman . . . does not make the sexual relationship something other than rape, unless one assumes that by the end of the period the woman has consented. . . . But to assume the consent of the woman is to erase her personhood.”

<sup>10</sup> Weinfeld, “Humanism,” 286.

<sup>11</sup> Weinfeld, “Humanism,” 286, n. 5. See Chapter 2, pp. 74-76 for Ezek 22:10 as a reference to non-coercive sex.



the point he wishes to make about Deut 22:28-29. His decision that what is depicted in Genesis 34, Judges 19, and 2 Samuel 13 is “innocent” reveals a lack of attention on the parts of Weinfeld and Greenberg to the particulars of these texts. The fact that the *pilegesh* was raped and abused by a mob all night until morning (Judg 19:25) certainly involves more than a “degree of imposition upon” her, especially since, in addition to being gang-raped, the abuse involved is denoted by the verb *עָלַל*, which also is used to describe Saul’s fears and Zedekiah’s fears as to what they would suffer upon falling into enemy hands.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, the author of 2 Samuel 13 makes it clear that Amnon raped Tamar.<sup>13</sup> Verse 14 describes his overpowering her (*הִיזַק*), *עָנָה* refers to his pinning her down,<sup>14</sup> and *הִתְעַבְּרָה אֵת הַתְּהֵמָה* refers to his removing her clothes and forcefully penetrating her.<sup>15</sup> *הִתְעַבְּרָה אֵת הַתְּהֵמָה* refers to the same thing in regard to Shechem’s treatment of Dinah. Thus, in light of Fewell and Phillips’s contention that “if we have not seen the face of the other, we have not understood what we have read.”<sup>16</sup> it is clear that Weinfeld and Greenberg did not understand what is depicted in Genesis 34 or in 2 Samuel 13 or in Judges 19, for they failed to see Dinah’s face, or Tamar’s face, or the face of the *pilegesh*.

### **Tikva Frymer-Kensky**

Frymer-Kensky’s analysis of Genesis 34 is part of her overview of sex in the Bible. According to her, the “only access into the mind-set” of ancient Israel concerning sex was “through its laws.”<sup>17</sup> What she sees in the sex laws is the desire “to control

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 2, p. 78, n. 144.

<sup>13</sup> For the author’s reason for depicting Tamar as innocent and not seduced, see Chapter 7, pp. 311-312.

<sup>14</sup> For this interpretation, see Chapter 2, pp. 79-80.

<sup>15</sup> For this as the meaning of *הִתְעַבְּרָה אֵת הַתְּהֵמָה*, see Chapter 7, p. 318.

<sup>16</sup> Fewell and Phillips, “Ethics,” 7.

<sup>17</sup> Frymer-Kensky (“Law,” 239) makes this assertion in comparison with the treatment of sex in pagan religions, where there was, she asserts, “a mystique, expressed through the sacred marriage ritual. . . . The goddess of sexual attraction imparts a divine aspect to erotic impulse and a vocabulary to celebrate it and to mediate and diffuse the anxieties it may engender.” According to Frymer-Kensky (250), this is not

sexual behavior by delineating the proper parameters of sexual activity.”<sup>18</sup> This includes restrictions on having “a sexual relationship that infringes on another family,” as well as on sexual relationships “within one’s own family.”<sup>19</sup> According to her, “sex’s power to dissolve categories . . . is problematic” not only in terms of family relationships, but also “on a national scale.”<sup>20</sup> She sees this as the issue which “is clearly highlighted in Genesis 34.”<sup>21</sup>

According to Frymer-Kensky, the fundamental problem addressed in Genesis 34 is that Shechem’s “free exercise of erotic love . . . threatened” the control over intermarriage which was necessary if Jacob’s family was to “remain a distinct unit.”<sup>22</sup> Since Frymer-Kensky sees this as the issue which Genesis 34 addresses, then it does not matter whether or not Shechem raped Dinah; in either case, he would have violated Dinah’s family’s rights to control their intermixing with other peoples by choosing Dinah’s mate for her. Without giving a reason for her choice, Frymer-Kensky follows the line of thinking which perceives the story as “not about a forcible rape,”<sup>23</sup> and she asserts that “Dinah may have consented to the act.”<sup>24</sup> The danger that Frymer-Kensky sees in Genesis 34, then, is not the nature of Shechem’s and Dinah’s sexual encounter. Rather, it is the fact that when Hamor “tendered the offer of marriage, he extended it” to include intermarriage between the Shechemites and Jacob and his family.<sup>25</sup> According to her, “this intermixing was the great threat to Jacob’s family. Even though the generation of

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the case in the Bible, where “there is no vocabulary in which to discuss such matters, no divine image or symbolic system by which to mediate it.”

<sup>18</sup> Frymer-Kensky, “Law,” 242.

<sup>19</sup> Frymer-Kensky, “Law,” 245.

<sup>20</sup> Frymer-Kensky, “Law,” 246.

<sup>21</sup> Frymer-Kensky, “Law,” 246.

<sup>22</sup> Frymer-Kensky, “Law,” 246.

<sup>23</sup> Frymer-Kensky, “Law,” 246.

<sup>24</sup> Frymer-Kensky, “Law,” 246.

<sup>25</sup> Frymer-Kensky, “Law,” 246.

Jacob's sons was the first to intermarry with the local inhabitants, they had to do so under controlled conditions" so that they could maintain their distinctness.<sup>26</sup>

In response to Frymer-Kensky's assertion, the question arises as to whether or not Shechem's coitus with Dinah would have been viewed as so great a threat to the Jacob and his family in terms of intermixing with other peoples had Hamor not extended the offer of marriage to Shechem to include an intermarriage treaty with Jacob and his sons. In other words, she does not take into account that, in terms of what Shechem demanded of his father, the offer to the Jacob and his sons of intermarriage with the Shechemites was not a necessary part of the arrangements. All that Shechem demanded of his father was that his father arrange for Shechem's possession of Dinah to be legalized by his marriage to her, not that his father offer intermarriage to Jacob and his sons. The indication is, then, that it was *not* Shechem's actions which threatened the distinctness of Jacob's family due to the threat of intermixing through marriage, but rather Hamor's offer of wholesale intermarriage.<sup>27</sup>

Had Frymer-Kensky adduced the acquisition of the Shechemite women by Jacob's sons in the aftermath of the slaughter of the Shechemite men as an example of uncontrolled intermarriage, her assertion concerning Genesis 34 could be seen as reflective of the content of the text. But instead she asserts that it is the marriages of Jacob's sons which need to be controlled—yet in this text they are not.

As for her contention concerning Dinah's interest in having sex with Shechem, Frymer-Kensky undertakes no semantic analysis in support of this assertion. She merely states that this is the case. Her belief that Dinah shared Shechem's interest in sex

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<sup>26</sup> Frymer-Kensky, "Law," 246.

<sup>27</sup> This is not to say that Hamor's offer of intermarriage did not arise from what Shechem had done, but that Hamor's offer was not the inevitable result of what Shechem had done.

apparently arises from Jewish tradition, an influential part of which has viewed Dinah's "going out" as going "awhoring."<sup>28</sup> Frymer-Kensky sees in the statement that Dinah went out to look at the daughters of the land the probability of "a snide remark on the order of "she asked for it"—an idea which is similar to the idea of going "awhoring."<sup>29</sup> However, Frymer-Kensky does not explain why the statement that Dinah went out to look at the daughters of the land implies that "she asked for it." She merely states that it does, thus indicating that this is an assumption which she has brought to her reading of Genesis 34. When the entirety of Frymer-Kensky's analysis of Genesis 34 is taken into account, it appears that her interpretive desire to fit Genesis 34 into her larger interpretive scheme caused her to overlook some of the important details of the story in favor of her larger agenda.

### **Calum M. Carmichael**

Both Weinfeld's and Frymer-Kensky's arguments demonstrate that when a text is put into the service of a thematic interpretation, details of each individual text which point in other directions may not receive the attention they deserve. However, inattentiveness to textual content also can occur in interpretations which are not thematic in nature, but in which texts are brought together in order to mount an overarching argument. This can be seen in Carmichael's analysis of Genesis 34, which is part of his monograph, *Women, Law and the Genesis Traditions*. In his work, he seeks to demonstrate how the narrative traditions in Genesis influenced the construction of Israelite laws concerning women. Deut 22:13-29 receives his attention in relation to Genesis 34. Carmichael refers to the coitus described in both of these pericopes as

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<sup>28</sup> See Chapter 5, pp. 234-245.

<sup>29</sup> Frymer-Kensky, "Law," p. 253, n. 15.

“seduction.” The addition of the wisdom tradition to his interpretive mix apparently led him to see these pericopes in this way. Carmichael asserts that the series of laws in Deut 22:13-29 grew out of the law-giver’s desire “to present at a legal level the sages’ warning to avoid wrongful sexual passion. Thus the five laws in Deut 22:13-29 all deal with this topic. The context in which they are unfolded is mainly, but not exclusively, Shechem’s treatment of Dinah. That is to say, problems thrown up by this tradition prompt the construction of most of the laws.”<sup>30</sup> Even though Carmichael consistently refers to Shechem’s “seduction” of Dinah, his description of Dinah as “sallying forth”<sup>31</sup> suggests that she might have been ‘guilty’ of seduction herself.<sup>32</sup> Such a view of Dinah’s behavior fits with the understanding in Proverbs that young men are in danger of “giving vent to [their] passion” when approached by a seductive woman (Prov 7:4-27).<sup>33</sup> Carmichael remains focused on the interest in the wisdom tradition on the “lack of restraint”<sup>34</sup> which might characterize the behavior of young men under such conditions, and he does not address the issue of rape in Genesis 34 directly, but rather does so indirectly by indicating that Dinah was not raped. He does this by suggesting that Dinah was a seductress.

As for the relationship of Genesis 34 to Deut 22:23-27, Carmichael sees Dinah’s unknown status (i.e., whether or not she was betrothed) as the basis for the lawmaker’s development of the two laws in Deut 22:23-24 and Deut 22:25-27.<sup>35</sup> According to Carmichael, Dinah’s being “seduced in a place beyond the boundary of her group”<sup>36</sup> caused the lawgiver to develop these two laws in consideration of what should occur

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<sup>30</sup> Carmichael, “Dinah,” 36.

<sup>31</sup> Carmichael, “Dinah,” 36.

<sup>32</sup> Carmichael, “Dinah,” 43.

<sup>33</sup> Carmichael, “Dinah,” 36.

<sup>34</sup> Carmichael, “Dinah,” 36.

<sup>35</sup> Carmichael, “Dinah,” 45.

<sup>36</sup> Carmichael, “Dinah,” 46.

had she been betrothed and ‘seduced’ either in the city or “seduced or forced” in the country.<sup>37</sup>

As for the law in Deut 22:28-29, Carmichael sees it as addressing the issue of an Israelite treating a woman like a harlot: the offender must be made to marry his victim so that she would not end up marrying someone else since she already had been ‘seduced.’<sup>38</sup> This is similar to the connection that Carmichael sees between Dinah, this law, and the two laws with which this pericope commences: Deut 22:13-21—the laws that address the situation of a bride who is accused of not being a virgin at the time of her marriage. According to him, these laws also are concerned with the situation of a man marrying a girl who already had been ‘seduced.’ However, neither the legal instruction in vv. 13-19 nor the law in vv. 28-29 was developed in order to protect a man from marrying a girl who had had intercourse with another man. Rather, these laws were developed in order *to protect the financial interests of the owner of the girl’s sexuality*.<sup>39</sup> In comparison to Carmichael’s analysis of Deut 22:13-29, Westbrook’s analysis of the origins of the legislation in Deut 22:13-29 is more convincing, because his approach points out the parallels between Deut 22:13-29 and the legal tradition in the ANE. This better accounts for the contents of all of the laws, as well as for the purely hypothetical nature of vv. 25-27.<sup>40</sup>

Nonetheless, Carmichael sees a connection between Deut 22:13-21, 28-29, and Genesis 34—based on his assertion that “after the Shechem incident” Dinah “returned to

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<sup>37</sup> Carmichael, “Dinah,” 45.

<sup>38</sup> Carmichael (“Dinah,” 47) sees Simeon and Levi’s characterization of Shechem’s treatment of Dinah in Genesis 34:31 as treating her as a harlot as part of the basis for this law. In addition, Carmichael (38) asserts that the lawgiver developed this law—and the ones in Deut 22:13-21—because Shechem had had intercourse with Dinah, but he did not end up married to her.

<sup>39</sup> For this interpretation of these laws, see Chapter 2, pp. 65-66. The legal instruction in vv. 20-21 was developed in order to restrict the freedom of movement of females. See Chapter 2 pp. 67-68.

<sup>40</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 66-67 and 70-71.

her native group” but apparently did not report her ‘seduction.’<sup>41</sup> In the context of the rest of his argument, the implication of his assertion about the silence which he attributes to Dinah is that, when she went out, she was seeking sexual favors from men—which she did not want her family to know. That Carmichael perceives Dinah in this way can be seen in his assertion that, if her “past is looked into carefully, it is difficult to say whether she was forced by Shechem or whether she was biddable. There is some indication that she was willing.”<sup>42</sup> However, this is hardly fair to Dinah, whose past prior to Shechem’s coming across her consisted of her being born and accompanying her family on their journeys and settling where they settled. Carmichael’s missing the fact that Genesis 34:4 and 26 indicate that Dinah did not return to her family puts him off base in terms of the claims he makes about Genesis 34. Thus Carmichael’s argument makes it apparent that textual content that has a bearing on an analyst’s argument may be overlooked *even* when a text receives closer individual attention than is often the case when it is part of thematic interpretations of the Bible, such as Weinfeld’s and Frymer-Kensky’s. In terms of Carmichael’s argument, this appears to be the case because he brought a construal of the social/relational dynamics—that of the Wisdom tradition—to his reading of Genesis 34, which do not fit what is depicted in the text.

**Group 2: Interpretation of Genesis 34:2-3 on the basis of concerns in relation to Genesis 34 which the interpreter brought to the text**

**Claudia Camp**

In reference to Genesis 34, Claudia Camp asserts that “there is no way to isolate

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<sup>41</sup> Carmichael, “Dinah,” 37, 38.

<sup>42</sup> Carmichael, “Dinah,” 42. He (43) also refers to “the dubious nature of Dinah’s role in the circumstances described in Genesis 34.” He (46) asserts as well that “Dinah’s guilt or innocence is left undetermined.”

... [the] ‘intention’ [of an author] within the conflicted mix that now constitutes this narrative and its intertexts.”<sup>43</sup> As a result, Camp does not try to figure out what point an author might have been trying to make in composing Genesis 34. Rather, she turns her attention toward those in antiquity whom she asserts would have been receptive to the idea of endogamy, which she sees Genesis 34 as promoting. According to her, the priestly-faction during the Second Temple period considered endogamy to be ideal because interaction with a multiplicity of peoples to a much greater degree than during the monarchical period made contact with ‘strangeness’ a regular occurrence and a pressing concern as residents of Yehud struggled to define what it meant to be ‘Israel’ as a subject people in an empire. This struggle with who is ‘us’ and who is ‘them’ was a concern to the priestly faction not only in terms of Yehud’s relationships with other subject peoples, but also in terms of their relation to other Israelites. However, intermarriage with those who were not from priestly families or not Israelite did occur. According to Camp, as a result of the worry of the in-marrying woman bringing her strangeness into the family or into the nation, the concern with strangeness developed into the figure of the strange woman.<sup>44</sup> The alternative to the strange woman was marriage within the family—incest—also an untenable situation. Camp sees Genesis 34 as an expression of the attempt to resolve these tensions through the creation of the properly endogamous marriage: one in which the sister—the appropriate mate from the perspective which desires endogamy—is ‘made strange.’<sup>45</sup> In this way, the sister can also be viewed as an appropriate mate from the perspective which disapproves of incest. According to Camp, Genesis 34 accomplishes this by constructing Dinah as an estranged

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<sup>43</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 280, n. 3.

<sup>44</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 289.

<sup>45</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 18, 293.



sister through “her (possible) friendship with strange women and *her* illicit sex with a strange man.”<sup>46</sup> *However, for Camp’s priestly readers, whether or not the sex was rape would not matter. Dinah would still have been ‘made strange’ by her sexual encounter with a strange man.*<sup>47</sup> Therefore, it is not necessary in terms of Camp’s larger agenda that Shechem be depicted as not raping Dinah. It appears, then, that Camp pursues her interpretation of what transpired between Shechem and Dinah for reasons other than the requirements of her larger interpretational agenda.

Camp sees Genesis 34 as grounded in an ideology of honor and shame, in which “the principle of family honor [is] defined in terms of the containment of women’s sexuality [and] thus serves an impulse toward endogamy.”<sup>48</sup> If this is the case concerning Genesis 34, then the priestly faction would have approved of Simeon and Levi’s actions, which Camp construes as undertaken because they opposed exogamous marriage. Camp asserts that, in contrast to his sons, Jacob represents a dimension of “the ideology of honor and shame [that] is not limited to the issue of male control of women’s sexuality,” but that is directed toward enabling “the family [to] achieve a set of workable economic and social relationships with the outside world.”<sup>49</sup> Camp asserts that the readers in antiquity who perceived this aspect of the ideology of honor and shame in Genesis 34 would have been those who were amenable to the idea of exogamy. For them, Jacob’s response—which Camp construes as accepting of the Shechemite marriage proposal—was the correct one. However, Camp does not clarify with the same specificity with

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<sup>46</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 293, italics hers.

<sup>47</sup> Whether or not Dinah was raped was not a concern to the priestly readers whom Camp posits for Genesis 34, because, according to Camp (18), their concern was “purity of lineage,” something which would have been ‘polluted’ by intercourse with someone who was not an Israelite, whether or not that intercourse was forced. According to Camp (293), it is Dinah’s “sex with a strange man” which “narratively create[s her] as [a] strange wom[an].”

<sup>48</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 281-282, 283.

<sup>49</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 284.

which she identifies those who would have been in favor of endogamy who her second group of readers were. She merely asserts that “perhaps there were ancient readers . . . who would have resisted . . . ideas”<sup>50</sup> which were averse to intermarriage between Israelites and non-Israelites. The vagueness of Camp’s assertion concerning this second group of readers may be due to the fact that, even though she asserts that she engages in a comparison of the ideologies of two groups from antiquity,<sup>51</sup> it appears that her analysis of Gen 34:2-3 actually is directed toward contemporary readers whom she would like to ‘dis-align’ with the perspective she has attributed to the priestly readers: that of approval of the actions of Simeon and Levi. In order to do this, Camp seeks to persuade contemporary readers that Dinah was not raped; otherwise, Camp feels that “contemporary ideologies of, first, love and romance and, secondly, the individual’s right over her or his own body . . . make it relatively easy for the modern reader to leap to the support of Levi and Simeon.”<sup>52</sup>

Camp’s *first* translation of Gen 34:2 reflects the reality depicted in the MT: that all of the initiative for the sexual activity comes from Shechem. Concerned that contemporary readers might think that force is suggested by “the lack of subjectivity granted to Dinah in the encounter,” Camp claims that readers in antiquity would not have reached this same conclusion because for them “male initiative in sex was the norm.”<sup>53</sup> Camp asserts this, even though the Song of Songs suggests that female initiative in sexual matters was not something that ancient readers would have found implausible (Song 1:2-

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<sup>50</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 284.

<sup>51</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 288-89.

<sup>52</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 281.

<sup>53</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 286.

3:5).<sup>54</sup> Likewise, Carmichael's reading of Genesis 34 in relation to Proverbs makes it clear that readers in antiquity accepted female initiative in sexual matters. However, having raised the topic of Dinah's subjectivity, Camp takes the opportunity to suggest what it might have been. She asserts that "the 'humbling' of Dinah expresses more her male relatives' perception than her own desire or lack thereof."<sup>55</sup> In this way Camp suggests the possibility of mutuality between Shechem and Dinah—a suggestion which she reinforces with a reference to "the couple's pre-marital sex."<sup>56</sup> Thus, as she discusses v. 2, she endeavors to ease force out of the picture, but, ultimately she cannot do it—except through recourse to the force of her own opinion. This is evident in the reflections with which she closes her discussion of v. 2. "Did, then, Shechem force Dinah to have sex with him? Perhaps so, perhaps not. Does the narrator, through the use of the verbs 'saw, took, lay, humbled,' make a definitively negative judgment on Shechem *as rapist*? I do not think so."<sup>57</sup>

Moving on to v. 3, Camp translates it with the traditional positive view of Shechem. She then asks this question, "what can it possibly mean at this point in the sequence of events to say 'his soul clung to Jacob's daughter, he loved the girl, and he spoke to her heart'?"<sup>58</sup> In answer to her own question, she seeks to counteract the sequential nature of vv. 2 and 3 with the suggestion that there is the possibility that

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<sup>54</sup> Because of the general nature of Camp's claim concerning the construction of sex and love in antiquity, there is no need to establish a relationship between Genesis 34 and Song of Songs as to when they were composed. As part of the Hebrew Bible, the text from antiquity, they can comment on each other. As for the construction of sex and love in Song of Songs, Roland E. Murphy ("Song of Songs, Book of," ABD 6: 153) observes that "the Song clearly deals with sexual love between a man and a woman . . . . This seems to be the obvious meaning of the many expressions of both physical and spiritual affection between the lovers."

<sup>55</sup> Camp, "The (E)strange(d)," 286. See Chapter 4, pp. 163-164 for an analysis of where Dinah's family's assessments of what happened to her are placed in Genesis 34.

<sup>56</sup> Camp, "The (E)strange(d)," 286.

<sup>57</sup> Camp, "The (E)strange(d)," 286, italics hers.

<sup>58</sup> Camp, "The (E)strange(d)," 286.

the three verbs in v. 3

and the four that precede them are not to be understood as a linear temporal sequence. When Shechem ‘sees, takes, *lies with*<sup>59</sup> and humbles’ only the first and maybe the second can be temporally distinguished from the others. Lying with and humbling (and maybe taking) happen coterminously. Similarly, ‘cleaving, loving and speaking tenderly’ do not have to be understood as happening only after the sex act; their place in the verbal sequence may be simply a bit of narrative coyness.<sup>60</sup>

Camp follows this unusual narratological claim by referring to what she views as another instance of narrative coyness: “[the] alignment in Dinah’s and Shechem’s point of view” in the use of the verb ‘see.’ “Dinah goes out to see daughters; Shechem sees a daughter. Again, coyly, the narrative does not say directly that they ‘see each other,’ yet it suggests this mutuality (and consent?) in the common object of their seeing.”<sup>61</sup> If there were an alignment in Dinah’s and Shechem’s point of view, they would be looking at the same thing, not at each other. However, Camp plays upon the reality of a sexual encounter—that, most likely, sexually engaged, they were looking at each other—and turns that reality into mutuality and consent—all based on the presence of the verb “see” in reference to both Dinah and Shechem.

Camp’s closing argument concerning vv. 2-3 addresses the possibility that her readers may not have been convinced by her claims concerning the presence of narrative coyness in Genesis 34, for she asserts that “even if we accept the usual reading that equates the verbal sequence with a temporal sequence, and identifies the sex act as *rape*, I am not so sure that we can make as much of that as is often done by modern readers.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> With this translation, Camp offers a different interpretation of what occurred between Shechem and Dinah from the one presented in her *first* translation. See p. 105 *supra*.

<sup>60</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 287, italics mine.

<sup>61</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 287.

<sup>62</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 287, italics mine.

According to Camp, the problem that modern readers have with Genesis 34 arises from the contemporary requirement that love come before sex. This may be, but Camp is not talking about sex at this point, she is talking about rape, as the quote from her text makes clear. This means that she should state the problem as one in which contemporary readers have a requirement that love come before rape. However, in order not to make such an assertion, Camp must characterize the nature of the sexual encounter between Shechem and Dinah as sex, not rape, because “modern readers . . . find incomprehensible the change from rape . . . to love.”<sup>63</sup> In order to deal with this problem, Camp no longer seeks a change in the order of events as in the earlier part of her argument; she simply abandons the use of the word “rape”—which she has used twice previously in the same paragraph in reference to Shechem’s and Dinah’s sexual encounter—and instead refers to what took place between them as “sex.” Having thus altered the conceptual framework concerning Shechem’s treatment of Dinah, she pursues her argument along these lines: that what occurred between them was just sex. Even so, according to Camp, modern readers would have a problem with this because it does not fit the current definition of “‘true love;’” that is, of love first and sex second.<sup>64</sup> However, she contends that the ancients would not have had a problem with this construction of the event, because the current construction of ‘love first, sex second’ “was not operative for them.”<sup>65</sup> She supports this assertion by referencing the narrative constructions of ‘girl-boy’ encounters in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 287.

<sup>64</sup> Via reference to pop culture, I take issue with Camp’s assertions concerning contemporary norms. In the movie *Pretty Woman*, a prostitute was hired and, *after* having sex with her, the man who hired her fell in love with her. Likewise, in the television shows *Seinfeld* and *Friends*, sexual attraction is sufficient for intercourse to take place and love is nowhere in the picture. Camp’s assertions about contemporary norms concerning sex and love do not hold up, if one views these portrayals of contemporary life in the media as reflective of cultural values currently held.

<sup>65</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 287.

<sup>66</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 287.

However, there are no narratives of ‘girl-boy’ encounters in the MT which depict ‘sex first, love second,’ unless one construes Gen 34 in this manner. Even so, Camp uses her assertion concerning the narrative construction of ‘girl-boy’ encounters in the MT as evidence that authors in antiquity and their audiences just did not have the necessary sensibilities to convey or perceive love in the way in which it presently is construed in the “modern Western world.”<sup>67</sup> With this assertion, once again she ignores the presence of Song of Songs in the canon.

Camp’s assertions concerning the construction of love in antiquity and today—assertions made without verification via references to particular texts in the MT or to particular instances in contemporary society—indicate that she has brought certain conclusions about social/relational dynamics then and now to her reading of Genesis 34, conclusions which lead her to make suggestions concerning what transpired between Shechem and Dinah which are different from the traditional interpretation that Shechem raped Dinah. Her goal in doing this appears to be to change what she thinks contemporary readers would view as a valid basis for the actions of Simeon and Levi, because she cannot tolerate an interpretation of Genesis 34 which would side with what she refers to as the “brothers’ extraordinary and self-serving violence.”<sup>68</sup> Thus it appears that her interpretational desire in regard to what is depicted as transpiring between Shechem and Dinah arose out of the fear that Simeon and Levi’s behavior might be viewed favorably and this concern fostered her efforts to interpret the text along lines agreeable to her.

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<sup>67</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 287.

<sup>68</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 279.

### **Ita Sheres**

*Dinah's Rebellion: A Biblical Parable for Our Time*, the title of Ita Sheres' monograph in which she analyzes Genesis 34, accurately describes her approach to this text. She asserts that the final redactors of this text—Deuteronomists at work during the period of the Second Commonwealth—regarded Dinah's "going out" as rebellion against the exclusivity of the community of the people of God which they felt was necessary for them to maintain if they were to remain an intact entity in the Persian Empire.<sup>69</sup> Sheres asserts that this was the case because living as subject people in an the empire presented God's people with a situation in which peoples with varied religious habits intermingled with each other to a degree which had not been the case previously.<sup>70</sup> For this reason, the Deuteronomists promoted a theology in which God guaranteed the perpetuation of the people in the land if they did not mix in with these other peoples. This meant especially that they should not intermarry with non-Israelites.<sup>71</sup> Such an approach was undertaken in order that God's people not acquire either the religiosity of these non-Israelites or the immoral behavior which the Deuteronomists viewed as coincident with the differing religious practices of these other peoples.<sup>72</sup>

The subtitle to Sheres' work—"A Biblical Parable for Our Own Time"—refers to current Jewish citizens of the modern state of Israel whom Sheres' regards as sharing a commitment to exclusivity similar to that of the Deuteronomists. According to her, central to this contemporary understanding of what it means to belong to God is a similar emphasis on remaining in the land.<sup>73</sup> In order for this to take place, Palestinians must be

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<sup>69</sup> Sheres, *Dinah's*, p. 20, n. 13.

<sup>70</sup> Sheres, *Dinah's*, 28, 103.

<sup>71</sup> Sheres, *Dinah's*, 93.

<sup>72</sup> Sheres, *Dinah's*, 29; 46; 52, n. 3; 91.

eased off the land by Jews who wish to settle there. Sheres sees in what she presents as Dinah's interest in socializing with the Shechemites the possibility for an alternative vision of Israeli-Palestinian relations, one that would encourage peaceful interaction between the two peoples. In her reading of Genesis 34, Sheres, following Martin Buber, applies

reservations about nationalism . . . to the story of Dinah as a parable where the "I" of the family of Jacob/Israel meets "the other" of the clan of the Hivites. . . ." with the goal of looking "at Dinah in a new light. She *must be studied now* as an active political figure who tried to steer the Hebrews away from brutal confrontations. Her "going out" *must be understood as wise and desirable.*"<sup>74</sup>

Sheres's understanding of Dinah's motive for "going out," along with her perception of the social and political goals of the Deuteronomists, form the basis of her conclusion as to why Genesis 34 is in the form in which it is found in the MT.<sup>75</sup> According to her, the Deuteronomists had at hand a story in which Dinah went out to socialize with the local girls and, as a result, ended up wanting to marry a Shechemite. This was an intermingling with others that violated the Deuteronomists' goals to such an extent that they changed the story to one in which Shechem raped Dinah. They did this in order to point out the dangers of Israelites—especially the women—interacting with those who were not like them.<sup>76</sup> As support for this position, Sheres refers to the situation of women in Genesis as demonstrative of Deuteronomistic mores; that is, women other

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<sup>73</sup> Sheres (*Dinah's*, 10) claims that "the redacted tale of Dinah revolves around the Hebrews' territorial needs." Her monograph was published in 1990, so the situation to which she brings her analysis of Genesis 34 is the relationship between the Israelis and the Palestinians from 1948 to the 1980s.

<sup>74</sup> Sheres, *Dinah's*, 18, emphasis mine.

<sup>75</sup> Sheres (*Dinah's*, 3) asserts that "the specific manner in which Dinah appears in the text is due mainly to the ideological convictions . . . [of] the redactors of Genesis."

<sup>76</sup> Sheres, *Dinah's*, 10, 17.



than Eve and Dinah, whom she contends rebelled against patriarchal norms.<sup>77</sup> As for the other women in Genesis, Sheres asserts that their “dependence on the men” is stressed in the biblical text,<sup>78</sup> that they did not exercise political or social power, and that they were rewarded for their dependent posture by being provided protection within the patriarchal tent. The Deuteronomistic position that such a social arrangement was necessary was based on the belief that women were not only physically weaker than men but also morally so.<sup>79</sup>

The impetus for Sheres’s comparison of Dinah to the women of Genesis arises from the depictions of Rebekah going out (אָצֵר) to draw water (Gen 24: 15) and Rachel coming (אָבֵר) to water her father’s sheep (Gen 29:6-9); that is, they, like Dinah, both went out, but they went out on functional missions to the well,<sup>80</sup> a site which was known to give rise to betrothals.<sup>81</sup> Sheres then asserts that Dinah similarly went out looking for marital love,<sup>82</sup> but that, according to the Deuteronomists, she was looking in the wrong place.<sup>83</sup> Thus, while Rebekah and Rachel were allowed by the redactors to go out without there being disastrous results for them, Dinah was not allowed to go out on a similarly

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<sup>77</sup> Sheres, *Dinah’s*, 48. She (29-32) discusses Hagar but does not describe her as a rebel even though Hagar rebelled against her situation by going out on her own into the wilderness.

<sup>78</sup> Sheres, *Dinah’s*, 16.

<sup>79</sup> Sheres, *Dinah’s*, 42.

<sup>80</sup> Sheres, *Dinah’s*, 58, 61, 66.

<sup>81</sup> Sheres (*Dinah’s*, 55) asserts that “the two major betrothal narratives, which describe two women (Rebekah and Rachel) leaving their homes and going outside, clearly suggest that the major reason for a woman to leave the security of the tent is a prospective suitor.”

<sup>82</sup> Sheres, *Dinah’s*, 63, 82, 84.

<sup>83</sup> Commenting on the concerns of the redactors, Sheres (*Dinah’s*, 68, 71) asserts that “when Dinah “goes out,” . . . she decides to go “see the daughters of the land” rather than “to the cistern.” In his analysis of Genesis 34 Gruber (“A Re-examination,” 121-122) also suggests that the author intended to indicate that Dinah’s goal in going out was an unworthy one. He notes that the only other place that “daughters of the land” is used in the entire Bible is Gen 27:46, where Rebecca objects to Jacob’s marrying one of the “daughters of the land.” It is possible that the author of Genesis 34 used the terminology pejoratively, but this is unlikely, since the *situations* in Genesis 27 and Genesis 34 are not comparable. It is possible that Rebecca stated her objection to Jacob’s marrying a local woman in order to get Jacob away from the wrath of his brother Esau and that perhaps Isaac went along with Rebecca because he too feared for Jacob’s safety. In Genesis 34, Dinah’s going out creates the conditions for the plot to unfold and does not appear to have been regarded unfavorably by the author. See Chapter 6, p. 271.

successful mission—she must be raped by the first man who sees her.<sup>84</sup>

A review of the stories of the women of Genesis calls into question the viability of Sheres's claims concerning the matriarchs and their men, and whether or not residence in the patriarchal tent provided these women with the safety that she asserts was theirs due to their appropriately dependent behavior. In regard to the issue of the men as providers of safety, the story of Sarah indicates that Abraham in fact could not protect her.<sup>85</sup> Rather, in order to protect him, Sarah agreed to submit to the possibility of being raped—first by Pharaoh and later by Abimelech.<sup>86</sup> These are not stories of a woman enveloped in the safety of the patriarchal tent. Instead, these are stories of the constraints visited upon the marginalized and the kinds of arrangements they must make with each other in order to survive.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, when Isaac and Rebekah reside in Gerar, Isaac resorts to the same subterfuge in order to protect himself. He does not request Rebekah's collusion, but she does cooperate with him. Other depictions of their relationship indicate that she does not cooperate out of a sense of fear *of* him,<sup>88</sup> but rather out of a sense of fear *for* him.<sup>89</sup> It is the case that Rachel did not face a similar threat and that, in order to

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<sup>84</sup> Sheres, *Dinah's*, 87, 94.

<sup>85</sup> Sheres's encompassing statement that the women of Genesis—with the exception of Eve and Dinah—were dependent on the men and submissive to them authorizes the inclusion of the story of Sarah and Abraham in an investigation of the validity of that claim. She (*Dinah's*, 29-32) discusses Abraham and Sarah, but not in the context of Sarah's "going out," as Sarah is not depicted as "going out" of the tent.

<sup>86</sup> In seeking protection in Egypt, Abram entreats Sarai to pretend to be his sister, for he fears that should their true relationship be known he might be killed in order that another man could have her. In Gen 12:11 and 13, נא is used to describe Abram's appeal to Sarai. In seeking protection in Gerar, Abraham says to Sarah, וְהָהָרְחֵק אֶתְעַשֵׂי עִמָּדִי (Gen 20:13). The phrasing attributed to Abraham in Gerar is the same used by his servant when the servant prays to God for success for his mission to find a wife for Isaac (Gen 24:12)—these words are a plea, not a command; in other words, in neither case does Abraham appear to be in charge of Sarah and telling her what to do; rather, he appeals to her to lie to protect him.

<sup>87</sup> Sheres (*Dinah's*, 54) recognizes that "the process of becoming established . . . is at the heart of Genesis" and that the family is "looking for stability" (84) but, in her discussion of the matriarchs and the patriarchs, she does not seem to take into account how the tenuousness of their situation vis-à-vis the more settled population affects her argument concerning the 'safety' of the matriarchs in the patriarchal tent.

<sup>88</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 19.

<sup>89</sup> Gen 26:6 does not state that Rebekah fears for Isaac's safety, but gives the reason that Isaac is afraid, a reason which Rebekah apparently accepts for she cooperates with her husband in his lie.

protect her from Esau and his men, Jacob placed her in the very back of his entourage, but the picture of Jacob here is not that of a man who had a great deal of power with which to protect his family. In Gen 32:1-33:17, Jacob is depicted as very afraid of the brother (with his four hundred men) whom he had cheated of the birthright and blessing of the firstborn. What the stories of all three patriarchs have in common is that they are depictions of men whose capacity to protect their families is limited<sup>90</sup> and who, in the cases of Abraham and Isaac, require the cooperation of their wives in order to secure their own protection.

As for the tent being a place of enclosure from which political and social power was not exercised,<sup>91</sup> Rebekah's plan to secure the blessing of the firstborn for Jacob in place of Esau was formulated and pursued from within the tent (Gen 27:5-17). This was a plan whose successful execution can be seen to have had, as well as to continue to have, worldwide significance, due to the fact that Jacob became the eponymous ancestor Israel. Rachel also exercised power within the tent when she hid her father's household gods from him. As for Sarah, her entrance onto the biblical stage, as the barren wife who merely accompanies her husband as he answers his call (Gen 11:29-31, 12:5), is not suggestive of the power she ultimately is seen to exercise in relation to Abraham.<sup>92</sup>

This review of the behavior of the matriarchs indicates that Sheres' claims about them do not match the narrative content of their stories as found in the MT.

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<sup>90</sup> This is not true of the story of Abraham's rescue of Lot (Genesis 14), but this story is one which does not include the matriarch and is one which "stands in some tension with the rest of the [Abraham] cycle." (Terence Fretheim, "Genesis," *NIB* 1: 319-674).

<sup>91</sup> Sheres (*Dinah's*, 17) asserts that Rebekah functions "marginally, from within the tent."

<sup>92</sup> She must seek Abraham's permission in order to discipline her maid Hagar, but once she acquires it, he does not restrain her in any way—much to the detriment of Hagar, whom Abraham ultimately discharges into the desert with her child, *at the urging of Sarah* (Gen 16:5-6; 21:8-14).

Neither does Sheres's claim that Dinah's "going out" constitutes an expression of her "distinct identity."<sup>93</sup> In comparison to Rebekah and Rachel, who are depicted as engaging in enough activities that it is possible to develop a sense of these women as individuals, Dinah is so restricted after she encounters Shechem, it is hard to formulate an understanding of her distinctiveness. Nonetheless, Sheres casts Dinah in the role of a ground-breaking female who rebelled against patriarchal norms. Sheres does this because of her interest in casting contemporary Israeli women who seek to establish peaceful relationships with Palestinians in the same role—as women who, due to what Sheres claims is a current patriarchal agenda of exclusivity and land occupation similar to that of the Deuteronomists, are constricted and facing opposition in a way similar to that which she attributes to Dinah. Dinah is paradigmatic of these women, according to Sheres, because of her desire to interact with the Shechemites on a peaceful basis. However, Dinah is not depicted as wishing to socialize with the Shechemite girls. She is depicted merely as going out to look at them.<sup>94</sup> Sheres is aware that, "textually speaking, [Dinah] just went out "to see" the Canaanites."<sup>95</sup> Thus, Sheres knowingly does not interpret the story as it is told in the MT, but instead pursues her own interpretational agenda.

Sheres' approach to Genesis 34 raises the issue of "how we make use of the suffering of others,"<sup>96</sup> because Sheres does not interpret the text in terms of Dinah's

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<sup>93</sup> Sheres, *Dinah's*, 46.

<sup>94</sup> See Chapter 4, pp. 187-190 for a fuller discussion of this point.

<sup>95</sup> Sheres, *Dinah's*, 115.

<sup>96</sup> This quote and the following ones are from Karen Vandermeulen in personal correspondence with me, summarizing the advice of her ethics teacher Terence R. Anderson. According to Vandermeulen, Anderson reminded his students that the case studies used in teaching ethics involved "someone else's life experience, someone else's suffering," which were now "being used for a different, educational purpose." Therefore, there was "the need to be respectful" and to remember that "what for [the students] may prove an educational tool was in fact first lived/endured by another." Even though Dinah's experience *may* be only a fictional representation of rape, this does not make her being raped unreal to those who identify with her. Francisco (*Telling*, 106-107, italics hers) describes her identification with female victims: "I saw

suffering, but seeks instead to use Genesis 34 as a means of “alleviat[ing] the lot of the powerless and the excluded”<sup>97</sup>—in terms of the relationship between the Israelis and the Palestinians.<sup>98</sup> What is apparent in the desire expressed by Sheres, as well as by the thrust of her argument, is that she sees Genesis 34 as a story which, due to the goals of the redactors, was made to promote separation and exclusion. However, I argue in Chapter 6 that analysis of Genesis 34 *as it is found in the MT* reveals that it is not a story about exclusion and separation. If this is the case, then, while Sheres’s desire to address in a positive manner hostile relationships between Israelis and Palestinians is admirable, Genesis 34 is not a venue by which such an agenda can be realized, for the text is not addressing the issues that she asserts that it is—or could. Such an approach is particularly problematic when the suffering which *is* present in the text is not taken into account but is passed over in order to fit the interpretational goals of the interpreter. If Dinah was traumatized by Shechem, as I claim<sup>99</sup> and as Sheres acknowledges,<sup>100</sup> then her traumatization needs to be taken into account and not written off by attributing it to the goals of redactors who altered her story from that of a love story<sup>101</sup> to one in which she was raped.<sup>102</sup> As laudable as Sheres’s interpretive goals are, the lives behind the text and

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*Psycho* only once. . . . I had no idea that I would never be able to rid myself of the image of Janet Leigh, safe in her motel room behind a locked door, stepping naked into the shower. . . . Years later, Laura Palmer’s shrouded body, bluish lips, and tangled homecoming-queen-hair would bring praise for the filmmaker who put her on TV, for us to stare at. . . . Hitchcock killed off Janet Leigh before the end of the reel. *Twin Peaks* was never interested in Laura Palmer. The deaths of these two women were not the *point*, I’ve been told. But I, as they say, *identified*.”

<sup>97</sup> Sheres, *Dinah’s*, 125.

<sup>98</sup> Sheres (*Dinah’s*, 112) asserts that “if there is no rape in the original core story, then the whole narrative can be studied as a comment on the impact of a stern agenda that places land and possessions above moral and humanistic values.”

<sup>99</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 82-87.

<sup>100</sup> Sheres (*Dinah’s*, 72) acknowledges “the psychological damage that [Dinah] suffered as a result of the rape and its aftermath.”

<sup>101</sup> Sheres, *Dinah’s*, 89.

<sup>102</sup> Sheres (*Dinah’s*, 10) contends that Dinah’s “victimization in the story is at the hand of Shechem, the Hivite, but really she is exploited by the hand of the redactors.”

those in front of it are better served if the text is analyzed as it is in the MT and not primarily in service to interpretive desires that require distortion of the text. The word “primarily” is necessary here because it is neither possible nor desirable to eliminate an interpreter’s interpretive desire. This is what drives the interpretation of the text.

However, as all of the analyses which I have reviewed thus far make clear, in order to do justice to the text under consideration, an interpreter’s interpretive concerns must align in some way with concerns evident in the text: what Noble refers to as “the story’s own concerns.”<sup>103</sup> This kind of lack of fit between the compositional desire of the author and the interpretive desire of the interpreter also is evident in the remaining analyses in this chapter.

### **Group Three: Interpretive desire directed toward making sense of Genesis 34**

#### **N. Wyatt**

In his interpretation of Genesis 34, Wyatt focuses on Genesis 34 as the development of a story which he claims originally reflected the ritual of a “sacred marriage,<sup>104</sup> in which the bridegroom is sacrificed.”<sup>105</sup> According to Wyatt, circumcision, as a marital rite, recalls this sacrifice of the eponymous ancestor for the sake of his descendants<sup>106</sup> and makes the sacrifice of subsequent bridegrooms unnecessary.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Noble, “A Balanced,” 198. These are, of course, the concerns which a human being has brought to the composition of the text.

<sup>104</sup> The bulk of Wyatt’s interpretive effort is directed toward making the case that the original form of Genesis 34 was inspired by the ritual of a *hieros gamos*. Sixteen pages of his analysis are directed toward this issue and the interpretive issues which accompany it. He devotes only two and a half pages to discussing the three layers which he regards as having been added to the ‘original story.’

<sup>105</sup> Wyatt, “The Story,” 439. He believes that this original story consisted of vv. 1-3, 11-12, 14, 18-19, 26.

<sup>106</sup> The sacrificed bridegroom produces descendants due to his having impregnated the female with whom he had engaged in the rite of *hieros gamos* before being killed.

<sup>107</sup> This assertion requires Wyatt to develop a very complex argument. Since my concern is only with the way in which Wyatt’s interpretive concerns lead him to interpret the sexual encounter between Shechem and Dinah, I do not explicate the intricacies of the various trajectories he follows in order to make the points necessary to his overall argument.

Seeing this as the basis for the circumcisions in Genesis 34 and for Shechem's death, Wyatt views the murder of Shechem as "a human sacrifice."<sup>108</sup> Thus, Wyatt sees no reason in this original story for there to be "any provision for a motive [for killing Shechem], and none is given, until the later elaboration of the plot;" that is, until subsequent layers were added to the story, altering the motive for the killing to one which Wyatt sees as revenge, rather than that of the 'necessary' killing of Shechem which a ritual basis for Genesis 34 requires.<sup>109</sup> Wyatt does not state what the basis is for the revenge killing he sees in the final version of the story, but his translation indicates that he does not regard the reason to have been rape.<sup>110</sup>

As for the other layers in the story, Wyatt refers to the second layer as the "collective" layer.<sup>111</sup> The designation for this layer arises from Hamor's offer of a collective marriage to the Jacobites. Wyatt sees in this element a connection to a Greek myth which he suggests developed from the influence of Semitic settlers in Greece in the second millennium.<sup>112</sup> In this myth, "the fifty daughters of Danaos of Argos were married to the fifty sons of Aegyptus, and all but one, Hypermnestra, murdered their husbands on their wedding night."<sup>113</sup> However, he views the Greek myth as "a conscious rejection of connubium which was certainly *not* the intention of the original" form of Genesis 34.<sup>114</sup> The main connection between this myth, then, and Genesis 34 is that a large number of people got married. It is true that Hamor offered the possibility of multiple marriages to

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<sup>108</sup> Wyatt, "The Story," 439.

<sup>109</sup> Wyatt, "The Story," 439.

<sup>110</sup> Wyatt translates v. 2 as "And Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite the prince of the land saw her and took her and lay with her and made love to her," 450. See pp. 119-121 *infra* for my critique of this translation.

<sup>111</sup> Wyatt, "The Story," 449. The parts of the existing text of Genesis 34 which, according to Wyatt, comprise this second layer are vv. 4, 6, 9, 15-17, 20, 24 and portions of vv. 2, 10-15, 18, 21-23, 25 and 26.

<sup>112</sup> Wyatt ("The Story," 456) asserts that the Semitic myth addressed the issue of "dynastic origins."

<sup>113</sup> Wyatt, "The Story," 448.

<sup>114</sup> Wyatt, "The Story," 457, italics his.

the Jacob and his sons, but it is not clear that he was suggesting an immediate mass marriage. Circumcision appears to be related more closely to the Shechemites and Jacob and his family becoming one people (v. 16)—with the Shechemite men being prepared to marry the women from Jacob’s family when the occasion arose, rather than all at the same time.<sup>115</sup> Thus Wyatt’s suggestion that the Greek myth reflects a Semitic practice of mass marriage is not necessarily illuminative of the rationale for Hamor’s offer of a marriage treaty to Jacob and his sons.

The last two layers of the story’s composition, Wyatt labels “National” and “Final.”<sup>116</sup> The verses which Wyatt attributes to the “National” layer particularize the story in terms of Jacob and his family. Wyatt sees the purpose of these additions to be that of identifying “the two sides in the conflict as Israelite . . . and non-Israelite” and of describing the sexual encounter between Shechem and Dinah as one by which she has been dishonored.<sup>117</sup> The portions of Genesis 34 which Wyatt assigns to the “Final” phase of the story he contends reflect the time in the Second Temple period when the text was incorporated into the Genesis narrative.<sup>118</sup> Therefore there is a focus in this layer on adding details to Genesis 34 which dovetailed with other biblical texts. Wyatt sees the *purpose* of the final form of the text to be “the legitimation of land-seizure and community isolation from neighbors.”<sup>119</sup> However, such a reading does not reflect the content of Genesis 34, for, in v. 30, Jacob decries the alienation from the surrounding peoples which his sons’ actions have caused. In addition, if Genesis 34 is read in terms

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<sup>115</sup> This latter interpretation is reflected in the misgivings attributed to one of the Shechemite men in *Gen Rabbah*, “Shechem is getting married, why should Magbai get cut?” (*Genesis Rabbah: The Judaic Commentary to the Book of Genesis*. trans. Jacob Neusner [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985], *parashah* 80:8.4C.

<sup>116</sup> The “National” layer includes all of vv. 5, 7-8, 17, 29, 31, and portions of vv. 1, 3, 10, 13, 19, 21, 22, 23, 15, 30. The “Final” layer includes portions of vv. 1, 2, 10, 14, 15, 21, 22, 25, 30, and all of v. 28.

<sup>117</sup> Wyatt, “The Story,” 457.

<sup>118</sup> Wyatt, “The Story,” 457.

<sup>119</sup> Wyatt, “The Story,” 458.



of its canonical setting, Jacob and his family do *not* claim the city of Shechem, but, rather, they flee from the area (Gen 35:1-7).

Thus, Wyatt's interpretive desire to make sense of Genesis 34 in terms a rite of *hieros gamos* leads to a reading which does not account for the content of the text in an adequate manner. It also contributes to a strained reading of words in the text which militate against the argument he wishes to make. Seeing the rite of *hieros gamos* as the ritual basis for what he claims was the original story about Shechem and Dinah leads Wyatt to assert that the presence of the word אָרָץ in vv. 1 and 2 indicates that Dinah and Shechem belonged to the same ethnic group. This is a necessary aspect of a king performing a rite of *hieros gamos* on behalf of his people: the female representing the goddess must have the same ethnic origin, but the fact that the word אָרָץ appears in both vv. 1 and 2 does not imply this about Shechem and Dinah. In both vv. 1 and 2 the land is associated with the local people, not with Dinah.<sup>120</sup>

In addition, in order to make his case in terms of the language used in v. 2, which depicts the sexual encounter between Shechem and Dinah, Wyatt asserts that לָקַח “need not have the sense ‘seize,’” but that “its basic meaning here is ‘to take sexually, as in marriage.’”<sup>121</sup> The second verb, שָׁכַב, according to Wyatt, “lacks any inherent sense of force.”<sup>122</sup> However, since שָׁכַב is followed by אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה here—thus indicating force<sup>123</sup>—he asserts that the reason שָׁכַב is followed by אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה rather than אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה is because “the apparent object pronoun following *wayyishkab* has probably been attracted to this form by the

<sup>120</sup> In v. 1, the land is associated with “the daughters of the land” and, in v. 2, with Shechem as “the son of the chief of the land.”

<sup>121</sup> Wyatt, “The Story,” 435. Wyatt (439, italics his) subsequently decides that לָקַח in v. 2 “has the sense that Shechem took the girl *into his house*.” It must mean one thing or the other; it cannot mean both things in the same verse. It does not have the double valence that *inna* has in 2 Sam 13:12. See Chapter 2, pp. 79-81.

<sup>122</sup> Wyatt, “The Story,” 435.

<sup>123</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 22, n. 73 for places where I discuss אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה שָׁכַב as rape.

earlier use following *lāqah*, and is to be read *'ittâ* (BHS app.).”<sup>124</sup> With this argument Wyatt overlooks the first use of הַתָֹּא in v. 2—after הִרְאָה—and the possibility of there being a stylistic/semantic significance to the use of the pronouns in reference to Dinah in v. 2.<sup>125</sup> As for עָנָה, he asserts that it represents not III עָנָה, but I עָנָה,<sup>126</sup> that is, that it does not have any of the negative implications of III עָנָה but that it reflects I עָנָה in the “generic sense of ‘answer, respond’ (772b), and a subdivision of this is the sexual response of a wife.”<sup>127</sup> However, there is no reference in *BDB* 772b to I עָנָה referring to the sexual response of a wife. There is a reference to the wife’s response in Hos 2:17, which *BDB* glosses as referring to Israel’s being “amenable, docile.”<sup>128</sup> This does not refer to Israel’s sexual response to the LORD, but rather refers to the renewal of the relationship on the basis of its beginning, when Israel, as a recently freed slave population, followed the LORD out of Egypt and into the wilderness in a completely dependent state. Frymer-Kensky notes that, even though God is depicted as the husband of Israel, “God does not behave in sexual ways. . . . God does not kiss, embrace, fondle, or otherwise express physical affection for Israel.”<sup>129</sup> Since God made no sexual overtures to Israel, Israel’s response would not have been sexual in nature. However, in spite of the lack of linguistic support for his assertion, Wyatt pursues his interpretation of עָנָה as “he had intercourse with her” by contending that the Masoretes pointed עָנָה incorrectly.<sup>130</sup> He recognizes that the fact that he has claimed that lovemaking is the meaning of לָקַח, שָׁכַב, and עָנָה might be

<sup>124</sup> Wyatt, “The Story,” 436.

<sup>125</sup> See Chapter 4, pp. 179-180.

<sup>126</sup> “I עָנָה” (*BDB*, 772-773), “answer, respond”; “III עָנָה” (*BDB*, 776), “be bowed down, afflicted.”

<sup>127</sup> Wyatt, “The Story,” 435.

<sup>128</sup> *BDB*, “I עָנָה,” 772.

<sup>129</sup> Frymer-Kensky, “Law,” 240.

<sup>130</sup> Wyatt, “The Story,” 435. Wyatt does not say what the pointing should be, but his argument that עָנָה represents the sexual response of a wife indicates that he is interpreting עָנָה in the *hip ‘il*; that is, “he caused her to respond.” However, *BDB* lists only one use of I עָנָה in the *hip ‘il*, Eccl 5:19, which the editors of *BDB* regard as “wholly dubious,” 773a.

seen as “an overloading of the text,” but, according to him, “each term actually contributes a distinctive element in the narrative and a successive stage in the action.”<sup>131</sup> However, he does not explain what these distinctive elements are or what successive stages in the action each of these verbs meaning “to have intercourse with” represents. His assertion that they simply do convey these things contributes to his summation concerning  $\eta\eta\eta$ —that it means that Shechem “made love to” Dinah,<sup>132</sup> as befits a king performing a rite of *hieros gamos*. This reflects Wyatt’s interpretive desire in relation to Genesis 34—to make sense of the text in terms of a rite of *hieros gamos*.

### **Joseph Fleishman and Mayer Gruber**

In his article on Genesis 34, “Shechem and Dinah—in the Light of Non-Biblical and Biblical Sources,” Joseph Fleishman asserts that Shechem abducted Dinah at a festival of Shechemite girls.<sup>133</sup> According to Fleishman, Shechem did this because he wanted to marry Dinah but he “was aware of Jacob’s separatism and expected Jacob not to consent.”<sup>134</sup> Fleishman’s interpretation of Genesis 34 indicates that he thinks that Shechem’s approach was successful because he claims that Jacob accepted the ‘marriage’ of Shechem and Dinah “as the best solution under the difficult circumstances.”<sup>135</sup> However, this is problematic for Fleishman because it means that Jacob agreed to something that “his forefathers Abraham and Isaac” did not acquiesce to and that was to marry their children to Canaanites.<sup>136</sup> In addition, it means that Jacob agreed to marry his daughter to a rapist. *Viewing this as inappropriate behavior for a patriarch and a father,*

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<sup>131</sup> Wyatt, “The Story,” 436.

<sup>132</sup> Wyatt, “The Story,” 436. For  $\eta\eta\eta$  as “to have sexual intercourse with” in Ezek 22:10, see Chapter 2, pp. 74-76.

<sup>133</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 12.

<sup>134</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 28.

<sup>135</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 29, 30.

<sup>136</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 31.

*Fleishman seeks in his analysis of Genesis 34 to rehabilitate Jacob's image by rehabilitating Shechem's image.* Since Fleishman cannot undo Shechem's ethnicity and in that way restore Jacob's image as a patriarch, what is left to him is the legitimization of Shechem's behavior. Then at least Jacob can be shown not to have agreed to marry his daughter to a man who was merely a rapist rather than to a man who resorted to abduction and rape because he was afraid that he would not be allowed to marry the girl he desired. Fleishman asserts that "Jacob is willing to accept the solution proposed by Shechem because Dinah was not abducted for rape, and Shechem does not abandon her after the deed."<sup>137</sup>

The reasons that Fleishman gives for Jacob's acceptance of Shechem's solution can be seen—at least in part—as a response to Horst Seebass's observation in his exposition in *TDOT* of *hlq* that "merely taking a woman . . . is a base act (Gen.34:2)."<sup>138</sup> If Fleishman is to going to rehabilitate Shechem's image, then he must remove the baseness that Seebass attributes to Shechem's behavior. Thus, he asserts that Shechem resorted to abduction as a means of marrying Dinah. That Fleishman's interpretational goal is proving this assertion can be seen in his description of what he terms "abduction marriage." He states that

[a]mong various peoples in the ancient Near East . . . at times an abduction was carried out in order to bring about a legal marriage. . . . In an abduction marriage, *the female was forcibly removed* from the custody of her parents. . . . *Usually this was followed by . . . a forcible carnal connection between the abductor and the female . . . .* Nevertheless, the abductor could become the legal husband finally.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Fleishman, "Shechem," 31.

<sup>138</sup> Horst Seebass (*Halaq TDOT*, 8: 16-21). Fleishman cites Seebass on p. 22, n. 43.

<sup>139</sup> Fleishman, "Shechem," 12, italics mine.

The contents of this quote contain the rationale for Fleishman's analysis. What Fleishman wants to prove is that Shechem's abduction of Dinah followed by coitus comprised the means by which Shechem chose to marry her and, "since the abduction was carried out in order to bring about a legal marriage between a man and a woman, the abduction should not be deemed part of an act of rape."<sup>140</sup> If Fleishman can show this to have been the case with Shechem and Dinah, then, when Jacob agreed to Dinah's marriage to Shechem, he was only acquiescing to what generally was recognized as a legitimate marriage.

### **Redefining rape:**

Fleishman's first step down this interpretive path is to define rape as he asserts it was defined in "the ancient Near East (including biblical Israel)."<sup>141</sup> His first definition of 'rape' is based on Deut 22: 25-27<sup>142</sup> and is defined as "an act that has occurred when full sexual relations are forced upon a woman by a man without his having the legal right to have such relations with her."<sup>143</sup> Even though rape occurs in the scenario that Fleishman presents here, it is *not* the "forced full sexual relations" that he is referring to as "rape," but, rather, the lack of the man's *right* to rape. Since the English word "rape" refers to forced sexual contact, then the word "rape" cannot be used to describe what Fleishman defines as illegal here: that is, a man raping a woman without the legal *right* to do so.

Via this first definition of 'rape,' Fleishman seeks to demonstrate that Shechem's taking of Dinah constituted the first step in his marriage to her and that the forced "full sexual relations" which followed finalized the marriage. Fleishman is correct concerning what constituted the establishment of a legitimate marriage in the culture reflected in the

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<sup>140</sup> Fleishman, "Shechem," 13.

<sup>141</sup> Fleishman, "Shechem," 12.

<sup>142</sup> Fleishman does not cite Deut 22:25-27, but refers his readers to Frymer-Kensky, "Law," 252, n. 9 and Pressler, *The View*, 38, n. 49. Both of these scholars are referring to Deut 22:25-27 in these notes.

<sup>143</sup> Fleishman, "Shechem," 12-13.

Deuteronomic marriage laws: acquisition of the female, followed by coitus.<sup>144</sup> This explains Fleishman's desire to demonstrate that Shechem's taking of Dinah constituted the first step in his marrying her. Then Shechem's coitus with her would consist of the second step in the process of making the marriage legitimate. What Fleishman fails to acknowledge, however, is that in the culture reflected in the Deuteronomic laws (and in Exodus) the right to have sex with a female was acquired via *payment* of a bride-price to the owner of that female's sexual function, *not via abduction*. (See *infra*).

Fleishman's second definition of 'rape' is based on Deut 22:28-29<sup>145</sup> and is defined as "when the act is carried out without the knowledge and consent of the father of the girl."<sup>146</sup> This implies that whatever the 'act' is—rape or consensual sex—so long as the girl's father agreed to it, it would be legal. This was possible in the legal system reflected in Deut 22:13-29, but it is *not* possible in the North American legal system. In that system the word "rape" represents the lack of consent of victims of sexual assault, not the lack of consent of others to their being assaulted.<sup>147</sup> Once again, Fleishman's definition of "rape" does not fit the meaning of this word as it is used in English and therefore the English word "rape" cannot be used to define what Fleishman is describing: sexual contact with a girl without the consent of her father.

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<sup>144</sup> Bernard Levinson ("Deuteronomy" in *The Jewish Study Bible* [ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004], 412, n. 7; 418, n. 28) describes the establishment of a legal marriage as a "two-step process:" first the man purchased the right to the female's sexual function; then his coitus with her finalized the marriage.

<sup>145</sup> Fleishman does not cite Deut 22:28-29 directly, but refers his readers to Pressler (*The View*, 37, n. 46). Reference to the body of Pressler's text reveals that the text she is referring to in her note is Deut 22:28-29.

<sup>146</sup> Fleishman, "Shechem," 13.

<sup>147</sup> On November 20, 2007, Warren Jeffs, the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints leader, started serving a sentence of ten years to life for his conviction on two counts of being an accomplice to rape for arranging the 'marriages' of underage girls to adult males. See Chapter 5, p. 223, n. 94. In the case of statutory rape, the consent of a minor does not constitute consent. The scenario presented by Fleishman does not include anything similar to statutory rape, because the scenario that he presents has to do with a person other than the girl herself consenting to sexual contact with her.

With his second definition of ‘rape’ a problem arises for Fleishman. Since the sexual relations between Dinah and Shechem *did* take place without Jacob’s knowledge or consent, then Shechem is guilty of ‘rape,’ according to Fleishman’s second definition of ‘rape.’ However, Fleishman is able to mitigate the guilt which would be attributable to Shechem according to this second definition of ‘rape’ via a third definition of ‘rape,’ which is based on Bechtel’s interpretation of Deut 22:28-29.<sup>148</sup> Fleishman’s third definition of ‘rape’ as “an act that has occurred . . . when the sexual relations are not intended to create a legal bond between the man and the woman”<sup>149</sup> serves to undo the effects of his second definition of ‘rape;’ that is, this third definition, stated positively, suggests that a male *can* have sexual relations with a female without the consent of the female’s father if he intends for such sexual relations to constitute the finalization of a marriage. However, once again the word “rape” cannot be used to describe or define such a situation. Since in this scenario the sexual relations are not described as forced, the situation has nothing to do with the English word “rape.”<sup>150</sup>

In terms of Deut 22:28-29, Fleishman arrives at his definition of ‘rape’ via the verb, *tps* which, according to him, denotes the abduction of a female and the subsequent coitus undertaken “not for purposes of rape *in the usual sense of the term*, but for the purpose of marriage.”<sup>151</sup> Fleishman arrives at his conclusion concerning the significance of the use of *tps* with *עַם בְּכַחֵּשׁ* in Deut 22:28-29 through a comparison of Deut 22:28-29 to

<sup>148</sup> Fleishman refers to Bechtel’s article, “What If Dinah Is Not Raped,” on p. 12, n. 2.

<sup>149</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 12, 13. This definition reflects Lyn Bechtel’s analysis of Deut 22:28-29. (See Chapter 4, pp. 156-157).

<sup>150</sup> See Chapter 5, p. 230, n. 115, for the aspect of *force* as essential to the definition of the English word “rape.”

<sup>151</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 24, italics mine. Fleishman acknowledges here that his definitions of ‘rape’ do not correspond to the meaning of “rape”—not only in English, but *universally*. See p. 129 *infra*. Even though on p. 128 Fleishman uses the word “usually” in his acknowledgement that rape refers to forced sexual contact, he cites no human society in which there is no concept of forced sexual contact corresponding to the English word “rape.”

Exod 22:15-16 and Deut 22:25-27. To Fleishman, both Exod 22:15-16 and Deut 22:28-29 provide examples of “marriages without the consent of parents carried out either by elopement or by the abduction of the girl.”<sup>152</sup> Fleishman focuses on the issue of the consent of the parents because of his desire to demonstrate that the mere taking of a girl into one’s possession can result in a legitimate marriage—that parental consent was not required. However, the Exodus passage proves just the opposite. The couple is not married unless her father agrees to it. Nonetheless, the Exodus passage provides Fleishman with his example of marriage by elopement. Deut 22:28-29 provides Fleishman with his example of marriage by abduction. That Deut 22:28-29 represents marriage by abduction is confirmed for him by comparison of these two verses to the two which precede it. In Deut 22:25-27, the verb *hzq* represents the force with which the rapist seizes his victim. Unlike Washington, who recognizes that the different terminology in Deut 22: 25-27 and Deut 22:28-29 is merely two different ways of representing rape,<sup>153</sup> Fleishman finds in the difference between the two verbs used in the two passages the special significance that he attaches to *tps* which precedes coitus: taking for the purpose of marriage. However, the different terminology used in the two passages is attributable to the fact that these laws are part of a *collection* of laws found in Deut 22:13-29 regarding unlawful coitus.<sup>154</sup> Since the collection of laws in Deut 22:13-29 is not regarded as having been composed by one hand at one particular time, then it is possible for there to be different words representing force within this one pericope.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 23.

<sup>153</sup> Washington (“Lest,” 208) asserts that “most observers today would recognize the two instances of force in the text as rape; that is, the violent crime of forcing another person to submit to sexual intercourse.”

<sup>154</sup> Fleishman’s analysis here underscores the value of making sense of a pericope in its entirety before using parts of it for an argument one wishes to make.

<sup>155</sup> See Chapter 4, pp. 151-153, for *szq* as representing force in Deut 22:23-24 and pp. 157-158 for *szq* as representing force in Deut 22:28-29. Also for *szq* as force, see Chapter 2, pp. 48-49 and n. 48.



Nonetheless, for Fleishman the evidence that תּפּס עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל denotes “taking for the purpose of marriage” is “hinted at in the word וְנִמְצָא... which notes the fact that the intimate deed became public.”<sup>156</sup> It is the case that וְנִמְצָא indicates “that the intimate deed became public,” but if the man’s abduction of the girl and coitus with her constitute a legitimate marriage, then there is no significance to being found out: the man would expect that his marriage would become public knowledge. What וְנִמְצָא indicates instead is that the rapist is caught in the act and thus can be held accountable. Once again, Fleishman argues the opposite of what the law proposes, as can be seen in his assertion that what the passages in Exod 22:15-16 and in Deut 22:28-29 “have in common is that the legal solution to the intimate relations between the man and the unengaged girl—which relations occurred without her father’s permission, whether willingly or unwillingly on her part—is the marriage of the couple.”<sup>157</sup> As I noted above, Fleishman’s conclusion ignores the fact that in the Exodus passage coitus results in the marriage of the couple *only* if the father agrees to it—*something that Fleishman claims is not necessary to the establishment of a legitimate marriage*. As for the Deut 22:28-29 passage, marriage *does* represent “the legal solution to the intimate relations”—not because the rapist desires such a solution, but because he does not.<sup>158</sup> Therefore תּפּס עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל cannot represent his taking the girl for the purpose of marriage. Neither the Exodus passage nor the Deuteronomic one is concerned with the establishment of a legal marriage without the consent of the girl’s father, but with the remuneration due the father for the theft of his

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<sup>156</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 24.

<sup>157</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 27.

<sup>158</sup> The fact that the rapist is to be married to his victim under duress can be seen in the punishment imposed on him: a steep fine and denial of the possibility of divorcing his victim.

property (Exod) and, where marriage is required, with the establishment of responsibility for the maintenance of the now ‘damaged goods’ (Deut).

Thus it is apparent that, even though the scenarios to which Fleishman refers in order to develop his definitions of ‘rape’ in antiquity include depictions of rape, there is no connection between the English word “rape” and *what is deemed unlawful* in the laws in Deut 22:25-29 to which Fleishman refers.<sup>159</sup> His discussion in connection with his redefinitions of rape indicates this. First, he acknowledges that “the term “rape” in human societies usually refers to sexual intercourse without the consent of the woman.”<sup>160</sup> Then, after relating his three re-definitions of “rape,” he asserts that “thus rape (“in the ancient Near East [including biblical Israel]”<sup>161</sup>) refers to sexual relations between a man and a woman that are in opposition to current laws and practices regarding marriage.”<sup>162</sup>

Fleishman has identified correctly what the laws in Deut 22:25-29 address: coitus deemed unlawful in the shame/honor culture which is reflected in these verses, but what is unlawful is not the rapes which are depicted in these texts. The way to refer to the ‘crimes’ addressed in these laws is *unlawful sexual relations*, because what is addressed in them is *not* the violation of the will of the female, but, rather, the violation of the property rights of another man.<sup>163</sup> Fleishman’s use of the word “rape” in order to define the illegality of what is deemed illegal in Deut 22:25-29 can be attributed to the fact that

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<sup>159</sup> Pressler (*The View*, 37, n. 46) notes that “the woman’s consent or lack of consent comes into play in determining whether she, as well as the male offender, is guilty of the violation of the claims of her husband, prospective husband, or father.” Washington (“Lest,” 208) is correct in his assessment of Deut 22:23-29—that they are not “rape laws;” that is, they are not laws designed to punish a rapist for the physical, psychological, spiritual, and mental harm he inflicts on his victim. They are designed to punish the rapist—and his victim (vv. 23-23)—for the *social* harm the rapist has inflicted on the victim’s betrothed or for the *financial* harm the rapist has inflicted on the owner of an uncontracted girl’s sexual function (Deut 22: 28-29).

<sup>160</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 12.

<sup>161</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 12.

<sup>162</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 13.

<sup>163</sup> Gerstenberger (*TDOT* 11: 237) notes that the rapist “has violated a legal asset.”

he is not focused on the experience of rape victims,<sup>164</sup> but rather on the normalization of Shechem's behavior in line with what he asserts were the cultural norms of Shechem's time.

In the aftermath of his efforts to recast Shechem's rape of Dinah as the second step in the establishment of a legitimate marriage, Fleishman proceeds to undo the rape altogether simply by not referring to their coitus in terms that indicate that this sexual contact was forced. He refers to Shechem's "engag[ing] in intimate relations with her,"<sup>165</sup> to his "ha[v]ing] sexual relations with her"<sup>166</sup> and to his "lying with her."<sup>167</sup>

Fleishman finds textual verification of his proposal in his assessment that "even Shechem's feelings after he had lain with her imply that Dinah was not raped."<sup>168</sup> Fleishman makes this assertion after his previous acknowledgement—in his description of what he terms abduction marriage and in his discussion of the verb *tps*—that Shechem had, in fact, raped Dinah. With this assertion, Fleishman indicates that what is of significance in his reconstruction of the events depicted in Genesis 34 is not Dinah's intentions or feelings, but Shechem's: not just his intentions—as construed by Fleishman and outlined above—but also the feelings which Fleishman attributes to him. Fleishman acknowledges that Dinah has negative feelings about what has occurred.<sup>169</sup> However, when it comes to determining the significance of what took place, her intentions, her feelings do not matter.

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<sup>164</sup> Gravett ("Reading," 298) notes that "reading 'rape' . . . locates readers within an experience of personal, sexual, emotional, and societal violation by acknowledging the lived reality of a character/group."

<sup>165</sup> Fleishman, "Shechem," 27, 29.

<sup>166</sup> Fleishman, "Shechem," 28, 29.

<sup>167</sup> Fleishman, "Shechem," 29.

<sup>168</sup> Fleishman, "Shechem," 28. Fleishman's conclusion here points to the reality that to interpret Shechem's behavior positively after his raping Dinah is to, in a very real sense, acquit him of rape.

<sup>169</sup> Fleishman ("Shechem," 28) recognizes that *וְדִנָּה* at the end of v. 2 "enables a brief, clear and unequivocal sense of Dinah's internal view and status. It points to the mental condition of Dinah," which Fleishman views as negative in response to what Shechem has done to her.

### **The meaning of the verb לקח in Genesis 34:2**

A question comes to mind in connection with Fleishman's claims about the connotations of תפש in Deut 22:28-29: if תפש represents what the author of Genesis 34 meant to convey about Shechem's treatment of Dinah, why did he not say so by using the word תפש in v. 2 instead of using the word לקח? This question most likely did not occur to Fleishman because he is focused on the presence of לקח in v. 2 as the linchpin of his argument; that is, that לקח in v. 2 represents Shechem's taking of Dinah as the first step in the establishment of a legitimate marriage. Fleishman arrives at this conclusion via Mayer Gruber's analysis of Genesis 34, in which Gruber asserts that לקח אִתָּהּ represents Shechem's marrying Dinah. It is worthwhile, then, to examine Gruber's claims concerning the meaning of לקח אִתָּהּ in Gen 34:2.

### **Gruber's argument concerning the meaning of לקח אִתָּהּ**

Gruber's interpretive desire is to demonstrate that Simeon and Levi's anger was fueled by the exogamous marriage of Shechem and Dinah and not by the rape of their sister.<sup>170</sup> In order to fulfill his desire, Gruber endeavors to show that לקח אִתָּהּ represents Shechem's legitimate marriage to Dinah and not his raping her.<sup>171</sup> In pursuit of this goal, Gruber asserts that לקח אִתָּהּ in v. 2 refers to Shechem's taking Dinah as a wife because, "throughout the whole Bible, לקח אשה (took a woman) is interpreted as נשא אשה (married a woman)."<sup>172</sup>

There are two drawbacks to Gruber's claim. First, every case which I researched where "acquiring a wife" is referred to,<sup>173</sup> a pronoun is not used, as it is in Gen 34:2—

<sup>170</sup> Gruber, "A Re-examination," 127.

<sup>171</sup> Gruber, "A Re-examination," 127.

<sup>172</sup> Gruber, "A Re-examination," 121.

with one exception: Deut 20:7.<sup>174</sup> In this verse, in the laws of warfare where reference is made to a man who has purchased a wife but has not yet consummated the marriage, the construction is *לָקַחָהּ*. Here the grammatical construction is that of a pronoun suffix on the verb, but the reference is not to marriage simply by taking a female and having intercourse with her, as Gruber is suggesting is the case with *לָקַח אִתָּהּ* followed by *וַיִּשְׁכַּב*. In Deut 20:7, the *man already has purchased his wife* (*אִרְשָׁהּ*). He just has not consummated the marriage. The law instructs him to return home and do just that, “lest he die in battle and another man take her.” *לָקַח* in Deut 20:7 refers to the legitimate process for “taking a wife to/for oneself,” because the bride-price already had been paid: all that remained was for the groom to take the bride home and have intercourse with her, thus finalizing the marriage. Referring to marrying a woman as “taking (*לָקַח*) her to/for oneself as a wife” is used at least fifteen times in the MT—three times in Genesis 34 alone: in vv. 4, 9, and 16.<sup>175</sup> This suggests that, if the author had wished to convey that Shechem’s taking of Dinah constituted his marrying her, *וַיִּשְׁכַּב* would have been used in v. 2 of Genesis 34, as well as in v. 4. The fact that the formulaic phrase is used in v. 4 indicates that this is the point at which Shechem seeks to make Dinah his wife, not in v. 2, in which *לָקַח* merely describes his seizing her.

A second drawback to Gruber’s argument that Shechem’s *לָקַח* of Dinah represents his marrying her is his assertion that *וַיִּשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ* following *וַיִּלְקַח אִתָּהּ* is the equivalent of *וַיִּשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ* coming after *וַיִּלְקַח אִתָּהּ*.<sup>176</sup> Gruber asserts that *וַיִּשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ* coming after *וַיִּלְקַח אִתָּהּ* occurs “a

<sup>173</sup> Thirty-one references in all. Gen 4:19; 6:2; 11:29; 12:19; 24:4, 7, 38, 40, 48, 67; 25:1; 26:34; 27:46; 28:1, 2, 34:4. Exod 2:1; 6:20, 23; 21:10. Lev 21:7. Deut 20:7; 22:13; 23:1; 24:1, 3, 4. Judg 19:1. Hos 1:2.

<sup>174</sup> In the other twenty-nine cases, either the noun *אִשָּׁה* is used or there is a reference to an actual person.

<sup>175</sup> In addition to the use of this grammatical construction in Genesis 34, it is also found in Gen 4:19, 6:2, 11:29, 12:19, 28:2; Exod 6:20, 23, 21:10; Deut 24:3, 4; Judg 19:1; Hos 1:2.

<sup>176</sup> Gruber, “A Re-examination,” 122.

few times in the Bible.”<sup>177</sup> He actually cites only one instance of such a grammatical occurrence: the one found in Deut 22:13. However, in support of **וּבָא אֶל־יָהּ** referring to the consummation of a marriage, he also cites Gen 29:21, where Jacob requests that Laban give him “[his] wife...that [he] might go into her” and also Ruth 4:13, which refers to Boaz’s going into Ruth. All three of the references cited by Gruber refer to **וּבָא אֶל־יָהּ** as the consummation of a marriage, thus lending support to his claim concerning the significance of **וּבָא אֶל־יָהּ** following **לָקַח אִשָּׁה**. However, his claim concerning the equivalency of this grammatical construction to the grammatical construction of **לָקַח אִשָּׁה** followed by **וַיָּשָׁב אֶת־יָהּ** is not supported by the other uses of **וַיָּשָׁב אֶת־יָהּ** in the MT, which, as my examination of this grammatical construction shows, do not refer to the consummation of a marriage.<sup>178</sup>

### **Abduction marriage**

Fleishman accepts Gruber’s assertion that **לָקַח אִשָּׁה** refers to Shechem’s marrying Dinah, because Gruber’s assertion as to the meaning of **לָקַח אִשָּׁה** in Gen 34:2 serves as the basis for Fleishman’s contention “that this was an alternative means of marriage: by abduction.”<sup>179</sup> In addition to the linguistic analyses which he undertakes, Fleishman seeks to demonstrate via cultural analysis that a man’s taking a female without having paid for the ownership rights to her sexuality could result in a legal marriage in antiquity. He cites laws from several ancient Near Eastern law codes as evidence for this. Then, as additional support for his contention that abduction marriage was a legitimate form of marriage, he cites rabbinical literature, and, from the Bible itself, the story in Judges 21 of the abduction of the girls from Shiloh.

<sup>177</sup> Gruber, “A Re-examination,” 127.

<sup>178</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 22, n. 73, for the places where I have explicated **וַיָּשָׁב אֶת־יָהּ** as representing rape.

<sup>179</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 27.

### Hittite laws

Fleishman first cites Hittite laws which he asserts “seem to intimate that abducting a young woman for the purpose of marriage was a phenomenon that existed and required a legal decision regarding its legal status.”<sup>180</sup> The first Hittite laws which he cites *are* indicative of his claim that the abduction of a female required adjudication, but the basis of the adjudication was not whether or not the resultant cohabitation was legal without parental consent, which, apparently it was. Rather, the laws are focused on assuring that a man who had purchased a bride be compensated for his financial loss should she be abducted by another man or should her father give her to someone else. In his interpretation of this law, Fleishman focuses on the issue of parental consent because he wishes to show that *lqh* in Gen 34:2 represents Shechem’s legitimate marrying of Dinah—without Jacob’s consent.

Another Hittite law that Fleishman adduces states that “if anyone runs off with a woman, and a group of supporters goes after them, if three men or two men are killed, there shall be no compensation. You (singular) have become a wolf.”<sup>181</sup> The point of the law is to establish that if any of the supporters of the abductor is killed in an attempt by the woman’s supporters to retrieve her from her abductor, the families of those killed are not allowed to seek compensation for their deaths because they had acted in support of someone who had behaved like a wolf stealing a lamb from the flock.<sup>182</sup> However, what Fleishman infers from this law is “that the young woman’s parents could not nullify the marriage after the occurrence of intimate relations between the abductor and his

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<sup>180</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 15.

<sup>181</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 16.

<sup>182</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 17, n. 23.

victim.”<sup>183</sup> This is a possible reason for the parents trying to prevent sexual relations between their daughter and her abductor from occurring, but this law does not provide evidence that an abduction marriage could not be nullified if coitus between the abductor and his victim had occurred. Fleishman’s inference in relation to this Hittite law can be attributed to his desire to depict Jacob’s supposed agreement to Dinah’s marriage to Shechem as Jacob’s acquiescence to a situation that was irreversible because of Shechem’s intercourse with Dinah after he abducted her.

### **The Laws of Eshnunna and the Laws of Hammurabi**

Fleishman next cites two laws—one from the *Laws of Eshnunna* and one from the *Laws of Hammurabi*—which do not recognize cohabitation as constituting a legal marriage. What Fleishman finds significant about these two laws is that, according to him, in contrast to these Mesopotamian laws, “biblical law finds a way to create a legal marriage out of the situation.”<sup>184</sup> The problem with his comparison is that the biblical laws that Fleishman refers to (Exod 22:15-16 and Deut 22:28-29) do not address a situation in which a couple necessarily has cohabited. The scenario presented in the Exodus law addresses a situation in which a girl perhaps has attempted to be proactive in determining who her mate would be by having intercourse with the man of her choice. The issue addressed here, then, is the prevention of a girl’s circumventing the will of her father in terms of determining whom she married, for the law determines that coitus does not constitute a legal marriage—only the father’s acceptance of a bride-price, thus indicating his consent, could result in a legal marriage. As for the law in Deuteronomy, it creates a marriage where none is desired. There is no issue in the Deuteronomic law

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<sup>183</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 17.

<sup>184</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 24.



concerning whether or not cohabitation constituted a legal marriage. *Pace* the claims Fleishman makes, the Mesopotamian laws provide a way to create a marriage. In order for the cohabiting couple to have their union regarded as legal, it is only necessary for the appropriate funds to change hands.<sup>185</sup> Apparently, Fleishman would like to make the point that in addition to Shechem's abduction of Dinah, followed by coitus, her presence in Shechem's house was all part of a legal marriage without parental consent. This was possible in Hittite law, but not in the law codes of Eshnunna, Hammurabi, or Exodus.

### **Rabbinical literature**

In terms of the rabbinical literature which he adduces, Fleishman cites two cases from the Talmud which deal with the abduction of betrothed girls. In the first case, the question addressed is whether or not the children born to the couple who cohabited as a result of the abduction were legitimate. Hillel's answer in the affirmative was based on the woman's original marriage contract, which read "when she shall enter my house she will become my wife, according to the law of Moses and Israel."<sup>186</sup> Fleishman concludes from Hillel's decision that the woman's "abduction for the purpose of marriage and the sexual relations she had with the abductor rendered her betrothal null and void."<sup>187</sup> This is the result of Hillel's decision, but his decision does not represent a blanket acceptance

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<sup>185</sup> Pressler (*The View*, 11) asserts that "marriage in the ancient Near East normally involved a contractual arrangement between the groom or his parents and the parents of the bride....[T]he existence of such a contract determined whether the relationship between a man and a woman was considered a legal marriage." She cites as evidence for her assertion two of the laws cited by Fleishman (§27 of *The Laws of Eshnunna* and §128 of *The Laws of Hammurabi*) and Reuven Yaron (*The Laws of Eshnunna*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev.ed. [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988], 200-205). Pressler (32, n. 30) finds validation of this reality in biblical literature in the fact that in 2 Sam 3:14 "David bases his demand that Michal be returned to him on the fact that he paid the bride-wealth for her." Pressler further notes that the verb *arash* [translated into English as "to be, become engaged, betrothed," *HALOT* 1: 91] "involves payment . . . . BDB [77] . . . suggests it literally has to do with "paying the price of."

<sup>186</sup> Fleishman, "Shechem," 19. Hillel's decision was based on the technicality that the woman had in fact entered the home of her abductor and not that of the man to whom she had been betrothed. He ruled this way in order that the children of the couple not be declared illegitimate.

<sup>187</sup> Fleishman, "Shechem," 20.

of abduction for the purpose of marriage, for other rabbis decided against the couple in whose favor Hillel ruled, declaring instead that a man cannot make a woman his wife merely by cohabiting with her. He must pay the bride-price for her. Quidd. 9b *does* recognize cohabitation “as one of the three legal methods of acquiring a wife,”<sup>188</sup> but Fleishman does not cite this decision.

The other Talmudic case which Fleishman adduces—in which a bride is snatched from her bridal chair and carried away—does not result in a legally recognized marriage.<sup>189</sup> Even though the second Talmudic case he cites does not result in a decision favorable to the case Fleishman is making concerning abduction marriage, he seems to have referred to it because the impropriety recorded there put him in mind of other improprieties which might occur on occasions connected with betrothal and marriage. With the wedding misdeed in mind, Fleishman adduces a *mishna* which describes young women dancing in the vineyards during fall festival days in order for the young men to choose a wife.<sup>190</sup> The indication is that the young men were to convey their preferences to their fathers who would take their preferences into account when arranging their sons’ marriages. What this Tannaitic source implies to Fleishman, however, is that what occurred in the second Talmudic case might occur in this situation: that is, that “instances of elopement or of abduction for purposes of marriage” might occur due to “romantic

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<sup>188</sup> Bernard Grossfeld (*Targum Neofiti 1: An Exegetical Commentary to Genesis* [New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 2000], 165) notes that on the basis of Gen 20:2 “Talmudic law recognized “cohabitation” as one of the three legal methods of acquiring a wife.” Fleishman may not have cited this case because it is based on Abimelech’s “sending for and taking Sarah” from Abraham. This is just as much an abduction as Shechem’s abduction of Dinah, but the method used is not the same; therefore Fleishman may not have felt that it helped him make his case. Other examples of the kind of abduction of which Sarah was the victim are Bathsheba’s victimization by David who sent messengers for her who took her to him and Madge, who was escorted to the home of her rapist and murderer, Steve, by one of his aides. Once there, she found herself alone in the company of four men who prevented her from leaving. See Chapter 6, pp. 294-295.

<sup>189</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 20.

<sup>190</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 20.

connections” that might be made “between and a young woman and a man.”<sup>191</sup> Romantic connections resulting in elopement or abduction arising from such occasions were certainly a possibility, but, according to the rabbinical literature that Fleishman himself adduces, such romantic involvement would not lead to legitimate marriages, because “the rabbis . . . declared . . . cohabitation to be an act of mere fornication.”<sup>192</sup>

In spite of the rabbinical ruling that cohabitation could not result in a legal marriage, the scenario suggested to Fleishman by the image of the “daughters of Jerusalem”<sup>193</sup> dancing before the eyes of their potential husbands becomes the scenario that is basic to his argument concerning the validity of Shechem’s treatment of Dinah. Fleishman claims that “Shechem indeed abducted Dinah at a festival of the “daughters of the land” [and] he did so for the purpose of marriage.”<sup>194</sup> He arrives at this conclusion in the following way: in his initial sentence in his opening paragraph on this topic, he suggests “that the words “to gaze at the daughters of the land” hint that what happened between Shechem and Dinah can be understood against the background of special festivities for girls that we learn about from biblical<sup>195</sup> and other sources.”<sup>196</sup> By the end of this same paragraph, he declares that “even though the text does not state so specifically, it seems that one can understand the appellation “daughters of the land” at the beginning of our story as a hint at the agitation of the narrator because Dinah went to

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<sup>191</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 21.

<sup>192</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 20.

<sup>193</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 20.

<sup>194</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 12.

<sup>195</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 26, n. 57. The biblical sources that he adduces are “those hinted at in Isa 16,10; Jer 31,4f; Song of Songs,” and the occasion of the girls dancing at Shiloh as described in Judges 21.

<sup>196</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 26. The other sources which are suggestive of this to him are Late Sumerian literature with its “motif of a meeting between men and women at a festival” and Josephus who states that “Dinah went to Shechem on a holiday,” 26, n. 58.

these Canaanite festivals.”<sup>197</sup> Thus, in one short paragraph, Canaanite festivals are introduced into Genesis 34 and Dinah is seen to be in attendance at one of these festivals. In the next paragraph of Fleishman’s analysis, Shechem is seen to be at this festival as well, because “it was only natural that the young men went to look at young women,”<sup>198</sup> just as—though Fleishman does not say so directly—the young men described in the Tannaitic text went to see the daughters of Jerusalem dancing. Fleishman has suggested the possibilities of what can happen in such a setting: romantic connections leading to elopement or abduction. As for what happened at the festival at which we are now envisioning Shechem and Dinah to be in attendance, Fleishman suggests that this is what took place: “at this event . . . Shechem saw Dinah and desired her (v. 8). He abducted her . . . and had sexual relations with her some place.”<sup>199</sup> According to Fleishman, Shechem’s “grabb[ing]” of Dinah was “not to rape her but to transfer her to his possession by marrying her, and afterwards he engaged in intimate relations with her.”<sup>200</sup>

### **The Bible**

For validation from the Bible that Shechem’s taking of Dinah constituted the establishment of a legal marriage to her, Fleishman turns to the story in Judges 21 of the abduction by the Benjaminites of the Shilonite girls. The abduction of the Shilonite girls was necessitated by the fact that “*every woman of the Benjaminites had been annihilated*” in the war of the other Israelite tribes against the Benjaminites (Judg 21:16). Because of the vow that the Israelites had made before going into battle against the

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<sup>197</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 26. For other analysts who see in the reference to the “daughters of the land” a pejorative assessment of Dinah’s motive for going out, see n. 83 *supra*.

<sup>198</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 26.

<sup>199</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 27.

<sup>200</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 27.

Benjaminites that they would not marry any of their daughters to a Benjaminite, females from the tribes of Israel could not be *given* to the Benjaminites, they would have to be *taken*. Four hundred girls were taken from Jabesh-Gilead, whose other inhabitants were annihilated for refusing to participate in the war against the Benjaminites (Judg 21:8-12). But this meant that the Benjaminites were still two hundred short: thus the plan to take the girls from Shiloh. If the girls were *taken*, then the Shilonites would not be guilty of breaking their vow not to *give* their daughters to the Benjaminites.

In his discussion of the abduction of the Shilonite girls, Fleishman recognizes that “the narrative (in Judges) makes it clear . . . that the necessity for marriages by abduction of the women stemmed from the particular circumstances at the time. Therefore one cannot conclude that this was one of the accepted means of marriage among the Israelites.”<sup>201</sup> Yet, in the very next sentence, he avers that “the advice of the Elders leads one to believe that the abduction of a woman for the purpose of marriage was known to them, and that at times the Israelites did consider it legitimate.”<sup>202</sup> On the contrary, the advice of the Elders indicates just how illegitimate they knew what they were recommending to the Benjaminites was, for in Judg 21:20b-21 the Elders advise the Benjaminites to “lie in wait (אָרַב) in the vineyards and watch (רָאָה), and, look, if the young women of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, then come out (יֵצֵא) of the vineyards and grab (הִטָּה) for yourselves—each of you—his woman from the young women of Shiloh and go to (הֵלֵךְ) the land of Benjamin.” In her article addressing the events described in Judges 21, Alice Bach notes that “the verb אָרַב . . . is used to describe the Philistines lying in wait to ambush Samson [and] Joshua[’s] . . . ambush [of] Ai and

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<sup>201</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 23.

<sup>202</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 23.

its king. . . . The only other biblical use of the verb is found in Psalm 10:9: . . . “they lurk in secret [אַרְבַּ] like a lion in its covert; they lurk that they may carry off [הִטְטֵר] the poor.”<sup>203</sup>

The unsavory nature of what the Elders were advising the Benjaminites to do can be seen in each of these other uses of the verb אַרְבַּ. Like a lion waiting to pounce on its prey and drag it away, the Benjaminites will pounce and grab and run away with the Shilonite girls. That this grabbing is not legitimate can be seen in the Elders’ prediction that the fathers and brothers of the girls will come to complain about what has happened, at which point the Elders will say to them, “Show them mercy because we did not take his wife for each man in battle; neither did you give them to them [or] at this time you would be guilty” (Judg 21:22). Following the Elders’ advice, the Benjaminites abducted the girls from Shiloh and took as wives (וַיִּשְׂאוּ נָשִׁים) the number that they needed “from the dancers whom they had stolen” (גָּזְלוּ).<sup>204</sup> Fleishman notes that “the verb נָשָׂא “to marry”. . . is a legal term for a legitimate marriage,”<sup>205</sup> which it is, but the legitimacy of the marriages of the Benjaminite men to the Shilonite girls is undermined by the narrator’s last word on the topic: “stolen.”

### **Why are marriage negotiations necessary?**

The similarity of the situation in Judges 21 to the scenario which Fleishman has constructed for Genesis 34 helps to explain why Judges 21 recommended itself to him for comparison to Genesis 34. In asserting that Shechem’s taking of Dinah and subsequent intercourse with her constituted his legitimate marriage to her, Fleishman is faced with the problem that Shechem asks his father Hamor to get Dinah for him as a wife. If she is his wife already, then why is this necessary? According to Fleishman, Shechem does this

<sup>203</sup> Alice Bach, “Rereading the Body Politic: Women and Violence in Judges 21.” *BI* 6 (1998), 10.

<sup>204</sup> What happened to the rest of the girls whom they had stolen?

<sup>205</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 22.

because “he wishes for her family to agree to the marriage, not because this is necessary in order for Dinah to be considered his wife, but in order to mitigate the anger of Dinah’s family about their daughter being taken for marriage without their permission”<sup>206</sup>— just as the anger of the fathers and brothers in Judges 21 needed to be assuaged due to the Benjaminites taking their daughters/sisters for the purpose of marriage without their permission. However, Shechem’s offer of a bride-price indicates that he is not assuaging the anger of Dinah’s family, but rather seeking to pay the bride-price which would make his possession of Dinah legitimate according to the mores reflected in the MT.<sup>207</sup>

The elaborate conflation of extra-textual with biblical sources which Fleishman brings to his reading of Genesis 34 leads one to ask: if the author wanted to tell the story which Fleishman sees encapsulated in the verb  $\text{קָבַץ}$ , why did he not do so, instead of telling the story he did tell? What is evident in Fleishman’s interpretation of Genesis 34 is his desire to make Shechem’s behavior legitimate in order to make what Fleishman perceives as Jacob’s acceptance of Shechem’s marriage to Dinah an acceptable decision on the part of the patriarch.

### **The effect of interpretive desire on interpretation**

The analyses of the eight scholars whose work I reviewed in this chapter make it clear that, if analysts’ interpretive desires are to be tempered at all by the compositional desires of those who composed the texts they are analyzing, then the *content* of the texts

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<sup>206</sup> Fleishman, “Shechem,” 28.

<sup>207</sup> See n. 185 *supra*.

under consideration must be taken into account in its “wholeness and its complexity.”<sup>208</sup>

Jon Levenson’s critique of Liberation Theology helps to demonstrate the importance of such an approach to biblical interpretation. Levenson rejects the claims of Liberation theologians that the Exodus story is solely or primarily *about* God’s “preferential option for the poor.”<sup>209</sup> In order to make his point that Liberation theologians who make such claims have failed to take into account the wholeness and complexity of the biblical narrative of the Exodus event, Levenson cites the reference in Exod 2:23-25 to God’s “remembering His covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob”—which is part of God’s response to the Israelites “groaning under” their bondage to Egypt. Levenson asserts that

if God’s hearing the groaning, crying, and moaning of the afflicted slaves reflects “the preferential option for the poor,” His remembering the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob reflects the chosenness of Israel. Of the two concepts, chosenness is in this narrative the more important, *for only it accounts for* the identity of those freed in the exodus and for their leaving Egypt rather than staying: they are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and they leave in order to participate in God’s fulfillment of his promise to give them the land of Canaan.<sup>210</sup>

What Levenson’s criticism of Liberation Theology makes clear is that, in order to interpret a biblical text with an appropriate degree of attentiveness to the compositional desires of its composers, interpreters must take *all* of the elements of the text into account *in relation to each other* and not favor some parts of the text over others.<sup>211</sup> In addition, his citation also makes it clear that it is especially important to pay attention to features of the text which can be regarded as its ‘defining elements.’ In Levenson’s example, this is the concept of the chosenness of Israel, for this is the only way to make sense not only of

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<sup>208</sup> Jon Levenson, “The Perils of Engaged Scholarship: A Rejoinder to Jorge Pixley” in *Jews, Christians, and the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures* (ed. Alice Ogden Bellis and Joel S. Kaminsky; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 240.

<sup>209</sup> Levenson, “The Perils,” 223.

<sup>210</sup> Levenson, “The Perils,” 223-224, italics mine.

<sup>211</sup> No one interpreter is able to account for all of the surplus of meaning that is part of any biblical text, but an interpreter should be able to account in a coherent manner for the language of the text itself.



the fact that God chose to free *these* slaves and not others but also of the reason why these slaves responded to God's initiative: on the basis of the promise of land to their ancestors; that is, if they left, they believed that they would have some place to go to.

This kind of approach to the interpretation of biblical texts takes not only the integrity of the text into account but also the integrity of the 'people' within them—those characters with whom present-day recipients identify—because these characters are made sense of in their own 'environment' before their experiences are adduced in order to bolster arguments scholars are making in another textual environment. Once these characters have been taken into account in their "wholeness and complexity" in their original environment, then their experiences may be adduced for comparative purposes in other textual environments. This approach not only increases the possibility that the adductions so made will result in like situations being compared to each other, but also that all of the texts involved in the analysis will be interpreted with attentiveness to and respect for their own particularity.

It is a lack of this kind of attentiveness to the particulars of the texts they adduce in support of their thematic arguments which results in the comparisons which Weinfeld and Frymer-Kensky make being off-base. Gruber, as well, fails to compare like situations in his linguistic analysis of לָקַח אֶת הַיְהוּדִים. This misalignment in Gruber's argument can be attributed to his desire to demonstrate that Simeon and Levi's wrath was attributable to Dinah's exogamous marriage to Shechem and not to his having raped their sister.<sup>212</sup> Likewise, Camp's and Sheres' particular concerns in relation to what is depicted in Genesis 34 directed their arguments along trajectories not indicated by the content or

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<sup>212</sup> I assert that Simeon and Levi's behavior is attributable to neither of these things but to their desire to protect the family. See Chapter 6, pp. 286-287.

grammar of the text. As for the arguments of Carmichael, Fleishman, and Wyatt, their arguments do not reflect what is represented in Genesis 34, because the sociological constructs which they brought to their readings of the text do not fit the situation represented in Genesis 34. The fit of the sociological constructs which interpreters bring to their readings of biblical texts to the text under consideration is an issue which resurfaces in various ways in Chapters 4 - 7.

As I have asserted previously, all interpreters bring to their readings of biblical texts certain interpretive desires in relation to these texts. Their desires may range from a wish to interpret a translation adequately for a commentary they have been asked to write (for example, Milgrom)<sup>213</sup> or their desires may be more complex than this—for example, van Wolde’s desire to counter aspects of Genesis 34 which she fears might provide grounds for the valorization of Simeon and Levi’s violent behavior.<sup>214</sup> Van Wolde’s analysis—as well as the analyses of the interpreters in *this* chapter—makes it clear that, in order to make sense of a text, the interpreter’s interpretive desires must cohere in some manner with the author’s or redactor’s compositional desires; that is, the concerns which an interpreter brings to a text must fit in in some manner with the concerns which prompted the author or redactor to compose the text in the first place. I examine this issue in Chapter 6, but at this point I turn to Bechtel’s argument and the issue of the fit of sociological constructs which interpreters bring to a text in order to make sense of that text.

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<sup>213</sup> See Chapter 2, p. 89.

<sup>214</sup> See Chapter 2, p. 89.

## **Chapter 4: Sociological models and the determination of meaning**

### **Introduction**

As is evident in the interpretations of texts which I reviewed or undertook myself in the previous chapters, interpreters do not come to a text they intend to analyze as *tabulae rasae*, to be inscribed by the text with its meaning. Rather, these earlier interpretations make it clear that interpreters bring the inter-text of themselves to the texts they interpret. In my analysis of Lyn Bechtel's interpretation of Genesis 34 this intertext of the interpreter once again is on display—once again in the form of the interpretive desire which Bechtel brings to her reading. In this way she resembles other interpreters, whose interpretations arise out of the intertwining of their interpretive desires, their decisions as to what a text is about, and their construal of the relational/social dynamics in the texts they are analyzing. In addition, of the arguments I analyzed, part of the interpretive desires of Camp<sup>1</sup> and van Wolde<sup>2</sup> encompassed a concern about how Genesis 34 might be received and this influenced their approach to their interpretations of this text. Bechtel evidences a similar concern that also influences her approach to Genesis 34. In order to enable what she terms individually-oriented contemporary readers to grasp the group orientation of the text, Bechtel applies the sociological model of a shame culture to the text. In addition, in order to explain Shechem's character and his relationship to Dinah, she brings the sociological model of the hostile rapist to her reading of Genesis 34. Through recourse to these models, Bechtel seeks to undo the traditional reading of Genesis 34 of Shechem as a rapist/lover. She asserts instead that Shechem was only a lover.

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 3, pp. 102-109.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 2, p. 89.

In my analysis of Bechtel's reading of Genesis 34, I take into account the effect of her sociological models on her interpretation and also assess her engagement in inner-biblical comparisons. In addition, in the context of Bechtel's argumentation concerning the meaning of *שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ* in Gen 34:2, I address once again the issue of the emendation of *שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ* by analyzing the rest of its occurrences in the MT.

### **Bechtel's interpretive desire**

Bechtel's approach to Genesis 34 is formulated in response to the assertion of some feminist readers of Genesis 34 that the story is "a paradigm of many situations of rape in modern society because the story (together with its exegetes) minimizes or ignores Dinah's suffering. Thus, it has been used to show both ancient and modern insensitivity toward women and the experience of rape."<sup>3</sup> Bechtel's solution to the concern expressed by these feminist readers is to assert that "the story did not intend to indicate that Dinah [was] raped."<sup>4</sup> Thus, if Dinah was not raped, then she did not suffer the physical and psychological harm associated with rape; therefore this story does not reflect ancient insensitivity toward raped women and cannot be considered paradigmatic of insensitive societal attitudes toward these women. Bechtel's interpretive desire, then, is to address the concerns of these feminist readers by showing that Dinah was not raped. She does this by attempting to show that Genesis 34 is *about* the desire on the part of some of the characters—namely Dinah, Shechem, Jacob, Hamor and the other Shechemites—to engage in intercultural bonding. A desire on Dinah's part to bond with

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<sup>3</sup> Bechtel, "What," 20.

<sup>4</sup> Bechtel, "What," 20. As a created product, a story itself cannot intend. The story reflects the intentions of the person(s) who created it. See Chapter 2, p. 91, n. 189, for Greenberg's recognition of the intentionality of the author of Ezekiel.

Shechem means that he did not rape her, for Dinah would not have wanted to bond with the person who had raped her.

According to Bechtel, contemporary readers cannot see the intent of the story because there is a discontinuity between the current understanding of rape and the way in which rape was viewed in the society reflected in Genesis 34. However, as my discussion of Fleishman's *redefinitions* of rape demonstrated, it is not the case that there was a different understanding in the societies whose mores are reflected in the MT as to what constituted rape from our understanding of what constitutes rape,<sup>5</sup> including, until recently, who had the right to rape; that is, the owner of the female's sexual function — her betrothed and her husband—had the right to rape.<sup>6</sup> The story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39, the story of the rape of the Levite's *pilegesh* in Judges 19, the story of the rape of Tamar in 2 Samuel 13, and the numerous references to sexual assault in the prophetic corpus all point to the fact that there was an understanding in the

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 3, pp. 124-130, especially p. 129, where Fleishman acknowledges that the English word "rape" reflects the human experience of forced sexual contact.

<sup>6</sup> Whether or not in the society reflected in the Holiness Code and in Deut 22:13-29, the father as owner of his daughter's sexual function had the right to rape is unclear. In the laws concerning prohibited sexual relations in Lev 18:6-23, relations with a daughter and a full sister are not specifically prohibited, though the opening statement of the law—that a man shall not approach "כָּל-נִשְׂאָר בְּשָׂרוֹ"—would include both a full sister and a daughter. Schwartz ("Leviticus," 250) notes that in Lev 21:2 that "nearest flesh" includes a priest's daughter and that the reference in Lev 18:9 to "your father's daughter and your mother's daughter" may include the full sister "by inference since she is in both categories." However, Schwartz further observes that "there is no satisfactory explanation for the omission of the daughter" from the list of prohibited sexual relations. The fact that the father had control of the bed clothes from his daughter's marriage bed meant that, if he chose to, he could hide incest of any kind that had taken place in his household. Even if the violation of daughters was a 'fact of life,' it is possible that the father's desire that he not be seen as one who dealt fraudulently by selling 'damaged goods' may have protected daughters against incest. In addition, the references in Genesis 19 and Judges 19 to fathers in both of these texts offering their daughters to a mob bent on rape does not appear to be approved of, if, in the case of Genesis 19, Lot's action there is considered in light of the entire presentation of him in Genesis 12-19, where he comes across as self-absorbed in comparison to Abraham's unselfishness toward him (Gen 13:8-11) and care for him (Gen 14:1-16) and if the willingness of the perverse host in Gibeah to consign his daughter to horrible abuse is compared to the apparent unwillingness of the *pilegesh's* father to allow her to return with the Levite (Judg 19:3-9); that is, the *pilegesh's* father appears to try to protect her, but ultimately, he gives way to the pressures of custom and lets his daughter go with the Levite. This and the behavior of Laban and, I will argue, of Jacob in regard to their daughters indicates the presence in the societies which gave rise to these texts of a valuing of fatherly concern for daughters, which suggests disapproval of father-daughter incest.

societies which gave rise to these texts of rape as coerced sexual contact.<sup>7</sup> The difference between then and now is the mindset that is revealed in the legal instruction in Deut 22: 23-29. In none of the three scenarios of rape outlined in these verses does the physical and emotional harm sustained by the female as a result of being raped constitute the harm which is prosecuted in these cases. In all three cases, the prosecutable crime is the ‘ruination’ of a virgin. The difference, then, between then and now is what was considered to be the prosecutable offense in a situation which included the rape of a female and what is considered to be the prosecutable offense now when a rape is committed.

Nonetheless, it is important to take into account the criteria for rape which Bechtel adduces “in order to determine the presence or absence of ‘rape’ in Genesis 34,”<sup>8</sup> because this is the standard by which she judges whether or not rape is represented in Gen 34 and in the other biblical texts to which she compares Genesis 34. According to her, the “modern definition of rape . . . [is] a man’s forcible, aggressive sexual intercourse with a woman who at the time does not consent and shows obvious resistance or vigorous struggle.”<sup>9</sup> Bechtel informs her readers that her definition of rape is a composite of the work of seven scholars, spanning the years from 1974 to 1989.<sup>10</sup> Even so, her definition appears inadequate when compared to the Justice Department’s definition of rape as “the carnal knowledge of a *person*, forcibly and/or against that person’s will.”<sup>11</sup> The requirement that a victim “show obvious resistance or vigorous struggle” in order for there to be a determination that rape has occurred is no longer a part of North American

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<sup>7</sup> See “Rape is not romantic” in Chapter 5, pp. 215-217.

<sup>8</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 20.

<sup>9</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 20.

<sup>10</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 30, n. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Raine, *After*, 208, italics hers.

jurisprudence. In addition, Bechtel's definition of rape is important, because it plays a part in her explanation of the meaning of *הַנָּזָה* in Genesis 34 and, consequently, in her explanation of the kind of group-orientation which she asserts characterizes Genesis 34. A definition of rape that requires resistance on the part of the victim allows for a reading of Genesis 34 in which no rape occurred, since no resistance on Dinah's part is recorded in the text, although *וַיַּעַזְבוּ* does indicate the negative effect on Dinah of what Shechem has done<sup>12</sup> and this must be accounted for. Bechtel explains the negativity conveyed by *הַנָּזָה* in Genesis 34 in terms one of its meanings in the *pi'el*: "to humiliate intensely."<sup>13</sup> According to her, *הַנָּזָה* names the humiliation felt by and the shamefulness attributed to those who act shamefully in a shame culture. It is the perspective of a shame culture which Bechtel asserts is the group-oriented point of view which informs Genesis 34. In Genesis 34, since *הַנָּזָה* appears in the context of coitus, Bechtel asserts that the appearance of *הַנָּזָה* in this context "indicates the shame associated with sexual intercourse that violates or does not lead to marital, family, or community bonding and obligation;"<sup>14</sup> that is, *הַנָּזָה* does not "automatically indicate rape, as many scholars assume" that it does.<sup>15</sup> In order to test her premise concerning whether or not *הַנָּזָה* indicates rape when it appears in the context of coitus, she examines several other "biblical incidents of sexual intercourse using 'nh'"<sup>16</sup> (or not)—namely, the incidents outlined in Deut 22:23-29 and Amnon's rape of Tamar.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 26, n. 97, and Chapter 2, pp. 81-87.

<sup>13</sup> Bechtel, "What," 24. Bechtel's definition comes from W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* [Leiden: E. J. Brill], 1951.

<sup>14</sup> Bechtel, "What," 25.

<sup>15</sup> Bechtel, "What," 23.

<sup>16</sup> Bechtel, "What," 25.

### Deuteronomy 22:23-29

The first text which Bechtel adduces is Deut 22:23-24, in which a man overtakes a contracted girl and engages her in sexual congress. According to Bechtel, what has occurred between the two does not qualify as rape because there was no force involved. This is indicated to Bechtel by the fact that the girl did not cry out. Bechtel does not question whether or not the girl was able to cry out.<sup>17</sup> This is not a concern of the text and neither is it a concern of Bechtel's. Nor is it a concern of van Wolde, who reads this text in the same way that Bechtel does.<sup>18</sup> Van Wolde asks the question, "Is this a case about forced sex?" and then answers her question in the negative, "no, the use of force is even denied. If the girl had shouted, it would have become clear that she was forced, but because she did not, there is no proof of unwillingness on her side nor of force from his side."<sup>19</sup> However, there is evidence in the verb *אָפְּדָה* of unwillingness on her side. According to Ceresko, *אָפְּדָה* is better read as "he overtakes her" in Deut 22:23 than as "he meets her," as both the RSV and the NRSV translate *אָפְּדָה* in this verse.<sup>20</sup> Ceresko bases his assertion on "the relationship between Hebrew *ms'* and Ugaritic *msa/mza* and *mgy*,"<sup>21</sup> a relationship recognized by a number of scholars.<sup>22</sup> This relationship has led these

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<sup>17</sup> Washington ("Lest," 210) notes that "an attacker can violently silence his victim or can subdue her through a combination of deceit and intimidation." Also, Fokkelien Van Dijk-Hemmes ("Tamar and the Limits of Patriarchy" in ed. Mieke Bal, *Anti-Covenant Counter-reading Women's Lives in the Hebrew Bible* [Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989], 136) notes the power of intimidation in her citation of Joke Schrijvers' ("Weerstand tegen geweld," *Tijdschrift voor Vrouwenstudies* [1983], 56) analysis of violence against women: "with reference to violence it seems that the most subtle form of power-assertion and violence manifests itself invisibly in the forming of feelings and thoughts—in this case: fear and the anticipation of possible violence—which ensure compliance in advance without a man having to do anything himself."

<sup>18</sup> Both read from the dominant perspective in the text, not from the perspective of a possible victim.

<sup>19</sup> van Wolde, "Does," 536.

<sup>20</sup> Ceresko, "The Function," 557, n. 32.

<sup>21</sup> Ceresko, "The Function," 555.

<sup>22</sup> According to Ceresko ("The Function," 555), these scholars include Iwry, Gerleman, Held, Dahood, Fishbane, Freedman and Anderson, and Pope.



scholars to assert that “in many more instances than have previously been recognized, Biblical *ms*’ means “to reach, overtake, seize.”<sup>23</sup>

In addition to this reason, Ceresko chooses “he overtakes her” instead of “he meets her” in Deut 22:23 for two more reasons. The first of these additional reasons is based on Samuel Iwry’s study of *whnms*’ in 1QIs<sup>a</sup>. In his study, Iwry seeks to establish the meaning of הנמצא, based on its use as a substantive in 1QS<sup>a</sup> in place of the adjectival modifier הנשרה, which is found in the same place in the same verse, Isa 37:31, in the MT.<sup>24</sup> Based on its relationship to its etymological origins,<sup>25</sup> one of its renderings in the LXX,<sup>26</sup> and its use in the contexts which he examines in the MT, Iwry concludes that in Isa 13:14-15 *hnms*’ refers to “captives” and to those “who had been captive” (in exile) or “who still were in exile” in Chronicles<sup>27</sup> and Ezra.<sup>28</sup> Iwry reaches these conclusions due to the “ample proof” that he assembled in order “to establish a meaning “come upon,” “meet,” or “reach” for Biblical נצף in the *qal*, and “overpowered,” “caught,” or “captured” in the *nif‘al*.”<sup>29</sup>

Ceresko’s second additional reason for his choice of “overtakes” for נצף in Deut 22:23-24 is the collocation in Deuteronomy 22 of vv. 23-24 with “the sequence of action in v. 25: “overtake” (*ms*’), “seize” (*hzq*), “lie with” (*škb*); and in v. 28 “overtake” (*ms*’), “seize” (*tps*), “lie with” (*škb*).”<sup>30</sup> Based on these three reasons, Ceresko believes “he

<sup>23</sup> Ceresko, “The Function,” 555.

<sup>24</sup> Samuel Iwry, “*Whnms*’—A Striking Variant Reading in 1QIs<sup>a</sup>,” *Textus* 5 (1966) 34.

<sup>25</sup> Iwry (35) notes “that the prevalent connotation of הנמצא—“that which is found”, “is present” or “existing” represents in effect the cumulative semantic development of the Semitic root נצף which basically meant “to reach,” “to come upon,” “to overtake,” “to catch.”

<sup>26</sup> Iwry (“*Whnms*’,” 36) notes the use of ἀλίσκομαι “be caught,” “held” for נצף.

<sup>27</sup> Iwry, “*Whnms*’,” 40-43.

<sup>28</sup> Iwry, “*Whnms*’,” 42.

<sup>29</sup> Iwry (“*Whnms*’,” 36) cites uses of נצף and נצף in Lev 25:28; Num 20:14; Judg 5:30, 6:13; 1 Sam 23:17; Isa 10:10, 14; Pss 21:9, 116:3 as proof of his assertion as to the meanings of נצף.

<sup>30</sup> For נצף as conveying rape in this context, see pp. 168-170, *infra*.

overtakes her” to be a more adequate representation of what is depicted in the MT than “he meets her.”<sup>31</sup> The implication of Ceresko’s decision to translate נִפְגַּשׁ as he does in v. 23 is that the experience represented in v. 23 points to the same sequence of actions as those represented in vv. 25-27 and 28-29—even though the entire sequence is not described in v. 23. Such a conclusion has merit in light of the conclusion that Deut 22:13-29 is a redacted text; that is, that it is composed of legal instruction (vv. 13-27) and a law (vv. 28-29) collected from different places and/or times. As a result, the same experience is represented in the different scenarios but this experience is represented with different wording. In other words, Ceresko’s reading of vv. 23-24 indicates rape. Thus a translation of “if a man *meets*” a contracted girl in the city can be misleading—because then there is the possibility of construing the situation as one in which the girl has participated in an assignation, rather than her having been waylaid and raped.

Nonetheless, in the social situation reflected in the text, the contracted girl is guilty of a ‘crime,’ but what ‘crime’ has the girl committed? The thinking of contemporary translators perhaps has run along these lines: a raped girl would not be held responsible for having been raped, therefore the ‘crime’ for which she is held responsible is having cheated on her betrothed; that is, by translating נִפְגַּשׁ with the word “meets,” contemporary translators do not represent the happenstance nature<sup>32</sup> of the encounter between the contracted girl and the man, but rather convict the contracted girl of the only ‘crime’ that they think she possibly could be guilty of in this situation: that of cheating on her betrothed. *Such a translation adopts the dominant perspective in the text*; that is, that the girl is guilty of a ‘crime,’ *but it fails to represent the social reality reflected in the*

<sup>31</sup> Ceresko, “The Function,” 557, n. 32.

<sup>32</sup> The translation of “if . . . a man *find* her” in the KJV is preferable to the translation of “meets” in the RSV and NRSV—which are re-workings of the KJV.

*text*: that the contracted girl is held responsible for any sexual contact with a man other than her betrothed—whether or not that contact was voluntary. If such sexual contact took place, both the contracted girl and the man were guilty of a capital offense. A translation of *نكح* with the word “meets” fails to encapsulate this social reality. *This does an injustice to the lives reflected in the text; that is, the lives behind the lines in the text* of contracted girls in the shame/honor culture reflected in Deut 22:13-29, who lived with the restrictions placed on them by the laws outlined therein and who were subject to the possibility of being judged guilty of a capital ‘crime,’ should they engage in any freedom of movement outside the purview of the man who owned their sexual function.

The overriding concern in shame/honor cultures to circumscribe the freedom of movement of females can be seen in the case of the “Girl from Qatif.”<sup>33</sup> Concerning the Girl from Qatif, The Khaleej Times Online reports from Riyadh that

a Saudi woman who was kidnapped at knifepoint, gang-raped and then beaten by her brother has been sentenced to 90 lashes—for meeting a man who was not a relative. . . . The 19-year-old said she was blackmailed a year ago into meeting a man who threatened to tell her family they were having a relationship outside of wedlock.<sup>34</sup> After driving off together from a shopping mall near her home, the woman and the man were stopped and abducted by a gang of men wielding kitchen knives who took them to a farm where she was raped 14 times by her captors. Five men were arrested and given jail terms ranging from 10 months to five years. . . . But the judges also decided to sentence the woman, identified by the newspaper only as ‘G,’ and the man to lashes for being alone together in the car. . . . ‘G’ said one of the judges said she was

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<sup>33</sup> This is the designation made by the Arabic media of a young Saudi woman from the town of Qatif who was gang-raped and then sentenced to ninety lashes by a Saudi court for being alone in the company of a male who was not a member of her family, nor was he her fiancé. Hannah Allam, “Middle East Diary: Saudi judges opt to punish rape victim.” (<http://www.kansascity.com/41/story/369551.html>, 11/21/2007).

<sup>34</sup> “She met the man so she could retrieve an old photograph of herself from him. . . . The photo was innocuous . . . . She was engaged to be married at the time. . . . When the judge pronounced the sentence, he said to her, ‘You were involved in a *suspicious* relationship, and you deserve 200 lashes for that’.” (<http://www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/meast/11/21/saudi.rape.lawyer/index.html?iref=were...> 11/22/2007; italics mine in order to call attention to the coincidence of the judge’s words with the situation of the wife in Num 5:11-31).

lucky not to have been given jail time. . . . The woman also told the paper she had tried to commit suicide and that she had been beaten by her younger brother because the rape had brought shame on their family.<sup>35</sup>

It would appear that the severe punishment meted out to the Girl from Qatif was given to her so that she would learn to circumscribe her activities properly in the future. Her mistreatment has had a not unexpected effect on other Saudi women. Fawzeyah al-Oyouni, founding member of . . . the Saudi Association for the Defense of Women's Rights, said, "We're fearing for our lives and the lives of our sisters and our daughters and every Saudi woman out there. We're afraid to go out in the streets,"<sup>36</sup> a result which appears to be at least one goal of the legislation which served as the source of the judicial decisions in the case of the Girl from Qatif.

As I noted above, the real concern in Deut 22:23-24—why the young woman must be executed—is that she was waylaid when out and about in the city. This is the same 'crime' for which the Girl from Qatif was to be punished.<sup>37</sup> However, in Bechtel's view, the punishment meted out in Deut 22:24 arises from the fact that "despite the fact that there is no rape, the sexual intercourse is shameful because it threatens the social bonding of the community. In this case *the word 'nh follows škb, which seems to be the case when rape is not involved.'*"<sup>38</sup> Whether or not there was rape is immaterial in this law, which is not concerned with the woman—other than the way in which her behavior impacts the man who owns her sexual function—much as the Saudi judges were not concerned about the Girl from Qatif. The problem with Bechtel's conclusion concerning

<sup>35</sup> (<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile+data/middleeast/2007/March/. . . 11/22/2007>).

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.plnewsforum.com/index.php?/forums/viewthread/26015/>, 11/22/2007.

<sup>37</sup> International outrage over her sentence led to its being rescinded.

<sup>38</sup> Bechtel, "What," 25, italics mine.

what is depicted in Deut 22:23-34 is that, even though rape is depicted in Deut 22:23-24, in terms of its intent, this law is not *about* rape. Bechtel is correct “that within a sexual context the verb *nh* in the Piel indicates the ‘humiliation’ or ‘shaming’<sup>39</sup> of a woman through certain kinds of intercourse including rape, though not necessarily,”<sup>40</sup> but the “humiliation” does not arise from the contracted female’s having engaged in voluntary sexual relations. What הָנָהּ refers to in vv. 23-24 is the prosecutable offense of a man having ‘ruined’ a contracted girl by having sexual contact with her.<sup>41</sup> The function of הָנָהּ in this law is not to reveal whether or not rape occurred and it cannot be relied on to do so.

The problem for Bechtel is that her premise concerning the workings of a shame culture *does not fit* the shame/honor culture reflected in Deut 22:13-29. In that culture a female was not to have any contact with a man—except for her immediate family members—outside the control of the man who owned her sexual function. In light of these mores, it is not necessary to assert that it is only *voluntary* sexual intercourse that was “humiliating,” because in a shame/honor culture, the female is shamed (‘ruined’) whether she engaged in sexual relations willingly or not. Bechtel’s assertion that הָנָהּ represents the female’s *feelings* of shame in the face of communal disapproval of her having engaged in sexual relations voluntarily is the point at which Bechtel fails to connect with the reality reflected in Deut 22:13-29.<sup>42</sup> In the situation reflected in Deut

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<sup>39</sup> Bechtel’s conclusion is correct only if what she terms “humiliation” or “shaming” is recognized as a prosecutable crime. I call this crime the ‘ruination’ of a virgin.

<sup>40</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 24.

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 68-69.

<sup>42</sup> Bechtel (“What,” 27, italics mine) explains: “within a shame-culture the reference to ‘shame’ (*herpâ*), ‘humiliation’ (*nh*) and ‘foolishness’ and the expression ‘such a thing is not done in Israel’ (a common expression in shame-cultures), all point to the sense of inadequacy that an individual should *feel* for violation of the societal ideals and customs, which should produce an *emotional* response of shame.” Bechtel is referring to terminology which is used in 2 Samuel 13.

22:13-29, the female most likely *would feel* shamed, but the force of the legal instruction in this pericope does not arise out of the fear on the part of the female that she would *feel* ashamed in front of the community, should she be involved sexually with a man other than her betrothed or her husband. The force of Deut 22:23-24 arises out of the fear on the parts of *both* the male and the female of being executed. Part of the confusion in Bechtel's argument may stem from the use of the English word "shame" to describe this kind of culture,<sup>43</sup> because the emphasis in the English word "shame" is on the feelings engendered. As for Deut 22: 28-29, like Deut 22:23-34, עָנָה may well include the female's feelings of shame, but it *denotes* the prosecutable crime of the 'ruination' of a virgin.

The premise with which Bechtel views Deut 22:23-29—that when עָנָה follows עַם שָׁכַב, עָנָה in this syntactic position indicates that there was no rape—means that she has to adjust the text when analyzing Deut 22:28-29 in order to make it fit her premise. Bechtel asserts that in vv. 28-29, the man "takes hold of or touches the heart of (*tps*) an unbonded young woman and lies (*škb*) with her."<sup>44</sup> But there is no mention of a young woman's heart in Deut 22:28-29. Bechtel introduces this element into the text. שָׁכַב is used with "hearts" in Ezek 14:5, which refers to "capturing their hearts." "Hearts" are specifically mentioned in the Ezekiel passage, unlike the passage in Deuteronomy. What *is* the same about the Ezekiel passage and the Deuteronomic passage is the meaning of שָׁכַב as "to capture." What is captured in the Deuteronomic passage is the girl herself, who then is raped. Washington asserts that שָׁכַב in Deut 22:28 (preceding עַם שָׁכַב) represents "force ...

<sup>43</sup> "Shame culture" or "shame/honor culture" are the accepted designations for these kinds of societies.

<sup>44</sup> Bechtel, "What," 25.

rape ... the violent crime of forcing a person to submit to sexual intercourse.”<sup>45</sup> In spite of the evidence to the contrary, Bechtel claims that “the man has touched the heart (*tps*) of the woman.”<sup>46</sup>

The fact that in Deut 22:28-29 Bechtel does not recognize נָפַץ as naming the crime of ‘ruination’ committed by the man also creates problems for her in terms of defining what is “shameful” about the coitus described in v. 28. According to her, what is “shameful” about the coitus in Deut 22:23-24 is that it violates the bonds of an already bonded young woman. In terms of the values of the shame/honor culture reflected in Deut 22:13-29, this is the correct conclusion,<sup>47</sup> but what, then, can be said about the situation in Deut 22:28-29, where the coitus that takes place is between “two unbonded people”?<sup>48</sup> According to Bechtel, the “shamefulness” in the situation described in vv. 28-29 can be attributed to that fact that, even though the man and the girl have been involved sexually, “there is no request for future bonding.”<sup>49</sup> To Bechtel, this means that there is “no prospect of bonding and obligation.”<sup>50</sup> However, it is not the case that there is no prospect of bonding and obligation even though the man did not request it. He does not have to request it because the law takes care of that for him. As a result of the crime having been discovered in progress, he and his victim will be wed for life. Such a contractual arrangement is possible because the young woman had not been contracted to anyone else yet.

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<sup>45</sup> Washington, “Lest,” 208. See, as well, Chapter 2, p. 48, n. 48 for Pressler’s equivalent claims concerning the meaning of *tps* and my verification of those claims via the references given in *HALOT*.

<sup>46</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 25.

<sup>47</sup> If one recognizes that נָפַץ identifies a prosecutable crime which arises out of the humiliation felt by the girl’s betrothed and imputed to her.

<sup>48</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 25.

<sup>49</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 25.

<sup>50</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 25.

הַנָּזֵף does not appear in Deut 22:25-27. This is the only Deuteronomic text which Bechtel examines in which she recognizes rape as occurring, because this text matches her definition of rape, which requires “a protest from the woman and [the] obvious use of force”<sup>51</sup> According to Bechtel, הַנָּזֵף is not used to describe the rape because the text states that the “woman has acted correctly; she has cried out for help, so this sexual intercourse is not voluntary and is not considered a violation by her of her existing bonding and obligation.”<sup>52</sup> Thus, in Bechtel’s estimation it is the *involuntary* nature of the sexual contact depicted in vv. 25-27 that makes it not “shameful.” Comparing this text to the other two texts in Deut 22:23-29 which she has analyzed, she concludes that, when הַנָּזֵף occurs in a text in which coitus is depicted—as it does in Deut 22:23-24, 28-29, and Gen 34:2—what it designates is the “shamefulness” of “*voluntary* sexual intercourse” either between a bonded woman and a man to whom she is not bonded or “between two unbonded people.”<sup>53</sup> “Two unbonded people” reflects the situation in vv. 28-29. Bechtel’s conclusion as to the meaning of הַנָּזֵף in Deut 22:23-24 and 28-29 makes it apparent why she adds the element of the girl’s heart to v. 28—so that the man can touch the girl’s heart, rather than capturing the girl herself. The sex in v. 28 must be voluntary or vv. 28-29 do not fit her premise concerning the presence or absence of הַנָּזֵף in a text in which sex is depicted.

## **2 Samuel 13:11-14**

The last text which Bechtel examines in connection with the use of הַנָּזֵף in Gen 34:2 is 2 Sam 13:11-14. Like the passages in Deut 22:23-29, הַנָּזֵף is found in this text in the context of coitus. Of all the Deuteronomic texts that Bechtel analyzes, Deut 22:25-27 is

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<sup>51</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 26.

<sup>52</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 26.

<sup>53</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 25, italics mine.



the most like 2 Sam 13:11-14 because what is easily discernable in both texts is that they meet Bechtel's requirements for rape: force on the part of the rapist and resistance from the victim. In regard to Deut 22:25-27, Bechtel concluded that it was the *involuntary* nature of the sexual congress described there that made that sexual contact *not shameful* and the lack of shamefulness was indicated by the fact that  $\eta\zeta\eta$  was not present in that passage whereas it *was* present in the texts depicting *voluntary* sexual relations (according to Bechtel): Deut 22:23-24 and 28-29, indicating the shamefulness of those sexual relations. However  $\eta\zeta\eta$  *is* found in 2 Sam 13:14, which Bechtel acknowledges depicts a rape. What, then, does  $\eta\zeta\eta$  indicate in 2 Sam 13:14? At first Bechtel claims that "it is with the forcing (*hzq*) that the '*nh* (humiliation) is linked,"<sup>54</sup> but that does not fit what she has said about the texts in Deuteronomy. She then claims that "the rape is shameful because it is carried out by a member of her family, a person with whom there is bonding and obligation that precludes such sexual activity."<sup>55</sup>

However, these are not the particular bonds and obligations that are emphasized in 2 Samuel 13. 2 Samuel 13 is a pejorative assessment of kingship, a negative assessment which is paired with 2 Samuel 11 with its portrayal of King David's dalliance with Bathsheba and his subsequent murder of her husband Uriah.<sup>56</sup> The bonds and obligations which are emphasized in 2 Samuel 11-13 are the bonds of the king to his people and his obligations to them, which he is not living up to. In order to make this

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<sup>54</sup> Bechtel, "What," 26.

<sup>55</sup> Bechtel, "What," 26-27.

<sup>56</sup> Phyllis Trible ("Tamar: The Royal Rape of Wisdom," ch. 2 in her *Texts of Terror* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984], 37) sees 2 Samuel 13 as "part of a narrative about King David and his court." The opening phrase of 2 Samuel 13—"and it came to pass after this" (her translation)—Trible sees as referring to the "sordid deeds of David to secure Bathsheba." This indicates the connection of 2 Samuel 13 with the two previous chapters of 2 Samuel.

point, the author depicts Uriah and Tamar as the best that Israel has to offer.<sup>57</sup> Intelligent, loyal and virtuous, they are destroyed by ruthless and calculating royals in order to demonstrate what happens to the virtuous and the good when you have a king—who is supposed to protect his subjects, but does not.<sup>58</sup> Described as beautiful and depicted as obedient and caring, Tamar, with her strong commitment to the values of a shame/honor culture, comes across as the perfect shame/honor princess.<sup>59</sup> Because 2 Samuel 13 touts the values of a shame/ honor society, it is her ‘ruination’ which is emphasized in 2 Samuel 13 more than the incestuous nature of Amnon’s assault on her. Since her ruination is tied most directly to the unauthorized sexual congress,<sup>60</sup> then the ‘ruination’ arises from the rape, not from her familial relationship to the rapist.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Even though Uriah is ethnically a Hittite, he embodies the highest values of Israelite society, whereas the king does not. I am indebted to Meir Sternberg (“Gaps, Ambiguity, and the Reading Process,” ch. 6 in his *Poetics*, 186-229) for an understanding of Uriah as resisting David with everything he has.

<sup>58</sup> Gerstenberger (*TDOT* 11: 249) observes that the king was “responsibl[e] for public welfare.” Isa 32:1-2 describes the qualities of good rulers: “See, a king will reign in righteousness and princes will rule with justice. Each will be like a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land” (NRSV).

<sup>59</sup> The values of a shame/honor culture play a significant part in 2 Samuel 13. See Chapter 7, pp. 307-308 for the ways in which Tamar exhibits the values of shame/honor culture.

<sup>60</sup> As the laws in Deut 22:13-29 make clear, it is sexual intercourse outside the purview of the man who owns a female’s sexuality which ruins her. In the case of Tamar that would be King David. That is why Tamar tries to get Amnon to get the king to authorize their sexual relationship. Whether or not the laws in Deut 22:13-29 were in effect when 2 Samuel 13 was written, both pericopes reflect the same values.

<sup>61</sup> Questions arise concerning the issue of incest, because, as part of her protest against Amnon’s forcing her, Tamar proposes that all Amnon need do is ask the king for her and the king would allow him to marry her. Would such a marriage have been possible given the fact that sexual relations between half-brothers and half-sisters are forbidden in Leviticus (18:9)? An interpretive issue that arises from this question is that of the relationship of the books within the biblical canon to each other. Rather than trying to discern whether or not the laws in Leviticus were in effect at the time that 2 Samuel 13 was written, I prefer to regard the relationship between Leviticus and 2 Samuel from the perspective that the MT is revelatory of particular points of view that characterized the societies out of which the MT arose. One of those points of view is a negative one of sexual relationships between siblings. That indicates to me that the societies out of which the MT came and which it reflects disallowed such relationships, but whether or not they did during the entire time of the composition and compilation of the texts which are received now in the form of the MT is unknowable. The information from Leviticus is enough, however, to hypothesize that the author of 2 Samuel 13 meant for the recipients of this story to view such a relationship between a half-brother and a half-sister negatively. If this is the case, then Tamar’s proposal is one more way in which the author casts aspersions on King David: he should not have allowed such a marriage, but he would have, because he was “carelessly compliant” when it came to the wishes of his sons. (“Carelessly compliant” is P. Kyle McCarter, Jr.’s, [*II Samuel*, trans. and notes; AB 9, Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc. (1984), 327] apt description of David in 2 Samuel 13). In sum, sex between a half-brother and sister is

### עֲנָה in Genesis 34

After her analysis of Deut 22:23-29 and 2 Sam 13:11-14, Bechtel turns her attention to Gen 34:2-3, in order to see if “the sexual intercourse between Dinah and Shechem qualif[ies] as rape.”<sup>62</sup> Applying her definition of rape to the depiction of events in Gen 34 and noting that no resistance on Dinah’s part is recorded in the text, nor is any violence on Shechem’s part (according to Bechtel), Bechtel concludes that the situation in Gen 34:2-3 is like the situation in Deut 22:28-29—because “Shechem’s whole being (*nepes*) bonds (*dbq*) with Dinah.”<sup>63</sup> But, since Deut 22:28-29 is not about a natural bonding between a man and a woman,<sup>64</sup> but about a legally-enforced bonding, Bechtel’s comparison of the two texts is off the mark. Nonetheless, her comparison leads her to conclude that עֲנָה in Gen 34:2 refers to the fact that Shechem has humiliated Dinah, because, according to the mores of Jacob and his family, “Shechem is an outsider, a ‘prince’ of the Canaanites, so there is no possibility of marital and family bonding and obligation with this outsider.”<sup>65</sup> Dinah is a shamed girl because her family will not let her marry the man who has had sex with her. What Bechtel’s decision as to the meaning of עֲנָה in Genesis 34 fails to do is not only to take into account accurately the social dynamics depicted in the text but also the sequential nature of prose narrative.

As for the social dynamics depicted in the text, Bechtel’s application of a shame culture to Genesis 34 does not fit the world of an inter-tribal agonistic society that the text of Genesis 34 imaginatively projects. That a shame culture does not reflect the kind of

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meant to be viewed negatively, but of greater importance to the author of 2 Samuel 11-13 was the misuse of royal power against those whom it was meant to protect, a misuse which led to the destruction of good men (Uriah) and good women (Tamar)—and Tamar’s destruction is brought about by rape, not by incest.

<sup>62</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 27.

<sup>63</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 27.

<sup>64</sup> I do not construe Shechem’s bonding to Dinah as natural, as Bechtel does. See Chapter 7, pp. 324-327.

<sup>65</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 27.

social world reflected in Genesis 34 can be seen in Bechtel’s claim that people in such a society derive their identity from “the society as a whole and *the household groups within it.*”<sup>66</sup> But Jacob and his family, as the *only* household, make up the entirety of Israel.<sup>67</sup> There are no other households within the entity Israel for them to compete with for status. In Genesis 34, Jacob and his family are depicted as a *small family group* trying to survive in an archaic world of larger and more established tribes, as is indicated in v. 30 in Jacob’s reproach of Simeon and Levi.

As for the meaning of  $\text{הָעָנָה}$ , this must be taken into account in terms of the sequential nature of prose narrative. Bechtel herself notes that  $\text{הָעָנָה}$  is the central verb in a series of seven verbs in vv. 2-3,<sup>68</sup> the first of which describes Shechem’s spotting of Dinah; the next two, his treatment of her; the next, the effects of his treatment of her on Dinah ( $\text{הָעָנָה}$ );<sup>69</sup> the next two, Shechem’s attitude toward Dinah that results from her response to what he has done, and finally, his speaking to her. It is unlikely that an author would insert a verb about the attitude of Dinah’s family toward Shechem in the middle of a series of verbs which describe Shechem’s actions and attitude toward Dinah. Dinah’s family *does* respond to what Shechem has done, but their assessments of what he has done come later—in vv. 5 and 7, *after* they hear about what has taken place. Verse 5 reveals that Jacob focuses on the harm that Shechem has done to Dinah—on his penetration of her ( $\text{אֶנְטָה}$ ).<sup>70</sup> Verse 7 reveals that Jacob’s sons focus on the harm that Shechem has done to the family—on the fact that he has committed  $\text{הַבְּלָה}$  in Israel.<sup>71</sup> Yet

<sup>66</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 21, italics mine.

<sup>67</sup> Sheres (*Dinah*’s, 31) observes that “the Hebraic family delineated in the book [of Genesis] is an extended household.”

<sup>68</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 23.

<sup>69</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 26, n. 97.

<sup>70</sup> For this interpretation of  $\text{אֶנְטָה}$  in Gen 34:2, see Chapter 6, pp. 264-268.

<sup>71</sup> For this interpretation of this verse, see Chapter 6, pp. 292-293.

Bechtel concludes that Dinah's being עָנָה was the fault of her family, even though the text states that their response to what Shechem has done comes later, and even though v. 2 states that it is Shechem who עָנָה her. Thus, due to the way in which Bechtel construes the meaning of עָנָה in v. 2, its negative connotations do not reflect badly on Shechem at all. And, according to the way in which Bechtel reads all of vv. 2 and 3, neither do the other verbs which describe Shechem's actions and attitude toward Dinah: קָשַׁב אֶת־הָאִתָּהּ, לָקַח אֶת־הָאִתָּהּ, קָבַץ, אָהַב, and דָּבַר עֲלֵי־לֵב. It is necessary, then, to examine Bechtel's interpretation of these other terms as well, as part of the determination of how thoroughly her perception of Shechem as a lover is grounded in the content and grammar of Genesis 34.

#### **לקח in Genesis 34**

Bechtel asserts that “in the story *lqh* has no inherent connotation of physical force.”<sup>72</sup> She backs up this assertion with the observation that “[לָקַח] is used most often in the expression ‘to give (*ntn*) and take (*lqh*) wives (vv. 4, 9, 16), which is a part of the proposed ‘giving and taking’ between the Shechemites and the Jacobites, an interplay intended to foster bonding and cooperation,<sup>73</sup> but not carried out by physical force.”<sup>74</sup> It is the case that לָקַח is used three out of the nine times that it is used in Genesis 34 in connection with the peaceful exchange of women and Bechtel is correct that לָקַח has no inherent connotation of physical force. She is not correct, however, when she asserts that “it is only in vv. 25-26 where violence is described in association with *lqh* (taking [*lqh*]

<sup>72</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 28.

<sup>73</sup> In reaching this conclusion, Bechtel overlooks the statement in the text as to the Shechemite motivation for undergoing circumcision: so that the giving and taking of women would result in all of the Jacob's wealth ultimately coming under Shechemite control (vv. 23-24).

<sup>74</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 28.

the sword and killing all the males) that it takes on such a meaning.”<sup>75</sup> A review of the uses of לקח in Genesis 34 can help to clarify the meanings of לקח in this text.

A usage closely related to the three uses reflecting the exchange of women is Shechem’s demand of Hamor that he “get for me this הַדָּוָה as a wife” (v. 4). At the point at which he demands of his father that he לקח Dinah for him as a wife, Shechem has Dinah in his possession, so what he is demanding of Hamor is that his father legalize his possession of Dinah through the means available in the societal setting reflected in Genesis 34; that is, by paying the bride-price to Jacob which would mark the transfer of Jacob’s ownership of Dinah’s sexuality to Shechem.

The use of לקח in v.17 refers to “taking” in the aftermath of the use of force. On the surface the threat against the Shechemites by Jacob’s outmatched sons seems absurd. However, placed where it is in the narrative, the threat “to take our daughter and leave” serves as a reminder to Hamor and Shechem that, if the Shechemites fail to comply with their requirement that all the Shechemite males be circumcised, trouble lies ahead. Granted, due to their greater numbers and entrenched position, the Shechemites would prevail in any conflict with Jacob and his sons, but some lives would be lost and Shechem, as the one who had had coitus with Dinah, would be the primary target of Jacob and his family.

The use of לקח in v. 25 refers to Simeon and Levi’s picking up their swords in preparation for their assault on the Shechemites. The taking of their swords in hand led to the murders of an entire city of men, but the actual picking up of the swords was not done via the use of force.

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<sup>75</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 28.

The use of לקח in v. 26 to describe Simeon and Levi's taking of Dinah from Shechem's house represents precisely what Dinah's brothers had threatened to do in v.17: to retrieve Dinah after the use of the necessary force in order to make her removal possible. There is a strand of rabbinical speculation that posits that Dinah did not want to leave because "she had experienced intercourse with a passionate uncircumcised man and had acquired a taste for it."<sup>76</sup> The rabbis decided that, as a result of this, her brothers had to drag her out of Shechem's house.<sup>77</sup> These rabbinical speculations may arise from the influence of the Targums on rabbinical interpretation of the Bible. In *Tg. Onq.* and in *Tg. Ps.-J.*, in the verses which refer to the "taking" of females as wives—vv. 4, 9, 16, 21—as well as in v. 25 in reference to Simeon and Levi "taking" their swords, the verb נָסַב—"to lift up; to take; to carry"<sup>78</sup>—is used. In *Tg. Onq.* and *Tg. Ps.-J.*, in the verses which refer to Shechem's forceful taking of Dinah (v. 2), to her brothers' threat to take Dinah from Shechem and Hamor if the Shechemites do not comply with their requirement of circumcision (v.17), and to Simeon and Levi's removal of Dinah from Shechem's house (v. 26), the verb דָּבַר—"to seize, take, lead, drive"<sup>79</sup>—is used. Therefore, this might indicate the use of force by Dinah's brothers when they took her from Shechem's house. However, *Tg. Ps.-J.* suggests otherwise in that it specifically mentions the use of force in v. 2

<sup>76</sup> Yaakov Culi, *The Torah Anthology: MeAm Lo'ez* (trans. Aryeh Kaplan: New York: Maznaim Publishing Corporation, 1977), 176.

<sup>77</sup> Culi's conclusion reflects the line of rabbinical thinking found in *Genesis Rabbah*, (Neusner, Parashah 80:11, 155-156): B. R. Yudan said, "They dragged her out." Said R. Huniah, "A woman who has had sexual relations with an uncircumcised man finds it hard to leave."

<sup>78</sup> Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature*, (New York: The Judaica Press, 1996, 915. In Mishnaic and Talmudic literature \*לקח occurs only in the *itpe'el* and refers to "be[ing] taken, married" (Jastrow, "לקח," 717).

<sup>79</sup> Jastrow, "דבר," 278.

(באונסא) and in v. 17 (בתוקפא) and makes no such addition to v. 26.<sup>80</sup> But, in *Tg. Onq.*, whose translators did not engage in the same kind of expansionism which characterizes *Tg. Ps.-J.*, no such additions were made to the text.<sup>81</sup> It is possible to draw the conclusion from *Tg. Onq.*, then, that the same force that is implied in vv. 2 and 17 also is implied as being used to take Dinah out of Shechem's house. It is possible, then, that the rabbis reached their conclusion that Dinah was reluctant to leave Shechem's house on the basis of *Tg. Onq.* However, since Shechem was dead, the rabbinical conclusion as to why Dinah did not want to leave his house is nonsensical, since intercourse with him was no longer possible. Their conclusion is more reflective of their making sense of the text in terms of *Tg. Onq.* and in terms of the kind of performance anxiety which informs Num 5:11-31 and Deut 22:21-24. Thus, reading לקח as a representation of Simeon and Levi taking Dinah with them without having to force her is a reasonable reading of the use of לקח in v. 26.

In v. 28 לקח refers to the sons of Jacob taking all the Shechemites' possessions, a taking made possible because the male defenders of all this property had been killed by Simeon and Levi. So, it is a taking that results from the use of force, a use of force that made possible the Jacobites' taking that which did not belong to them.

As for Gen 34:2, Seebass notes, "often *lāqah* designates the initiative for subsequent action,"<sup>82</sup> as it does in this verse—and לקח *can* refer to the forceful taking of

<sup>80</sup> דבר is used in *Tg. Ps.-J.* in Gen 19:15 to describe the angel instructing Lot to *take* his wife and daughters away from Sodom. It appears that the translators of *Tg. Ps.-J.* viewed the removal of Dinah from Shechem's house as the same kind of taking.

<sup>81</sup> *Tg. Neof.* makes no distinction in terms of the verb "taking" and uses דבב throughout, even in v. 28, where the MT has לקח, but *Tg. Onq.* and *Tg. Ps.-J.* both have דבו. The verb *debbar* was part of the Jewish Aramaic dialect reflected in *Tg. Neof.*, but referred more to "bringing" than to "taking" (Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic* [Jerusalem: Bar Ilan University press, 1990], 138).

<sup>82</sup> Seebass, *TDOT* 8:17.



human beings.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, it is possible for לָקַח to refer to Shechem's forceful taking of Dinah for the purpose of further forceful action against her. Thus, how שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה is interpreted has an impact on whether or not לָקַח אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה is seen as a forceful taking.

### **Bechtel's interpretation of שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה in Genesis 34**

In Gen 34:2, Bechtel translates שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה as “Shechem lies (with) her.”<sup>84</sup> If Bechtel's assertion that “the verb *škb* designates sexual intercourse but it . . . has no inherent suggestion of force”<sup>85</sup> is the only means by which the meaning of שָׁכַב in Gen 34:2 is to be determined, then Bechtel's interpretation is an adequate interpretation of the meaning of שָׁכַב in this verse. But, as both van Wolde's and Bechtel's assessments of עָנָה demonstrated, more than a single meaning of a word needs to be brought to a text and addressed to the use of the word in order to decide what the meanings of a word in a particular text are.<sup>86</sup> In addition to a general idea about the meaning of a word, the particular form of the verbal construction and the grammatical and narrative content of the text need to be taken into account, in order to interpret the word with its particular nuances of meaning in each place where it is used in the text.<sup>87</sup>

### **Taking contextual variables into account**

The necessity of taking textual variables into account can be seen in the different uses of the verbal construction עָמַד שָׁכַב. The expression עָמַד שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה—“to lie down with

<sup>83</sup> Seebass ( *TDOT* 8:16) notes that “the fundamental meaning “take” displays considerable flexibility.” Examples of the forceful taking of human beings are Gen 14:11-12, where the enemies of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and their allies take Lot away when they sack the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 14:11-12) and Ezekiel 23, where first the enemies of Oholah take her sons and daughters (v.10) and then the enemies of Oholibah take her sons and daughters (v. 25). The NRSV uses the word “seize” for לָקַח in both v. 10 and v. 25 of Ezekiel 23.

<sup>84</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 23.

<sup>85</sup> Bechtel., “What,” 28.

<sup>86</sup> For van Wolde, see Chapter 2, pp. 71-86.

<sup>87</sup> See Ceresko's observation on this issue, Chapter 2, p. 40, n. 13.

his fathers”—refers to the eternal sleep of death,<sup>88</sup> while the expression *שָׁכַב עִמָּה*—“he lay with her”—refers to heterosexual intercourse.<sup>89</sup> Once these idiomatic expressions are learned, then the content of the text is not always crucial for determining the meaning of the verbal construction, though *שָׁכַב עִמָּה* *can* refer to sexual assault, depending on the context in which it is found. In regard to a meaning of *שָׁכַב עִמָּה* as sexual assault, Deut 22:28-29 serves as an example of the importance of context in the determination of meaning. Recourse to the method recommended by Barr and to van Wolde’s analysis of *עָנָה* helps to demonstrate why *שָׁכַב עִמָּה* denotes rape in this text. In the scenarios which van Wolde examined which depict forced coitus, she observes that the verb denoting seizure of the victim is in the first position and “the verb describing the sexual deed is in the second position:”<sup>90</sup> in the case of Deut 22:28-29, *שָׁכַב עִמָּה*. It is at this point that Barr’s recommendation to take into account what the word contributes to the context in which it is found comes into play. In Deut 22:28-29, the verb *הִכָּה* denotes the violence used by the man for the purpose of raping (*שָׁכַב עִמָּה*) the young woman. To interpret *this situation* as one of mutuality due to the presence of the grammatical construction *שָׁכַב עִמָּה* would be to engage in what Barr terms “illegitimate totality transfer.”<sup>91</sup> Barr describes this as “the error that arises when the ‘meaning’ of a word (understood as the total series of relations in which it is used in the literature) is read into a particular case as its sense and implication.”<sup>92</sup> What interpreters must do instead, according to Barr, is recognize when “something is meant in one place which is really irreconcilable with what is said in

<sup>88</sup> This, or some variation of it, is used forty-three times in the MT (Even-Shoshan, 1140-1141).

<sup>89</sup> *שָׁכַב עִמָּה* in reference to intercourse is found in Gen 19:32, 34, 35; Gen 30:15, 16; Gen 39:7; Exod 22:15; Lev 15:33; Deut 22:22, 23, 25, 28; Dt 27:20, 21, 22, 23; 2 Sam 11:4, 11; 2 Sam 12:11, 24.

<sup>90</sup> van Wolde, “Does,” 541.

<sup>91</sup> Barr, *Semantics*, 218.

<sup>92</sup> Barr, *Semantics*, 218.

another”<sup>93</sup> and not transfer the meaning of a word that it has in one context to another context without taking that context into account. In the case at hand, that would be to transfer the meaning of שָׁכַב עִם where it denotes mutual agreement to engage in sexual relations to a situation where it denotes the sex act itself in a situation which is not one of mutuality.

### **The verbal construction שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה and the issue of its emendation in the MT**

In order to determine the viability of Bechtel’s claim that שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה does not indicate Shechem’s use of force against Dinah, it is necessary to look at all the instances of שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה in the MT so that these other uses can be compared to the use of שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה in Gen 34:2; that is, this is to employ the method of meaning-determination which Barr recommends. This brings to the fore, once again, the issue of emendation, because emendation of שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה is recommended in *BHS* in some instances of שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה, but not in all instances of its use. Since emendation of שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה is recommended for Gen 34:2, then the issue I examine in connection with the other uses of שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה in the MT is the basis on which emendation is recommended in *BHS*, with an eye toward the viability of the recommendation for emendation of שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה in Gen 34:2. שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה is found in Gen 34:2, Lev 15:18 and 24, Num 5:13, 2 Sam 13:14 and Ezek 23:8. In order to determine further the specific meaning of שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה in Gen 34:2, in Chapter 7, I once again compare its use in 2 Sam 13:14 and Ezek 23:8 to its use in Gen 34:2 and also to other words which in some contexts refer to forced sexual intercourse.

### **שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה in 2 Sam 13:14 and Num 5:13**

In terms of שָׁכַב it is true that it has no inherent suggestion of force, but when it is used with אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה, it does designate force, as can be seen in 2 Sam 13:14 in which שָׁכַב

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<sup>93</sup> Barr, *Semantics*, 218.

הָאֵתְּ אֵתְּ represents Amnon's removal of Tamar's clothing and his forced penetration of her<sup>94</sup> after he has overpowered her (*hazaq*) and pressed her down (*'anah*).

The editors of *BHS* do not recommend emending הָאֵתְּ אֵתְּ to אֵתְּ אֵתְּ in 2 Sam 14:13. This indicates that they accept the force denoted by הָאֵתְּ אֵתְּ when it is used in conjunction with שָׁכַב in this text. However, as I noted in Chapter 2, the editors of *BHS* do recommend emending the use of the object pronoun with שָׁכַב in Num 5:13 and 19, yet, as my exegesis of that text and my discussion of Milgrom's comments on the emendation of Num 5:13a indicated, not emending הָאֵתְּ אֵתְּ to read אֵתְּ אֵתְּ allows for an interpretation of Num 5:11-31 which leaves the text as it is in the MT, as well as for an interpretation that makes sense of the text's content and grammar.

### **שָׁכַב אֵתְּ in Ezekiel 23**

שָׁכַב אֵתְּ is one of the twelve instances of the use of the independent object pronoun in Ezek 23. Of these, six are a form of the feminine singular object pronoun: in vv. 8, 10, 17, 25, 29, 34. Of these, emendation of three—in vv. 8, 25, and 29—is recommended by the editors of *BHS*. One other emendation is recommended for an independent object pronoun in this text, in v. 23.<sup>95</sup> The recommendation for this verse is that the form אֵתְּ אֵתְּ be read אֵתְּ. This recommendation is supported by the *defectiva* form אֵתְּ found in multiple manuscripts. Ezek 23:23 refers to the various enemies that the LORD is going to bring against Jerusalem: “the Babylonians, all the Chaldeans, Pekod and

<sup>94</sup> See Chapter 7, p. 314 for this as the meaning of הָאֵתְּ אֵתְּ.

<sup>95</sup> There is one more object pronoun in Ezekiel 23 which receives attention from the editors of *BHS*: אֵתְּ אֵתְּ in v. 45. In terms of the textual content, the feminine form is called for because the pronoun refers to Samaria and Jerusalem, personified as women. It is noted in the CA that in a few manuscripts, the *plene* 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural feminine object pronoun is found. The *plene* form is used in Ezek 23:47, and the *defectiva* form of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural feminine object pronoun is used in v. 46, thus indicating that both kinds of spelling are found in this pericope. Perhaps the masculine form in v. 45 is attributable to scribal error and to the Masoretes reading the masculine form as referring to the cities' inhabitants, rather than to the cities themselves, and thus not suggesting a corrective reading for it.

Shoa and Koa, and all the Assyrians *with* them.” The emended reading makes sense in terms of the narrative content. In addition, it is an example of the observation in Gesenius-Kautzsch that in Ezekiel the forms “אִתִּי *with me* . . . אִתָּם *with them*” are pointed incorrectly as the independent object pronoun.<sup>96</sup> All of these factors serve to justify the emendation recommended in *BHS*.

The other recommended emendations—in vv. 8, 25, and 29—also are supported by two *defectiva* forms found in multiple manuscripts.<sup>97</sup> The readings suggested by the editors of *BHS* for both of these *defectiva* forms is to read them as the preposition אִתְּ with the objective suffix, rather than as the object pronoun. However, these *defectiva* forms equally could be read as the object pronoun, a reading which would coincide with the *plene* form found in the MT. The appearance of *defectiva* forms in multiple manuscripts is not a sufficient reason on its own to emend the text. The narrative content and grammar of Ezekiel 23 support reading the MT as it is.

The prophetic diatribe in Ezekiel 23 against the cities of Samaria and Jerusalem, personified as the sisters Oholah and Oholibah respectively, begins with a description of the sexual experiences of these two sisters when they were girls in Egypt. In v. 3 they are described as fornicating in Egypt, where “their breasts were squeezed (*pu'al* of מָצַעַ) and their virgin nipples were pressed (II מָצַעַ).” מָצַעַ appears once in Ezekiel 23,<sup>98</sup> once in Lev

<sup>96</sup> Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzsch; trans. A. E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), 300, §103b. These are examples of the *beth comitantia*.

<sup>97</sup> The form in the MT v. 8 is “אִתִּי,” in vv. 25 and 29 it is “אִתָּם.”

<sup>98</sup> It is suggested in *HALOT* (2: 612) that מָצַעַ in Ezek 23:21 be emended to read מָצַעַ, a suggestion that probably arises out of the parallels between vv. 3 and 21. However, it is harder for me to make sense of v. 21 with this suggested emendation than to read the MT as it is, so I chose to read the MT as it is. Thus, I calculate only one use of מָצַעַ in Ezekiel 23.

22:24, where it refers to the squashed testicles of a bull, and once in 1 Sam 26:7 with מָצָה, where it refers to throwing a spear into the ground.<sup>99</sup> These other instances of מָצָה indicate that it refers to rough handling. The word I have translated as “pressed” (II מָצָה) *HALOT* glosses as “squeezed” but also notes that in Ugaritic, *ym ṣy* is “wine pressed out.”<sup>100</sup> Having chosen “squeezed” already for מָצָה, I chose “pressed” for II מָצָה.

After apprising us of the sisters’ experiences as girls in Egypt, the author informs us that the sisters became the LORD’S and bore sons and daughters (v. 4). While “under” the LORD, Oholah fornicated and lusted after the Assyrians (v. 5), upon whom she bestowed (נָתַתְּ) her fornication (v. 7): behavior which derived from her girlhood experiences in Egypt and which she had not forsaken (v. 8a). What had happened to her in Egypt? There they had “raped her (שָׁכַב אֹתָהּ) and pressed her virgin nipples and poured out their lust upon her” (v. 8b). This represents the perversion (\*תְּזוּנָה) which she had learned in Egypt: being raped and liking it so much that she longed for more of it.<sup>101</sup>

Translating שָׁכַב אֹתָהּ as “they raped her” maintains אֹתָהּ as the object pronoun, an interpretive decision which is justified by the content and grammar of Ezekiel 23, a chapter in which the prophet lambastes the apostate Jerusalemites via the metaphor of the sexual depravity of the adulterous wives of the LORD. Rape is indicated by the content of v. 8 with its description of Oholah’s virgin nipples being pressed and of lust being poured out upon her. The description of her virgin nipples being pressed is paralleled in v. 3, where rough treatment also is indicated by the verb מָצָה, a parallel description of what

<sup>99</sup> *HALOT*, 2: 612.

<sup>100</sup> *HALOT*, 2: 892. This indicates that the “squeezing” or “pressing” was *hard*.

<sup>101</sup> *HALOT*, 4: 1717, notes that תְּזוּנָה “is different from the approximate synonym, זְנוּנָה (“fornication,” *HALOT* 1: 276). “In BHeb. the sbst. occurs only in Ezekiel, and it has no parallel in the cognate languages.” It is found in Ezek 16:15, 20, 22, 25f, 29, 33, 34, 36 and 23:7f, 11, 14, 17, 19, 29, 35, referring to an “obscene practice.”

occurred in Egypt that reinforces an interpretation of rape in v. 8. As for the content of the chapter as a whole, a depiction of Oholah *liking* being raped—in that she indulged herself in lustful pursuits once she had experienced coitus, even coitus that was forced — contributes to the picture of total depravity that the prophet paints of the apostate nation. The expected response to being raped is one of revulsion, not attraction. A comparison of the experience of being raped to the experience of being slaves in Egypt is an apt comparison. By making the comparison in the way that he does, Ezekiel says even more: you were mistreated in Egypt, yet perversely you *liked* it,<sup>102</sup> and in your perversion you have sought similar experiences, experiences that harm you. As for the prophet’s accusations of fornication against the sisters in the first place—that is, of being guilty of fornicating even when they were being raped—the mindset revealed in Num 5:11-31, as well as in the legal instruction in Deut 22:13-27, indicates that the kind of thinking that views a young female as answerable for her behavior even when she was raped is well within the realm of possibility in the kind of patriarchal culture revealed in parts of the MT.<sup>103</sup> This difference in the thinking between then and now about who was responsible when rape occurs may have contributed to the decision of the editors of *BHS* to suggest emendation in v. 8; that is, they would not accuse a girl of fornication if she were raped: therefore, what really must be intended in this verse is that she was “slept with.”

Once “judgment is done to” Oholah (v.10), the author turns his attention to

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<sup>102</sup> There is support in the tradition for such a view, in that the people, hungry in the wilderness, longed to return to the flesh-pots of Egypt (Exod 16:3). Also, in Ezek 16: 30-34, the prophet emphasizes the *different*, or backward, not-what-is-expected nature of Jerusalem’s sexual exploits.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Marvin A. Sweeney (“Ezekiel,” *The Jewish Study Bible* [ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004], 1084, n. 3), who notes that “in contrast to modern sensibilities, Israel is being blamed for its own abuse.”

Jerusalem/Oholibah. Lustful like her sister Oholah, she seeks the attention of the Babylonians who come and penetrate her (הִתְּוֹ אֶמְטִי)<sup>104</sup> with their perversion (v.17). Because of the way in which Oholibah flaunted her perversions and her pudenda, the LORD’S desire withdraws from her (v.18),<sup>105</sup> but Oholibah does not notice. Instead, she increases her perversions, longing for her days of youthful fornication in Egypt (v.19), “when the Egyptians pressed [her] nipples on account of [her] young girl’s breasts” (v. 21). The parallels between vv. 3, 8, and 21 indicate that just as Oholah was raped in Egypt, so was Oholibah. Now, due to Oholibah’s having longed for that experience again, the LORD will see to it that she is ‘raped.’ The LORD tells Oholibah “I am going to direct (יָרֵךְ) my indignation (אֲקַדְּ) toward you (יָרֵךְ)” (v.25). What this means for Oholibah is that the enemies who have come against her will “press (הִשָּׁץ) her (הִתְּוֹ) with fury (הִתְּוֹ)” (v. 25), just as the Egyptians had pressed (הִשָּׁץ) her virgin nipples in her girlhood. The editors of *BHS* recommend emending the independent object pronoun in v. 25 to the preposition הָאֵל with the feminine suffix, citing multiple manuscripts with the *defectiva* form הָאֵל in support of their recommendation. Such an emendation requires, as well, a

<sup>104</sup> For justification of this translation, see Chapter 6, pp. 264-268.

<sup>105</sup> The LORD’S desire (הִשָּׁץ) withdrawing (עָזַב) from Oholibah parallels the withdrawal (עָזַב) of Oholibah’s appetite (הִשָּׁץ) from the Babylonians in v.17bα. According to *HALOT* (722) עָזַב is a “by-form of עָזַב.” In Gen 32:26, the man with whom Jacob wrestles pushes hard on the hollow of Jacob’s thigh and Jacob’s thigh withdraws (עָזַב) from its socket. In Jer 6:8, the LORD warns that his desire (הִשָּׁץ) will be withdrawn (עָזַב) from Jerusalem, because the city “keeps fresh her wickedness.” In both the Jeremiah and Ezekiel texts the subject of the feminine form of the verb is the feminine noun הִשָּׁץ. To translate עָזַב/עָזַב in Ezek 17bα and 18bα as “to turn from in disgust” (NRSV/JPS) is to create a misleading picture of Oholibah. There is no indication in Ezekiel 23 that Oholibah was ever disgusted with sex or with her sexual partners. Rather, the picture created in v. 17 is that of a woman satiated with the Babylonians; hence, she begins to long for the paramours whom she remembers from Egypt with their large erections and fulsome emissions (v. 19). It is the case that v. 28aα states that the LORD is going to put Oholibah in the hands of those whom she הִשָּׁץ, but this does not refer to hatred or disgust, but rather just to the fact that, satiated, she no longer desires the Babylonians. A similar picture is created in Gen 29:30-31, where, when Jacob marries Rachel, he prefers her to Leah. Leah is הִשָּׁץ (“not desired”) because Jacob now had married the woman he wanted in the first place. It is the case that the הִשָּׁץ which Oholibah feels for the Babylonians after she is satiated with them (v.28aα) is paralleled in v. 29a by the הִשָּׁץ with which the Babylonians will treat her. Here הִשָּׁץ *does* reflect hatred on the parts of the Babylonians, the hatred felt by those who were once desired, but no longer.



switch in verb form to I  $\text{פָּשַׁע}$ , resulting in a translation such as that found in both the NRSV and JPS: “they shall deal with you in fury.” However, II  $\text{פָּשַׁע}$  should be retained with the meaning of “press,” in order to maintain the word play present in the MT—because of the comparisons that the author of Ezekiel 23 has made via his use of the verb II  $\text{פָּשַׁע}$  in vv. 3, 8, 21, 25, and 29.

In Ezekiel 23, the verb  $\text{פָּשַׁע}$  is used ten times: in vv. 3, 8, 10, 21, 25, 29, 30, 38, 39, 48. In vv. 3, 8, 21, it refers to the young sisters’ nipples being pressed, thus indicating the use of II  $\text{פָּשַׁע}$  in these verses. As for v. 25, the imagery leading up to it indicates that the meaning “pressed” is intended in this verse as well. In v. 22, Oholibah/Jerusalem is told twice that the enemies will come *against you*:  $\text{עָלֶיךָ}$ . Then, this image of being “pressed against” is reinforced by the statement in v. 24 that the enemy will “set themselves against you ( $\text{עָלֶיךָ}$ ) *on every side*.” The rest of v. 25 and all of v. 26 are a recitation of the abuse that the enemies’ pressing against Oholibah will consist of. Then, just as with Oholah, in the verse before the summary statement concerning what the end result of Oholibah’s being pressed on all sides will consist of, the hands that will do this “pressing” are referenced twice in v. 28.<sup>106</sup> In v. 29, there is a repetition of “they shall press you” ( $\text{וַיַּעַשׂוּ אֵלֶיךָ}$ ). II  $\text{פָּשַׁע}$  is indicated in v. 29 as well, since in both vv. 25 and 29, the subject is the same—the enemies gathered all around—and, since in both verses, the syntax is the same: v. 25: “they shall press (against) you with fury;” v. 29: “they shall press (against) you with hatred” ( $\text{בְּשִׂנְאָה}$ ). As the basis for the recommended emendation in v. 29, the editors of BHS refer their readers to the recommendation in v. 25, thus

<sup>106</sup> In v. 9 the hands of the Assyrians are referenced twice before, in v.10, these hands administer Oholah’s terrible fate.

indicating that the basis for their recommendation in v. 29 is the *defectiva* form אַתָּךְ found in multiple manuscripts.

Then, in v. 30, the prophet declares, עָשָׂה אֱלֹהֵי לְךָ. The metaphor of “pressing” has given way to an encapsulating statement concerning “these [things that] will be done” to Oholibah.<sup>107</sup> The indication is, then, that at this point there has been a switch in verb form in v. 30 from II עָשָׂה to I עָשָׂה. I עָשָׂה is then repeated in vv. 38, 39, 48. Thus, the narrative content and the grammar of the pericope as a whole militate against relying on the *defectiva* forms in multiple manuscripts to support an emendation of אֹתְךָ to אֶתְךָ in vv. 25 and 29—or of אֹתָהּ to אֶתָּהּ in v. 8.

### **“שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ” in Leviticus 15**

The only other place in the MT where the verbal construction “שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ” appears—with the exception of its use in Gen 34:2—is in Lev 15:18 and 24. Leviticus 15 is a chapter which addresses the issue of purification from bodily discharges. Verse 18 addresses the situation of heterosexual intercourse. Due to ejaculation both parties must bathe and are unclean until evening. Verse 24 addresses the situation of intercourse with a menstruating woman. The man is unclean for seven days. Force is not implied in either of these situations, a conclusion which is supported by the summary statement of the chapter in Lev 15:33, which refers back to the man who lies with an unclean woman and שָׁכַב עִמָּהּ is used.<sup>108</sup> As I have demonstrated, שָׁכַב עִמָּהּ can refer to forced sex, but, in the case of Deut 22:28-29 where it does refer to rape, it is the narrative content of the text which indicates what the appropriate meaning is. If that same standard is applied to Lev 15:18

<sup>107</sup> Similarly I עָשָׂה in v. 10 is part of the summary statement concerning the judgment that “was done” to Oholah.

<sup>108</sup> Parallel usages to the one in Lev 15:33 are found in Deut 27:20-23, where “שָׁכַב עִמָּהּ” refers merely to sexual relations, as it does here in Lev 15:33.

and 24, since force is not indicated in these verses and yet *שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ* is used, it would seem that emendation to *שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ* would be recommended for these two verses in the Critical Apparatus of *BHS* and yet it is not. Emendation of these forms in Lev 15:18 and 24 finds support from the fact that in the rest of the references to sexual intercourse in Leviticus (there are nine more), *שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ* (“lie with”) is used. However, these nine references are all in the Holiness Code and Leviticus 15 is not. This may account for the difference between the forms in Leviticus 15 and the forms in the Holiness Code, though the pointing in Lev 15:18 and 24 does not appear to reflect the social situation depicted in the text and thus a recommendation for emendation could be expected, according to the editors’ own reckoning; that is, they do not recommend any change for *שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ* in 2 Sam 13:14, which depicts rape, so they should recommend emendation for these two verses which do not depict rape.

### **Emendation of the object pronoun in Genesis 34**

*BHS* recommends changing the object pronoun to the preposition with a suffix in vv. 2 and 9 in Gen 34 and includes references to the Ancient Versions as support. This recommendation finds further support in the notation in *HALOT* that “in Gn 34<sub>2,9</sub>, 1-2 Kg, Jr, Ezek אִתּוֹ etc. is often used instead of אִתָּהּ because *אִתָּהּ* is lacking in MHb.”<sup>109</sup> This statement in *HALOT* is similar to the one made in Gesenius-Kautzsch that “especially in Kings, and always in Jer. and Ezek.” the preposition *אִתָּהּ* is pointed incorrectly “*אִתּוֹ with me; . . . אִתָּם with them*”<sup>110</sup>—except for the fact that *HALOT* expanded on the notation made in Gesenius-Kautzsch concerning the incorrect pointing of specific forms in specific books in the MT to a general principle about the lack of *אִתָּהּ*

<sup>109</sup> *HALOT*, 1: 101. This statement is #d under the entry for “*אִתָּהּ*”. Under the entry for “*אִתָּהּ*” the assertion is made again: “the suffix form of *אִתָּהּ*, *אִתּוֹ* etc., is frequently incorrectly substituted” for “*אִתָּהּ*.”

<sup>110</sup> *Gesenius*, 300, §103b.

in MHb and has added Gen 34:2-9 to the notation in Gesenius-Kautzsch as verses in which II תָּא (the preposition “with”) has been pointed incorrectly as I תָּא (the direct object marker). However, II תָּא with a suffix is found in vv. 6, 8, 10, 16, 21, 22, 23 in Genesis 34. This indicates that the pointing in Genesis 34 does not exhibit a lack of II תָּא, even in verses where this situation is supposed to exist; that is, vv. 6 and 8.<sup>111</sup> Yet, *HALOT* recommends emendation of הָתָּא to הָתָּא in v. 2 and of אֶתְנִי to אֶתְנִי in v. 9. The mix of pronominal forms in Genesis 34 indicates that the author used the forms that he wanted where he wanted them and that the Masoretes understood this usage, either in terms of understanding the grammar of Biblical Hebrew or in terms of passing along the tradition which they had received or in terms of understanding the author’s intent—or for all three reasons.

In v. 2, הָתָּא is used three times as the object of the verbs רָצָה, לָקַח and כָּבַד. It is with the third usage that BHS recommends emendation to הָתָּא. However, the threefold use of הָתָּא in Gen 34:2 exhibits what van Wolde terms “diagrammatic iconicity: a kind of analogical inferring. The reader observes a certain similarity between forms in the text which (s)he connects with a certain content.”<sup>112</sup> The analogy that the reader makes is between the connection of the forms of the text with each other and actual human experience. In terms of the three instances of the third person feminine singular object pronoun, referring to Dinah as the object of Shechem’s attention and actions, the sense of what occurred that is conveyed is one of the rapidity with which he acted once he saw

<sup>111</sup> Waltke and O’Connor (177, n. 27, quotes in the text are theirs) appear to be skeptical about emending “I תָּא” too frequently. They refer their readers to Sperber’s *A Historical Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* “for a list of some passages involving supposed “confusions” between” I תָּא and II תָּא.”

<sup>112</sup> van Wolde, *Words*, 157.

her.<sup>113</sup> “He saw her (הִתְּאֵר), he took her (הִתְּאָר), he raped her (הִתְּאָר)” indicates Shechem’s instant objectification of Dinah upon seeing her and then his immediate appropriation of her. As Scholz notes, “no references to time and place delay the actions.”<sup>114</sup> To emend הִתְּאֵר to הִתְּאָר with the third verb breaks the chain of diagrammatic iconicity. The chain of iconicity is not broken until the last in the series of verbs in v. 2: וַיַּעַזְבֵהּ. וַיֵּצֵאָהּ conveys the result of what Shechem has done to Dinah. The change in verb form at this point serves to connect the three previous verbs as one continuous action. It also creates a brief pause in the narrative of abuse which calls attention to its effect on Dinah<sup>115</sup> before the narrative returns to its focus on Shechem and his interests and actions.

As for v. 9, there is a recommendation in *BHS* to emend הִתְּאָר to הִתְּאָר, following the verb הִתְּאָר. הִתְּאָר depicts Hamor’s offer of a marriage alliance to Jacob and his sons. An analysis of the grammatical constructions of הִתְּאָר in the MT indicates that the emendation recommended in *BHS* is unnecessary.

<sup>113</sup> That Shechem acted quickly once he spotted Dinah is a perspective shared by several scholars. Sharon Pace Jeansonne (*The Women of Genesis* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 91) notes that “as soon as Shechem sees her, he attacks.” Cf. Susanne Scholz (“Through Whose Eyes? A ‘Right’ Reading of Genesis 34” in *Genesis: The Feminist Companion to the Bible* (Second Series) [ed. Athalya Brenner; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998], 165) to whom the “combination of three verbs describes the rapid-fire action of the rape.” So also, Peter Lockwood (“Jacob’s Other Twin: Reading the Rape of Dinah in Context,” *Lutheran Theological Journal* 29D [1995], 100), who describes Shechem as “see[ing] Dinah and immediately tak[ing]her.” That the translators of the LXX viewed Shechem’s actions as rapid is conveyed by its rendering of the Hebrew as λαβὼν αὐτήν ἐκοιμήθη μετ’ αὐτης: “grabbing her, he lay with her.” The Vulgate’s rendering too indicates such a perception. In the Vulgate, his sighting of her is in a dependent clause, after which his “falling in love with her,” his taking of her, and his raping her follow in rapid succession. The sense of the rapidity of his actions is reinforced by the fact that there is no pronoun after the verb *rapuit*. *Illa* follows the third verb, *dormivit*, as the direct object of both verbs.

<sup>114</sup> Scholz, *Rape*, 136.

<sup>115</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 26, n. 97.

This chart will help to clarify my discussion:

<u>BDB</u>	<u>Halot</u>	<u>BDB</u>	<u>Halot</u>
Make oneself a daughter's husband to	To become a son-in-law for someone	Form a marriage alliance with	Intermarry with
תָּנַח Gen 34:9 1 Kgs 3:1	1 Kgs 3:1		Gen 34:9
בְּ 1 Sam 18:21, etc.	1 Sam 18:21, etc.	Deut 7:3 Josh 23:12 Ezra 9:14	Deut 7:3 Josh 23:12 Ezra 9:14
לְ 2 Chron 18:1	2 Chron 18:1		

The use of I תָּנַח (the direct object marker) with תָּנַח is indicated in the first column in the chart above. That this is the form of this grammatical construction in Gen 34:9—and not II תָּנַח (the preposition “with”)—is ascertainable in several ways.

First, there is the cultural perspective that is reflected in the uses of prepositions in different languages. The gloss in *BDB* “make oneself a daughter’s husband (son-in-law) to” reflects the practice of the son-in-law-to-be *submitting himself to* his future father-in-law to be circumcised before marriage.<sup>116</sup> This practice is reflected in the grammatical construction, which was maintained even in the absence of the practice of premarital circumcision.<sup>117</sup> Waltke and O’Connor stress the importance of taking into account the different perspectives reflected in prepositional usage in different languages. They assert that “the explanation [of usage] lies in the perspective of the speaker” of the language<sup>118</sup> and they provide the following example:

‘He took it from the table’ = [in French] *il l’a pris sur la table*. . . . Are

<sup>116</sup> *HALOT* (“תָּנַח,” 365a): “circumcised before marriage by future father-in-law; “daughter’s husband,” “bridegroom, newly married; “related by marriage.” Cf. Jastrow (“תָּנַח,” 514), “connection, son-in-law; bridegroom; (metaph., with reference to the covenant of circumcision).”

<sup>117</sup> Stephen A. Geller (“The Sack of Shechem: The Use of Typology in Biblical Covenant Religion,” *Prooftexts* 10 [1990], 9) notes that “originally it was a puberty or marriage ritual intended to increase fertility of seed on the usual sacrificial principles of *pars pro toto* and *do ut des*. . . . Biblical religion moved circumcision to birth, as a “sign” of the covenantal promise of seed (Gen. 17).”

<sup>118</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, 191, 11.2c.

we to assume that *sur* in French is ambiguous, meaning both ‘on’ and ‘from’? . . . No native speaker would accept the general interchangeability of *sur* with *de* [as in *de Paris* ‘from Paris] or *depuis* [as in *depuis le matin* ‘from morning on, since morning’]. . . . English expresses the separation caused by the act through the use of the preposition ‘from,’ while French looks at the position of the object before the action took place.<sup>119</sup>

While usage and meaning in the source language must be ascertained from the perspective of the users of the source language, the translated text must accommodate the needs of the receptor language, as is evident in the above example. Thus, *וְהָתַן אֶת אִתּוֹ*, *וְהָתַן בּוֹ*, and *וְהָתַן לּוֹ* can all be translated “to make a marriage alliance *with*,” since English requires the preposition “with” with the English expression “to make a marriage alliance.” Nevertheless, this does not indicate that usage and meaning in Biblical Hebrew reflect the interactive or reciprocal sense of the preposition “with” (see *infra* for more concerning the preposition *בְּ*).

In terms of the verb *וְהָתַן*, in *HALOT* a distinction apparently has been made between a marriage alliance established between *two groups* of men and a marriage alliance established between *two men*. The decision of the editors of *HALOT* to put Genesis 34 with the other instances of *וְהָתַן* which refer to a marriage alliance between two groups of men may be based on a reading of *בְּ* as “with” in a reciprocal sense since these alliances involve the men exchanging women *with* each other. Thus, they are reading *וְהָתַן אֶת אִתּוֹ* as an incorrect rendering of the preposition *אֶת* with the first person plural objective suffix. However, if the grammatical construction *בְּ וְהָתַן* is to have any integrity at all, then the preposition must mean the same thing whether it refers to an alliance involving *two men* or an alliance involving *two groups of men*: *בְּ* cannot mean “to” in the reflexive

<sup>119</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, 191.11.2c.

sense of “submitting oneself to”<sup>120</sup> someone in one case and then “with” in a reciprocal sense in another—even though this is apparently the way that *BDB* views the use of *הִתְּן* when it is used with the preposition *בְּ* (see columns 1 and 3 *supra*). The notation in *BDB* that this grammatical construction is in the genitive when it is used to refer to marriage alliances between two groups of men indicates that the editors consider *בְּ* in this usage to be the preposition “with.”<sup>121</sup> However, Waltke and O’Connor assert that “lexical ambiguity cannot be associated with relational terms: the prepositions, unlike nouns and verbs, do not have the sort of independent senses that lead to lexical ambiguity. To impute to *בְּ* a meaning ‘in’ and ‘from’ is to separate the word too drastically from its patterns of use.”<sup>122</sup> Central to my argument is the realization that *בְּ* does not express “with” in the reciprocal or cooperative sense<sup>123</sup> conveyed by the prepositions *עִמָּךְ*<sup>124</sup> or *וְעִמָּךְ*.<sup>125</sup> The meaning of “with” conveyed by *בְּ* is either the instrumental use of *בְּ* or the *beth comitantiae*. However, it can have the meaning of the movement “toward” or “into” a goal<sup>126</sup> that similarly is conveyed by the “goal orientation” of the preposition *לְ*—which

<sup>120</sup> The reason for the choice in *HALOT* of the English preposition “for” to render the reflexive use of *הִתְּן* is not clear (column 2 in the chart above).

<sup>121</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, 137, 9.1a.7: “the object of a preposition is in the genitive; it is the preposition(al phrase) that is directly related to the verb.”

<sup>122</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, 224, 11.4.3c. This situation regarding prepositions also can be seen in the prepositions used with the verb *הִתְּבַר*, which has a similar meaning to *הִתְּן*. *הִתְּבַר* refers to “allying oneself (to):” *qal* in Ps 94:20 (*HALOT*, 287), where the one “being allied to” by human beings—God—is in the accusative. *הִתְּבַר* in the *hitpa’el* in Dan 11: 23 refers to “a small group in Judea” (John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary [Dallas: Word Books, 1989], 299) “making an alliance *with*” (*HALOT*, 288) Antiochus IV and *לְ* is used. Waltke and O’Connor (193, §11.2.2a) note that with *לְ* “the senses involving movement” are more important than “the contingent locative sense (‘at, by, near’). . . . *לְ* marks a direction (‘toward’) [or] a goal or termination (‘into’)”—as do *בְּ* and *לְ*: just like the inferior human being moves toward the superior deity in her/his alliance to God, so does the small group in Judea move toward the superior Seleucid king. Even though English requires the use of the preposition “with” here, the reciprocal sense of the *hitpa’el* is not intended here, but rather the reflexive.

<sup>123</sup> “*בְּ*,” *BDB*, 88-91; “*בְּ*,” *HALOT*, 103-105; “*בְּ*,” Waltke and O’Connor, 196-199, §11.2.5.

<sup>124</sup> “*עִמָּךְ*,” *BDB*, 767-768; “*עִמָּךְ*,” *HALOT*, 839-840; “*עִמָּךְ*,” Waltke and O’Connor, 219, §11.2.14b.

<sup>125</sup> “*וְעִמָּךְ*,” *BDB*, 85-86; “*וְעִמָּךְ*,” *HALOT*, 101; Waltke and O’Connor, 195, 11.2.4a.

<sup>126</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, 196, §11.2.5b. This sense of what *בְּ* conveys with the verb *הִתְּן* can be seen in its use with “verbs of extending, touching . . . and reaching” (Waltke and O’Connor, 199, 11.2.5f).



“matches the goal orientation of the accusative function with transitive verbs.”<sup>127</sup> Thus the sense of the ‘movement’ of one man ‘toward’ another man,<sup>128</sup> which is evident in 1 Kgs 3:1 (Solomon aligning himself to Pharaoh via a marriage alliance:  $\text{I תא}$ ); in 1 Sam 18 (David aligning himself to Saul via a marriage alliance:  $\text{א}$ ); and in 2 Chr 18:1 (Jehoshaphat aligning himself to Ahab via the marriage of his son Jehoram to Ahab’s daughter Athaliah:  $\text{ל}$ ), is retained when the alliance refers to two groups of men entering into a marriage alliance. In these situations,  $\text{א}$   $\text{התן}$  or  $\text{אצ}$   $\text{התן}$  refers to the means of making marriage alliances in which men submitted themselves *to* other men in the rite of circumcision. The submission of men *to* other men in the rite of circumcision *is* the alliance which *creates the condition for the exchange of women*. This configuration of the meaning of  $\text{א}$   $\text{התן}$  is evident in its uses in Deut 7:3, Josh 23:12, Ezra 9:14, and of  $\text{אצ}$   $\text{התן}$  in Genesis 34. In all of these cases, the creation of the condition for the exchange of women ( $\text{התן}$  with the particle or preposition) is referenced *separately* from the reference to the exchange of women itself, which is the result of the alliance that the men have made with each other, via their submission to circumcision.

Other indications that  $\text{התן}$  with  $\text{אצ}$  as the direct object marker is the grammatical construction which is used in Gen 34:9 and 1 Kgs 3:1 include the fact that the accusative can be used with the reflexive of the *hitpa’el*—the *binyan* in which  $\text{התן}$  is found in the MT; the fact that  $\text{התן}$  is in the *hitpa’el* in all of its uses in the MT, thereby indicating that  $\text{התן}$  refers to a man *submitting himself* to another man in the rite of circumcision;<sup>129</sup> and the fact that there are verbs which “may govern either direct-object accusatives or

<sup>127</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, 222, §11.4.1b.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Jastrow (“ $\text{התן}$ ,” 514), “to enter into the family; “they desired to *ally him* to the Nasi family.”

<sup>129</sup> Gesenius-Kautzsch, 150, §54.f (c). G-K notes that the *hitpa’el* “more often” conveys the reflexive sense than the reciprocal.

prepositional objects, with no appreciable difference in meaning.”<sup>130</sup> Thus, it is grammatically possible for the verb *הָתַן* to function in the same way, whether it is marking a direct object or the object of a preposition. There is no need, then, to emend *הָתַן אֶת־נָּוּ* to read *אֶת־נָּוּ* in Gen 34:9. Neither v. 2 nor v. 9 needs to be emended. In terms of v. 2, this means that Shechem’s coitus with Dinah was coercive. He seized her and he raped her (*שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה*).

**Genesis 34:3: דָּבַר עַל־לֵב, אָהַב, דָּבַק בְּ**<sup>131</sup>

If Shechem forced himself on Dinah, then what is to be made of the description in v. 3 of his attitude toward her in the aftermath of his having raped her? Bechtel interprets this verse as it has been interpreted traditionally and views Shechem’s attitude toward Dinah as a positive one. However, there is a view of v. 3 different from the traditional one. This view is expressed by Ackermann,<sup>132</sup> by Gravett,<sup>133</sup> and also Scholz. According to Scholz, “in the context of rape the verb *אָהַב* does not refer to mutual intimacy. Rather, it indicates the meaning “to desire” in the sense of to lust (after).”<sup>134</sup> However, in spite of the context in which *אָהַב* is used, Bechtel views it as an expression of Shechem’s loving feelings for Dinah, a perception on Bechtel’s part which is reinforced for her by the presence of the terms *דָּבַק בְּ* and *דָּבַר עַל־לֵב* in v. 3. According to Bechtel, *דָּבַק בְּ* describes Shechem’s bonding with Dinah, and “speaking to her heart” is an expression “that connotes ‘reassurance, comfort, loyalty, love’ . . . [and that] is used to describe one person’s professing of love for another or God’s professing of love for Israel (e.g. Judg.

<sup>130</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, 222, §11.41b.

<sup>131</sup> For further discussion of these verbs, see Chapters, 5, 7, and 8.

<sup>132</sup> See Chapter 1, pp. 19-20.

<sup>133</sup> See Chapter 1, pp. 21-22.

<sup>134</sup> Scholz, *Rape*, 140-141.

19.3; Hos. 2.16).<sup>135</sup> To Bechtel, *דָּבַק* *דָּ* denotes the kind of bonding that is expressed in the cleaving of husband to wife that is described in Gen 2:24. This is the situation which I assessed in Chapter 1 as more reflective of the need of human beings to reproduce than a situation of deep emotional and spiritual attraction.<sup>136</sup> Scholz's assessment of *דָּבַק* *דָּ* in Gen 34:3 is not dissimilar from my assessment of its meaning in Gen 2:24. She sees it as indicating "physical and spatial but not emotional closeness."<sup>137</sup> As with these two scholars' interpretations of the significance of *אָהַב* in v. 3, the case which each interpreter makes for her interpretation of *דָּבַק* *דָּ* is in line with her understanding of what is depicted in this verse. The same can be said for their interpretations of *וַיִּדְבֹר עַל-לֵב הַנָּעִר*. Unlike Bechtel's positive appraisal of this idiom, Scholz sees it as a description of "Shechem's attempt . . . to make Dinah accept his interests."<sup>138</sup> There is much to recommend Scholz's interpretation of *דָּבַר עַל-לֵב* and it can be found in the references that Bechtel adduces in support of her *positive* appraisal of this idiomatic phrase. Bechtel cites Judg 19:3, which gives the Levite's reason for going after his *pilegesh*, who has left him and returned home to her father. The Levite is going to speak to her heart in order "to cause her to come back." Now the Levite might be intending to profess his love for his *pilegesh*, as Bechtel claims,<sup>139</sup> but the Levite's later treatment of her indicates that, if he did profess his love for her, it was most likely a profession of love made to change a well-founded negative opinion that his *pilegesh* had of him in order to get her to accept his interests and return home with him. *Therefore, it is questionable how much such a speech would represent love and how much it would represent his own self-interest.* This sort of motivation is

<sup>135</sup> Bechtel, "What," 28-29. Her citation is of Tribble (*Texts*, 67).

<sup>136</sup> Chapter 1, p. 18.

<sup>137</sup> Scholz, *Rape*, 139.

<sup>138</sup> Scholz, *Rape*, 141, italics mine.

<sup>139</sup> Bechtel, "What," 28.

even clearer in the Hosea text which Bechtel cites. In Hosea 2, the prophet casts God in the role of husband and Israel in the role of wife. God's "speaking to" Israel, "using persuasion," is undertaken for the same reason as that of the Levite: to get her to return to him. Her return is sought after he has "stripped her naked and exposed her as in the day she was born, killed her with thirst (v. 5), hedged up her way with thorns and built a wall against her (v. 8), and uncovered her shame in the sight of her lovers (v. 12)." (NRSV). After that kind of treatment, the husband certainly would need to speak persuasively in order to get her to change her opinion of him. And the Hosea text makes it very clear that this persuasion is undertaken in order *to get the wife to accept the husband's interests*.<sup>140</sup> These two citations indicate that interpreting דָּבַר עַל־לֵב merely as a profession of love is an inadequate way of making sense of this idiom.<sup>141</sup> Based on an examination of the use of the idiom דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in every situation in which it is used in the MT, Scholz asserts that in every case the context is one of "fear, anxiety, sin, or offense."<sup>142</sup> Thus the evidence suggests that Shechem's treatment of and attitude toward Dinah does not necessarily have the positive cast to them that Bechtel suggests.

### **What for, Dinah?**

Her positive construal of Gen 34:2 leads Bechtel to ask a key question in relation to Dinah: "if Dinah is not raped, how does she function in the story?"<sup>143</sup> Bechtel answers

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<sup>140</sup> Even though these interests are benevolent in relation to Israel, 'the wife', they are nonetheless unilaterally declared by God, 'the husband'. The wife has no say in the matter—except for what the husband decrees that she will say: "you will call [me] "my husband" and you will no longer call me "my baal"." (Hos 2:18b); "I will say to Lo'ammī, "You are my people" and he [representing the male body politic, Israel] will say "my God"." (Hos 2:25b).

<sup>141</sup> I discuss the idiom דָּבַר עַל־לֵב more fully in Chapter 8, pp. 352-376.

<sup>142</sup> Scholz, *Rape*, 141. Scholz's conclusion about the settings in which דָּבַר עַל־לֵב is used is based on Georg Fischer's ("Die Redewendung לב דבר על im AT-Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis von Jes 40,2," *Biblica* 65 [1984], 244-50) study of the idiom in all ten places in which it appears in the MT: Gen 34:3; 50:21; Judg 19:3; 1 Sam 1:13; 2 Sam 19:8; Isa 40:2; Hos 2:16; Ruth 2:13; 2 Chr 30:22; 32:6.

<sup>143</sup> Bechtel, "What," 31.

that question by viewing Dinah as the original bonder, as the one who goes forth “to see, to get acquainted with, the daughters of the land”<sup>144</sup> and who thereby ignites a desire for bonding which Bechtel apparently views as latent in the other characters to whom she attributes this desire: Shechem, Jacob, Hamor and the other Shechemite men. The issue which develops in connection with Dinah’s venturing out, according to Bechtel, is that Dinah’s crossing of her “group/tribal boundary”<sup>145</sup> is threatening to Simeon and Levi, who feel that such boundary-crossing “threatens the unity of [their] tribal community and threatens their identity.”<sup>146</sup>

The problem with Bechtel’s assertion that Dinah’s goal in “going forth” was “to get acquainted with” the daughters of the land”<sup>147</sup> is that v. 1 merely depicts Dinah as going out to “look at” the local girls. Bechtel’s decision that Dinah was going out to get acquainted with the daughters of the land may have arisen from a misreading of the definition of *לראות* in *BDB*. *BDB* glosses *לראות* for Gen 34:1 as “to gaze at so as to become acquainted with” and for Eccl 3:22 as “to gaze at so as to find out;” in other words, Dinah did not go out to make friends with the local girls, but rather to acquaint herself with them: to look at them in order to learn about them. The citation in *BDB* in the German here—“sich vertiefen in:” “to make oneself more knowledgeable about”—is a further indication that *BDB* recognizes that “visiting with” someone is not what is denoted by *לראות*.<sup>148</sup> Even though the NRSV, the REB, and the JPS translate *לראות* as “visit” in Gen 34:1,<sup>149</sup> comparison with the forty other instances of this linguistic

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<sup>144</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 32.

<sup>145</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 32.

<sup>146</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 32.

<sup>147</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 32.

<sup>148</sup> *BDB*, 908a, italics mine.

<sup>149</sup> Camp (“The (E)stranged,” 293) notes that “the verbal phrase often translated ‘to visit with’ is actually *lir’ot be*, literally, ‘to look into’.”

construction in the MT indicates that “looking at” is what is depicted in Gen 34:1.<sup>150</sup> In no case where  $\text{בָּ} \text{רָאָה}$  is used in the MT is there a sense of the observer “visiting with” the one (or those whom) he or she is observing. That this is the case can be seen in Judah’s words in Gen 44:34, where Judah pleads with Joseph to allow Benjamin to return with his brothers to Canaan, for Judah could not bear to  $\text{בָּ} \text{רָאָה}$  the suffering that Benjamin’s not returning would cause his father. Clearly, Judah is referring here to his desire not to “look on” or “witness” his father’s suffering.

An occurrence of  $\text{בָּ} \text{רָאָה}$  that parallels what is indicated in Gen 34:1 is found in Song of Songs 3:11. Here the speaker adjures the daughters of Jerusalem to “gaze upon” or “look at” King Solomon as he goes by in his litter with his entourage. There is no indication here that the daughters of Jerusalem are going to “visit” the king; rather, they are going to look at something of interest to them—from a distance. The LXX translation of Genesis 34 also supports a reading of Dinah’s going out to look at the local girls from afar. In the Göttingen version of the LXX, the Greek term used is *καταμαθάνω*, which Liddell and Scott gloss as “to learn or observe well; to understand; to consider well.”<sup>151</sup> *Καταμαθάνω* also is used in Judg 5:36 to describe Sisera’s mother looking intently out the window for his return. The MT has  $\text{הִקְשָׁה}$  here: “to look down from above.”<sup>152</sup> The choices of the translators of the LXX for these texts indicate that they perceived Dinah as having an intense interest in the local girls, but an interest that she intended to indulge by looking at them from afar. When a translation of  $\text{רָאָה}$  as “visit” is appropriate,  $\text{בָּ}$  is not used. The concept of “visiting” someone is indicated by the verbal construction  $\text{לְ} \text{רָאָה}$  as

<sup>150</sup> There are forty-one instances of this grammatical construction in the MT (Even-Shoshan, 1041).

<sup>151</sup> Liddell and Scott, *A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 357.

<sup>152</sup> *HALOT*, 4:1645.

an infinitive construct. It is used in 2 Sam 13:5, 6 in the two references to King David going to visit Amnon when Amnon is sick—or pretends to be—as well as in 2 Kgs 8:29 and 9:16 and 2 Chron 22:6 to refer to Ahaziah visiting the wounded King Joram.

Bechtel’s misunderstanding concerning the meaning of *בָּרָצָה* forms the basis for her argument, for she asserts that “the notion of [Dinah’s] ‘going forth’ and crossing her tribal boundary forms the foundation of what evolves in the story.”<sup>153</sup> However, if Dinah is just going to look at the local girls and is not going to visit them, then she does not cross her group/tribal boundary. This realization leads to the unraveling of Bechtel’s argument, for this means that the motives she attributes to Simeon and Levi for their actions are not accurate. If Dinah does not cross her group/tribal boundary, then they do not act in defense of their identity and the unity of their community. In addition, if Dinah did not go out with a desire to bond with the locals, then she would not have ignited that selfsame desire that Bechtel perceives as secreted in the hearts of Shechem, Jacob, Hamor and his fellow Shechemites. Thus my review of the meaning of *בָּרָצָה* in Gen 34:1 indicates how important the nuances of translators’ choices in the receptor language are, because it demonstrates how even the smallest textual detail can set interpreters off in a certain direction. The trajectory that an understanding of *בָּרָצָה* as “get acquainted with” set for Bechtel is one where she perceives an “emphasis in the text on wanting to get acquainted, nonviolent ‘giving and taking,’ bonding, professing love, honoring and cooperating:”<sup>154</sup> a perception of what Gen 34 is *about* that is not grounded in the text after all.

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<sup>153</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 32.

<sup>154</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 31.

### **Grammatical truth and accurate interpretation**

In her summary statement concerning what Genesis 34 is about, Bechtel claims that “Dinah and Shechem actively engage one another and bond sexually.”<sup>155</sup> Bechtel’s claim ignores the fact that Dinah is not depicted in Genesis 34 as actively engaging anyone. After her initial “going out to look at the local girls,” Dinah is an object. *This is the grammatical truth of her situation*, which, in order to do her justice, analysts need to honor and not grant her an agency which is not depicted in the text after v. 1; that is, after she encounters Shechem.<sup>156</sup> Bechtel objects that readers “from a twentieth-century, predominantly ‘individual-oriented perspective . . . automatically assume that . . . all the males in the story treat Dinah as an ‘object’.”<sup>157</sup> When the grammar of the text is taken into account, this assumption is seen to be accurate. When Bechtel tries to make Dinah’s situation other than it is, she reads against the clear directives of the text itself, a way of reading that ultimately does an injustice to the character depicted, as well as to lives behind and lives in front of the text—those lives whose life experiences are reflected in the characters’ experiences and those lives to whom the characters’ life experiences still speak. It is those lives then and these lives now that require that Dinah’s experience—and the experiences of all the characters in the text—be represented as accurately as possible, for this is where meaning originates: in those lives then and in these lives now.

### **According to Bechtel, what is Shechem like?**

Bechtel’s reconstruction of Shechem as a lover, not a rapist, is based on a very limited view of what a rapist ‘looks like.’ She asserts that “the description of Shechem’s

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<sup>155</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 35.

<sup>156</sup> Gravett (“Reading,” 283) notes that “Shechem’s actions objectify Dinah as he assumes the position of primary actor and she never again re-establishes her status as subject in the text.”

<sup>157</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 19.



behavior and attitude does not fit that of a rapist”<sup>158</sup> and she makes this assertion on the basis of sociological studies that “reveal that rapists feel hostility and hatred toward their victims, not love.”<sup>159</sup> She is correct that Shechem does not fit the sociological profile of a rapist that she has presented to her readers: that of a hostile, insecure man who rapes women in order to create “the illusion of power, control, dominance and superiority”<sup>160</sup> and she also is quite right that Shechem has no “need to create the illusion of power, control, dominance and superiority.”<sup>161</sup> As the son of the chief of the land, he already has all of those things at his disposal—to make use of as he pleases. The problem with her assertion is that there are profiles of rapists other than that of the hostile rapist, so, even though this one does not fit Shechem, this does not prove conclusively that Shechem is not a rapist.

### **What’s it all about?**

Like the other scholars whose arguments somehow construe Shechem as not a rapist, Bechtel is unable to make her case that Shechem is depicted as a lover in Genesis 34 in terms of the content of the text itself—as it is presented in the MT. She also is unable to do this in terms of the texts she adduces for comparison to Genesis 34.

A main factor in her inability to make her argument is the decision she made concerning what the text is about. She made this decision based on a fixed meaning for עָנָה of “to humiliate intensely,” a definition which is not nuanced enough in terms of the meaning of עָנָה in Genesis 34. This led her to apply the sociological construct of a shame culture to the text. My analysis of her argument revealed that this sociological model did

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<sup>158</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 31.

<sup>159</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 29.

<sup>160</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 21.

<sup>161</sup> Bechtel, “What,” 30.

not fit Genesis 34. Her interpretation of Genesis 34, then, indicates the importance of the fit to the texts under analysis of the sociological models interpreters bring to their interpretations—especially in terms of an effort to counter cultural presuppositions which we as contemporary readers bring to our readings of the biblical text. With this in mind, in the next chapter, I offer five sociological constructs which can help to make sense of Genesis 34 as it is in the MT. I also analyze six translations of Genesis 34 from antiquity as a means of displaying the origins of presuppositions which many contemporary readers bring to their readings of Genesis 34. What can be seen as a result of this is that both our presuppositions which arise from our cultural conditioning, as well as our presuppositions which arise from traditional interpretations of Genesis 34, color our perceptions as to what a text is about and therefore what we decide that it means, thus indicating the influence of presuppositions on the determination of the meaning of biblical texts.

## **Chapter 5: The role of presuppositions in the determination of meaning**

### **Introduction**

In order to make sense of Genesis 34, it is necessary posit a reason for the author's having written this narrative and written it as he did; that is, it is necessary to take a position concerning what Genesis 34 was *about* to its author. In order to do this an interpreter must make sense of the world within Genesis 34: the world that the text imaginatively projects. The interpreter has to take into account, as well, the world outside the text: the world within which and for which Genesis 34 was written. In addition, the interpreter has to discern the relationship of these two worlds to each other. In order to be able to take these two worlds of Genesis 34 into account and to be able to understand the relationship between the two worlds, it is necessary to alter some of the presuppositions that we, as contemporary readers, bring to our readings of Genesis 34. In this chapter, I address the issue of presuppositions related to the world within Genesis 34. Then, in Chapter 6, I address the issue of the world outside Genesis 34, as well as the relationship of the two worlds of Genesis 34 to each other.

In order to address some of the presuppositions that we present-day readers bring to our readings of Genesis 34, I present five sociological models that can help to make sense of the text as it is presented in the MT and I also review six translations of Genesis 34 from antiquity that can be seen to have influenced contemporary readings of the text. In Chapters 6 and 7, I use the sociological models that I introduce here as part of my analysis of Genesis 34. In this chapter, I present the description of sociological models first, because the sociological model of abduction marriage helps to make sense of Jerome's reconstruction of the events depicted in Gen 34:2-3. What becomes evident in

all of the translations from antiquity that I analyze is that the cultural views of the translators influenced their translations of Genesis 34.<sup>1</sup> Such a realization raises the issue of the use of the Ancient Versions and of the Targums in order to interpret biblical texts. I close the chapter by examining this issue via Moshe Greenberg's reflections on this topic.

There are several sources of insight into the relational and social dynamics at play in Genesis 34 that can help to make sense of these dynamics. First, a review of the reputation/retaliation method of social management employed by the Bedouin can clarify some of the behavior of the male characters in Genesis 34. A look at the reality of violent responses to the abduction of females also can help to make sense of the relational dynamics among the men in Genesis 34. Viewing circumcision as a premarital rite helps to clarify its function in Genesis 34. Finally, a review of the institution of marriage as it is presented in Genesis 34, as well as a different understanding of the crime of rape from the one that Bechtel brought to her reading of the text, can assist in unraveling this "gnarled knot of a tale."<sup>2</sup> If these various sociological models help to make sense of the text as it is in the MT, without having to alter it or any of the other biblical texts adduced in order to make sense of Genesis 34, then they can be considered a good fit to the text. The goal of a good fit of the insights derived from the application of sociological information to the text to which such information is applied is the improvement of the translators' transfer competence; that is, translators' abilities to convey in their translations the realities of the relational/social dynamics depicted in and reflected in the MT.

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<sup>1</sup> Ilona Rashkow (*Upon the Dark Places: Anti-Sexism and Sexism in English Renaissance Biblical Translation*. [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990], 38) observes that a "translation reflects the translators' 'view of the world'."

<sup>2</sup> Geller, "The Sack," 2.

### **Seeing the world within the text: insights from Bedouin culture**

When considering the situation of the Jacob and his family in the world that Genesis 34 imaginatively projects, it is important to take into account the differences between our world and the textual one—if we are readers who read this text in buildings with locks on the doors and windows and maybe even an alarm system in place to warn of intruders—and, of course, a police officer to call should an intruder come and a judicial system in which to try said intruder for her/his crime. None of this exists in the story world depicted in Genesis 34. Jacob and his family live outside the city of Shechem, exposed to the world and whatever might come their way. In such a situation, their safety lay in appearing strong enough to live as they do—on their own out in the open.

In his analysis of the ways in which the Bedouin conduct themselves in a similar situation, Clinton Bailey explains how the Bedouin manage their affairs living without an overarching structure of law enforcement and jurisprudence.<sup>3</sup> This situation exists for them because migration with their flocks means that they “must often seek pasture in remote places—remote from any law enforcement agencies that might protect them from attack.”<sup>4</sup> The strategy for dealing with this situation in Bedouin culture is “organization into clans, or blood revenge groups, known as *khamisa*.”<sup>5</sup> Blood revenge groups exist to protect not only the group, but also the individual out on her or his own. The degree of strength that the group exhibits is the foundation of its effectiveness: one does not assault or in any way interfere with any member of another clan because you will be dealt with

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<sup>3</sup> Clinton Bailey, “Bedouin Law Explains Reaction to Rape of Dinah.” *Bible Review*, vol. VII, 4 (August, 1991).

<sup>4</sup> Bailey, “Bedouin,” 20.

<sup>5</sup> Bailey (“Bedouin,” 20) relates that “*khamisa*, meaning “five,” denot[es] five degrees of patrilineal kinship.”

accordingly by other members of that clan.<sup>6</sup> This is the aura of protection that a member of a clan carries into an otherwise unadjudicated world.

Since the Bedouin law of vengeance is about enabling the greatest number of people to survive the harshness of desert life, its goal is the prevention of bloodshed, not its provocation. However, the emphasis on demonstrated strength in this type of social organization means that there is a danger that this emphasis could lead to an unnecessary spilling of blood—not by the larger and stronger clans who do not need to prove themselves, but rather by the smaller and weaker clans who feel that they do. Because of this, there are aspects to the strategic deployment of the clan system that are designed to curb bloodshed. If a weaker clan chooses to engage in futile attempts to demonstrate its strength in response to an offense perpetrated by a member of a stronger clan, these attempts often end badly for all concerned: men on both sides may die or be badly injured. In order to avoid such situations, Bedouin engage in face-saving rituals that allow the smaller clans to maintain their dignity without having to undertake any retaliation that might result in bloodshed. Bailey describes one such occasion that involved assuaging the offense of the accidental murder of “a man from one of the smallest and weakest tribes in the Sinai, the Bili, by someone from one of the largest and strongest tribes, the Suwarka.”<sup>7</sup> Bailey reports that “before a large intertribal assembly convened for the occasion [the Suwarka] implored the Bili to forego their right for vengeance and to settle for blood-money. The powerful Suwarka declared, despite their strength and the comparative weakness of the Bili, “The Bili are strong and determined

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<sup>6</sup> Bailey (“Bedouin,” 20) explains that “the ability of a Bedouin *khamsa* to deter others from attacking depends . . . on its record for acting in defense of its rights, for never tolerating even the slightest infraction.”

<sup>7</sup> Bailey, “Bedouin,” 21.

people and can cause us harm.”<sup>8</sup> The effect of this ritual was that everyone went home satisfied and in one piece.

There is, however, one contravention of the Bedouin cultural code that is most resistant to this kind of face-saving adjudication and that is the violation of the female of another clan.<sup>9</sup> The seriousness of this offense can be seen in the extremity of the punishment for it. “In cases of rape . . . the Bedouin allow the plunder of as much of the violating clan’s livestock as can be taken in a period of seven days.”<sup>10</sup> The extremity of the punishment also demonstrates how it is meant to act as a deterrent: by bringing to the mind of a potential offender what his offense will cost his entire clan. This type of protection is necessary since females are often on their own caring for the livestock, while the men are “searching for new pasture and looking after the security of the clan.”<sup>11</sup> Because of this situation, “only fear of vengeance and the reputation of the menfolk for relentlessness keeps other men away from their women. If a woman is indeed violated, it can only mean that the perpetrator considered her menfolk too weak to worry about; that is, the reputation of her menfolk is not sufficient to deter violation.”<sup>12</sup> The inviolability of the female constituents of the clan is crucial because the concept of blood-revenge is based on the blood relationship of clan members. This means that, if the affinity relationships are to be advantageous for the clan as a whole, then these must be decided upon by the tribal elders and not result from the self-indulgence of an errant individual.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Bailey, “Bedouin,” 21.

<sup>9</sup> Bailey, “Bedouin,” 21.

<sup>10</sup> Bailey, “Bedouin,” 21. The entire clan is held responsible for the act of one of its members.

<sup>11</sup> Bailey, “Bedouin,” 21.

<sup>12</sup> Bailey, “Bedouin,” 21.

<sup>13</sup> Bailey (“Bedouin,” 19) explains that “the mutual responsibility of Bedouin for one another is based on common blood. For this reason, they are very concerned that the people whom they consider patrilineal kin are in fact kin, and not of outside origin. The only way to guarantee this is to ensure the inviolability of their women.”

This reputation/retaliation structuring of social relationships, the kind of shame-culture described by Bechtel, and the kind of shame/honor culture reflected in Deut 22: 13-29 all exhibit a strong group orientation. As a result of this similarity, the social relationships which characterize a reputation/retaliation system need to be distinguished from those which characterize shame/honor cultures. Both of these types of social organization rely on the concept of honor in the sense of the reputation of the male members of the society. In the reputation/retaliation system what is most threatening is what others might *do* in terms of an actual physical attack. Thus what is most pressing in terms of the reputation of the men in such a setting is their reputation for having the physical strength and the necessary acumen to strategize in ways that will protect the group *from other groups* in the most effective manner. In a shame/honor system what is most pressing is the social strength that the male members within a society exhibit in relation to each other. In such a system, the well-being of the family is related to the maintenance of the honor/reputation of the head of the household. In contrast, what is at stake in a reputation/retaliation system is more than just the possibility of a household's slippage in status—which ultimately may affect adversely the flourishing of his family, but which does not place the safety and survival of his family in immediate jeopardy. In the reputation/retaliation system, the very existence of one's clan may be on the line if one is threatened with loss of life and/or the threat of absorption into another tribe. In this system, what matters is the reputation for strength of the entire clan for defense and survival purposes. What is evident, then, is what I have stated previously: the organization of a society along the lines of a shame/honor system reflects *intra*-societal



social relationships while the reputation/retaliation system reflects inter-societal relationships.

In terms of Genesis 34, Jacob and his household<sup>14</sup> constitute the entirety of the entity Israel. There are no other households within this entity to compete with Jacob for honor in terms of the dynamics of a shame/honor system. The world that Genesis 34 imaginatively projects is that of inter-tribal relationships between the Shechemites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, and Jacob and his family. The shame/honor system and the reputation/retaliation system are the same, however, in that they are both agonistic in nature and they both require the control of female sexuality, but for different reasons. This distinction needs to be made in order that confusion not arise in connection with Simeon and Levi's response to what Shechem did and, as a result, Genesis 34 be read through the grid of a shame/honor culture, rather than through the grid of a reputation/retaliation culture. The agonistic struggles of men with each other in a shame/honor culture or the threat of such struggles in a reputation/retaliation system raise the issue of the ego needs of those engaged in these struggles or threatened by the possibility of their occurring. In a reputation/retaliation culture the men must have a high degree of self-esteem and morale, since they must be ever-ready to hold their ground in a confrontation. This is not the same as the individualized ego needs of men in a shame/honor culture, ego needs that are intertwined closely with their libidinal desires. The combination of the ego needs and the libidinal indulgence of the male members of a shame/honor culture form the basis for the containment of female sexuality, whereas in the reputation/retaliation system the requirement of female sexual purity arises out of the pragmatic concerns of

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. v. 30, where Jacob refers to "I and my household."

maintaining manageable tribal boundaries and enhancing tribal strength through advantageous marriages.

### **Seeing the world within the text: the aftermath of abduction**

The kind of violence that can arise in response to the theft of a man's sexual property can be seen in the aftermath of the gang-rape of the Levite's *pilegesh*. The Levite does not tell the gathered tribes of Israel that he 'gave' his *pilegesh* to the mob that they might rape her (Judg 19:25). Instead, he leaves the situation open to interpretation and his audience apparently decides that the mob *took* the Levite's *pilegesh* from him. This belief that the Levite's 'woman' had been taken from him then becomes the impetus and rationale for the violence which follows. This kind of response to the misappropriation of a man's sexual property holds true across time and cultures.<sup>15</sup> That this is the case can be seen in the fact that laws from the Ancient Near East addressed this issue,<sup>16</sup> and anthropologists find that abductions of females and violent responses to it still occur in modern Greece.<sup>17</sup> Within the various cultures where this occurs "the only characteristic in common is the fact that the arranged marriage, made by the fathers of the couple involved, is the socially approved norm."<sup>18</sup>

In terms of making sense of Genesis 34, the abduction of a young girl described by Judith Evans-Grubbs in her study of abduction marriage in fourth century CE Roman society is more illuminative of Shechem's abduction of Dinah than the not-quite comparable incident of the 'theft' of the Levite's concubine. Evans-Grubbs cites a letter written by the Christian bishop, Basil of Caesarea in 375 CE, in which he upbraids a local

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<sup>15</sup> Judith Evans-Grubbs ("Abduction Marriage in Antiquity: A Law of Constantine and its Social Context." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 79 (1989), 63) notes that "there appear to be no geographical or religious boundaries within which the phenomenon of marriage by abduction occurs."

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 3, pp. 134-136.

<sup>17</sup> Evans-Grubbs, "Abduction," 62.

<sup>18</sup> Evans-Grubbs, "Abduction," 63.

church leader for not responding properly to an abduction that has taken place in his district.<sup>19</sup> Basil instructs the addressee of his letter that, in terms of the abducted child (*pais*), he is to “take her *by all force* and restore her to her parents.”<sup>20</sup> As for her abductor, he is to be excommunicated. As for anyone who assisted him in any way, that person and his entire household are to be excommunicated for a period of three years. “As for the village that received her who was abducted and kept her or even fought to keep her,”<sup>21</sup> they too are to be excommunicated so “that all may learn [to] consider[] the ravager as a common foe like a snake or any other wild beast, to pursue him accordingly and *to champion those who are wronged*.”<sup>22</sup> Significantly, Basil’s emphasis is on the girl and her family. With this as his focus, Basil *names her abductor for what he is*: “a ravager . . . a snake . . . a wild beast”—not a lover.

Evans-Grubbs suggests that “the ‘fighting’ that Basil refers to may have been against the males of the girl’s family and their slaves and freedmen who had come to rescue her.”<sup>23</sup> Evans-Grubbs suggests that the villagers may have sided with “the abductor [because] he was a favorite among the villagers, or even a local notable taking advantage of his higher status and power.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, the particulars of this situation as interpreted by Evans-Grubbs bear a strong resemblance to the situation depicted in Genesis 34. The popular (v. 19a) son of the chief of the land has abducted a young girl (v.4).<sup>25</sup> The reference to Shechem’s popularity within his tribe indicates that should the Jacob and his family try to free Dinah through recourse to violence, his fellow

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<sup>19</sup> Evans-Grubbs (“Abduction,” 74) relates that “the addressee of this letter is unknown, but he appears from the context to have been a local church leader.”

<sup>20</sup> Evans-Grubbs, “Abduction,” 74, italics mine.

<sup>21</sup> Evans-Grubbs, “Abduction,” 74.

<sup>22</sup> Evans-Grubbs, “Abduction,” 74, italics mine.

<sup>23</sup> Evans-Grubbs, “Abduction,” 75.

<sup>24</sup> Evans-Grubbs, “Abduction,” 75.

<sup>25</sup> See Chapter 7, pp. 336-338 for a discussion of Dinah’s age.

Shechemites would be more than willing to back him in resisting such an effort on their part. Thus Evans-Grubbs' explication of the social realities of this kind of situation reveals the potential volatility of such situations. Nonetheless, in Genesis 34, this potentially volatile situation at first appears to have been successfully addressed by the agreement of the Shechemites to undergo circumcision. How can this be so?

### **Seeing the world within the text: circumcision as a pre-marital rite**

For readers of the Hebrew Bible, circumcision is associated with the sign of the covenant; that is, it is the sign *par excellence* of being one of the chosen people. However, this is not its only significance in Genesis 34 or perhaps it is not its significance in this text at all. In this story circumcision functions in the same way as the Trojan horse does in the *Iliad*: it is deployed as a strategy by the Jacobites as a means of gaining access to the city of Shechem where Dinah is being held, so, *in terms of the plot*, whether or not it has any religious significance to the Jacob and his family is of no consequence.<sup>26</sup> It is how the *Shechemites* perceive circumcision that is crucial to this story. For them, circumcision is associated with the preparation of a bridegroom for marriage. This explains its presence in this text and its acceptability to the Shechemites; that is, it is something that was deemed necessary by certain groups in the archaic world depicted in Genesis 34 when a man married. Thus, what the Jacobite<sup>27</sup> requirement suggests to the Shechemites is that if the Shechemites were to be properly prepared to intermarry with them, they would have to undergo circumcision.

<sup>26</sup> Noble ("A Balanced," 183, n. 24, italics his) notes that since Jacob and his sons are "motivated by political expedience, *nothing* can be inferred about their true beliefs."

<sup>27</sup> Bechtel ("What," 30-34) uses the term "Jacobite" to refer to Jacob and his household. I use it to refer to Jacob and his sons when they are acting jointly or to refer to Jacob and his household when they are affected as a whole by the events described in the text. See especially Chapter 6, pp. 274-276 and pp. 282-285.

As I discussed in Chapter 4, the root  $\text{חָתַן}$  denotes circumcision as the means by which men established alliances with each other as the basis for their exchange of women.<sup>28</sup> According to *HALOT*,  $\text{חָתַן}$  refers to being “circumcised before marriage by [one’s] future father-in-law.”<sup>29</sup> Contemplation of the social realities of being circumcised by one’s future father-in-law helps to explain why intermarriage between tribes can establish trust and interdependence between males of previously unrelated groups: allowing one’s most sensitive bodily organ (both physically and psychologically) to be held and cut by a stranger demonstrates tremendous trust, something which both of the males involved in the procedure would experience.

However, the thought of undergoing such a painful and tension-filled experience makes Hamor’s and Shechem’s satisfaction with the requirement still somewhat mystifying. Their positive acceptance of the Jacobite requirement can be explained by the fact that circumcision is the Jacobite answer to Shechem’s offer to give whatever they ask of him. What is asked of Shechem is not some great outlay of wealth as a bride-price and marriage settlement, as he had suggested. Instead, a small cut on sensitive Shechemite skin will lead—Hamor and his fellow Shechemites think—to their controlling Jacob and his family thereby gaining control of all of their wealth.

### **Marriage in Genesis 34**

Having ascertained the significance of circumcision in this text, what, then, is the significance of the situation in this text that the rite of circumcision prepares the men for;

<sup>28</sup> *HALOT*, 1: 364-365. See Chapter 4, p. 180-185.

<sup>29</sup> *HALOT*, 1: 365. Wyatt (“The Story,” 438) concurs: “in this cultural context circumcision was a marital rite, performed on the bridegroom (*hātān*) by his future father-in-law (*hōtēn*).” In his reflections on Genesis 34, the eighteenth century commentator Yaakov Culi (170) imagined a situation similar to that for Genesis 34. He writes that, after the Shechemites agreed to the circumcision, “they invited Jacob’s sons to circumcise them. During the next two days, they circumcised Shechem, Chamor, Shechem’s five brothers, and then all the other men of the city. The total number of circumcised was 645 adult men, and 276 young boys.”

that is, marriage? In contemporary North American culture, marriage is associated with love. Such an association is evident in the song “Love and Marriage,” which was popular in the 1950’s. The lyrics of the song declare that “love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage.” More recently, this association of love with marriage (or at least with the desire for a life-long commitment based on compatibility and mutual attraction)<sup>30</sup> in North American culture can be seen in such popular films as *Sleepless in Seattle*, *The Runaway Bride*, and *Three Weddings and A Funeral*. In such a cultural setting, when a couple announces that they plan to marry, the assumption is that they are in love with each other. Such an association of love with marriage does not necessarily fit the situation depicted in Genesis 34. The bulk of the references to marriage in this text are to those which are to be undertaken for political purposes; that is, the exchange of women as the consequence of the ties established between the Shechemite and Jacobite males via circumcision (vv. 9,16, 21). Though love could be a part of such a picture, depending on the couple involved, marrying for love is not the motivating force for the formation of these marriages.<sup>31</sup>

But what about Shechem’s motive for wanting to secure his possession of Dinah by making her his wife? Shechem’s demand of his father that he secure Dinah as his wife precedes the references to the politically-motivated marriages. The fact that Shechem’s

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<sup>30</sup> A life-long commitment based on compatibility and mutual attraction is the basis on which the Internet match-making site *eharmony* makes its appeal to potential clients.

<sup>31</sup> Bechtel (“What,” 22) asserts that in group-oriented cultures “sexual intercourse between a man and a woman is not perceived in romantic or spiritual terms, but in terms of its perpetuation of the family/group.” Likewise, Evans-Grubbs (“Abduction,” 61) observes that “betrothal, then, is a social and indeed a political pact, formed on the basis of economic and social factors of concern to the family as a unit and to the community. The personal feelings of the prospective couple are not of great concern. . . . ‘Love’ does not enter into the betrothal arrangements, even though the culture may have an ideology of romantic love.” Evans-Grubbs’ observation that, when people themselves do not make the decision as to whom to marry, love is not the motivation for undertaking marriage is applicable to situations which reflect inter-tribal marital arrangements, as well as those to which Evans-Grubbs and Bechtel are referring to; that is, intra-societal marriages.

desire to maintain possession of Dinah by making her his wife is the expression of the desire of one person and is not the result of participation in a situation established as the result of a group decision suggests that his desire for marriage signifies something other than what the politically-based marriages represent.

One means of investigating Shechem's motive for marriage to Dinah is to compare his encounter with Dinah to the situation described in Deut 22:28-29, which many interpreters see as similar to what happened between Shechem and Dinah. A comparison of the scenarios depicted in the two texts reveals that the basic event is the same: a chance encounter that leads to rape. What is different about the two scenarios, though, is that the man in Deuteronomy is held to account because he is discovered during the rape. As far as readers of Genesis 34 know, Shechem and Dinah were not discovered in the course of his raping her, yet Shechem decided that he wanted to keep Dinah. In fact, the explicit depiction of his saying that this is what he wants suggests that this is not anyone else's idea; that is, it is not the result of his being held to account by others for his rape of Dinah. Therefore, since the situation underlying Shechem's expressed desire to secure his possession of Dinah by making her his wife is different from the situation which informs the politically-motivated marriages, does this indicate that he loves her?

The answer to that question hangs heavily—but not entirely<sup>32</sup>—on what is depicted in v. 3, the verse in which the author describes Shechem's motivation for wanting to secure Dinah as his wife. This is why it is important to honor the sequencing of the event the way the author has presented it, because v. 3 provides the motivation for

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<sup>32</sup> While the seven verbs in vv. 2 and 3 are crucial for determining the motivations for Shechem's behavior, there are other verses in Genesis 34 which also convey information about Shechem and which need to be explicated in order to see his character more fully. See Chapter 7, pp. 332-348.

what follows and what follows is what leads to everything else in the story. However, *in terms of the immediate plot development*, the nature of Shechem's desire has no more significance than whether or not circumcision has a religious meaning to Jacob and his sons. As far as the immediate plot development is concerned, all that matters about Shechem's attachment to Dinah is that it takes place, thereby creating the complication that must be dealt with by the other male characters.

Since, in terms of the immediate plot development what matters is the attachment, not the nature of it, there must be another reason for the author having depicted Shechem in the particular way that he did; that is, the author had something to convey beyond just relating what action followed upon what. This something more is conveyed by the way in which the characters are presented. Therefore, even though the nature of Shechem's desire for Dinah as presented in v. 3 may not affect the immediate development of the plot, it ultimately has significance in terms of the plot and the point that the author is trying to make.<sup>33</sup> It will affect the reader's sense of the believability of the characters and their actions. So, how *is* Shechem depicted in these verses?<sup>34</sup> Since I have demonstrated that the content and grammar of the text do not support a construction of him as not a rapist, is it possible that the author of Genesis 34 depicted him as a rapist and only a rapist?

### **What do rapists look like?**

In order to answer that question, it is necessary to enlarge on the current perception of what a rapist looks like, because, due to the traditional interpretation of Shechem as a rapist/lover, many interpreters have difficulty recognizing Shechem as a

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<sup>33</sup> In Chapter 6, I explain my understanding of the point the author is trying to make via the presentation of believable characters.

<sup>34</sup> In Chapters 6 and 7, I answer that question more fully than I do here.



rapist and only a rapist. This is because the traditional interpretation of him does not fit contemporary cultural constructions of how rapists behave. Thus Terence Fretheim finds Shechem's behavior to be "atypical"<sup>35</sup> and Sharon Pace Jeansonne finds the description of Shechem in v. 3 "surprising," coming after the description of him in v. 2.<sup>36</sup> Why is Jeansonne surprised? How does Fretheim know what 'typical' behavior is for rapists? They know, because they have certain ideas concerning what a rapist looks like, ideas galvanized in the crucible of culture, and, because of this, the traditional interpretation of Shechem's behavior and attitude in vv. 2-3 does not make sense to them.<sup>37</sup> It is necessary, then, to look at some of the cultural cues which serve to inform the current conception of rape in North American society in order to elucidate a view of rape which will help to make sense of Shechem as he is presented in the MT and not as his behavior and attitude have been interpreted traditionally.

In his article on Genesis 34, Mayer Gruber notes that until Susan Brownmiller's groundbreaking work, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*, there was "no historical analysis of rape."<sup>38</sup> According to Gruber, what prevailed prior to Brownmiller's work was "the received opinion . . . that a rapist was a male with an overactive sex desire who had no way to satisfy it except by attacking a woman who stimulated his passion."<sup>39</sup> However, Gruber's "perusal of volumes of research, [while] studying the rape of Dinah"

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<sup>35</sup> Fretheim, NIB, 1: 577.

<sup>36</sup> Jeansonne, *The Women*, 92. Jon Levenson ("Liberation Theology and the Exodus," in *Jews, Christians, and the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures* [ed. Alice Ogden Bellis and Joel S. Kaminsky; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000], 200) notes that "surprise on the part of interpreters usually indicates an error in their preconception of the text."

<sup>37</sup> Wolfthal (*Images*, 151) observes that "growing up, we knew exactly how to recognize a rapist. He was a stranger who lurked in the shadows and jumped out of dark alleys. Rapists, we thought, were a tiny fringe group of sex maniacs, easy to recognize by the distinctive crazed look in their eye."

<sup>38</sup> Gruber, "A Re-Examination," 120. Gruber is an Israeli scholar, but he is using analyses of rape from the U.S. in order to make assessments of the text.

<sup>39</sup> Gruber, "A Re-Examination," 120.

led him to believe “that in recent years a turnaround has occurred in the perception of rape.”<sup>40</sup> Basing his conclusion on the work of Nicholas Groth and Jean Birnbaum,<sup>41</sup> Gruber asserts that “today’s opinion is that the rapist conducts a sexual assault in order to articulate his anger or in order to demonstrate his power.”<sup>42</sup> The first construction of rape which Gruber adduces is that of the hostile rapist adduced by Bechtel. The image of the rapist that emerges from this understanding of what a rapist ‘looks like’ is one of an angry perpetrator, consumed with hatred for females because of feelings of inferiority engendered in him by women and responding to these feelings to express his anger. While this construction of rape describes the motivations and attitudes of some rapists, it does not encompass the entirety of motivations which underlie the crime of rape. Neither does the current popular conception of a rapist as a madman lurking in the bushes.<sup>43</sup> Susan Brownmiller adduces statistical results concerning the crime of rape and those who commit it which undercut this perception of a rapist. She reports that “from the non-nonsense FBI statistics<sup>44</sup> and some intensive sociological studies that are beginning to appear, we can see that . . . although the psycho rapist . . . certainly does exist, he is the exception and not the rule.”<sup>45</sup> This suggests, then, that there are ways of ‘seeing the rapist’ other than as a madman or a man who rapes in order to express his anger toward women.

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<sup>40</sup> Gruber, “A Re-Examination,” 120.

<sup>41</sup> Nicholas Groth and Jean Birnbaum, *Men Who Rape: The Psychology of the Offender* (New York: Plenum Press, 1979).

<sup>42</sup> Gruber, “A Re-Examination,” 120.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Julie A. Allison and Lawrence S. Wrightsman (*Rape: The Misunderstood Crime* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993), 21, 51, 59), who refer to “our stereotype of stranger rape [which] pictures the assailant lurking behind the bushes, brandishing a knife or threatening with a gun.”

<sup>44</sup> Susan Brownmiller (*Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* [New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1975], 174) relates that “police in every town and city compile their figures based on those offenders they manage to catch. . . . These figures are forwarded yearly to Washington, fed into computers and ground out again as the most comprehensive national statistics on forcible rape that we have: the *Uniform Crime Reports* put out by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.”

<sup>45</sup> Brownmiller, *Against*, 176.

A different profile of a rapist was developed by Andrea Medea and Kathleen Thompson, one they designated the “sexual gratification rapist.”<sup>46</sup> This is a rapist who appears to be safe and who rapes when he gets the opportunity, opportunities being afforded him because he does not fit the profile of the insane rapist or the hostile rapist. In fact, this is his chief characteristic: he is virtually unrecognizable. He could be anyone. P. L. N. Donat and John D’Emilio note in their survey of the changing perception in the United States over a three hundred year period of what constitutes rape, “as public discourse on sexual violence continued, it became increasingly evident that rapists were not only strangers behind bushes, but also might be dates, acquaintances, neighbors, husbands, friends, and relatives.”<sup>47</sup> This not-foaming-at-the-mouth, not-overtly hostile rapist has come to be termed the “date rapist.” There are two definitive characteristics of this rapist. First, as noted above, he is an opportunist. Second, he rapes because he has the social power to get away with it. The terminology “sexual gratification rapist” does not fit him—or any rapist—because rape is not about sex. It “is about power.”<sup>48</sup>

The date rapist counts on the fact that he would not be perceived as the kind of man who would do such a thing. In a survey done to identify characteristics of rapists, the subjects surveyed found the date rapist to be “confident, out-going, well mannered, clean-cut, psychologically stable, out-spoken, and well-liked.”<sup>49</sup> This profile is borne out in the testimonies of women who have been assaulted by this kind of rapist. Four female students at a small Jesuit liberal arts college in Massachusetts reported to researcher Ann

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<sup>46</sup> Andra Medea and Kathleen Thompson, *Against Rape* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1974), 21.

<sup>47</sup> P. L. N. Donat and John D’Emilio, “A Feminist Redefinition of Rape and Sexual Assault: Historical Foundations and Change” in *Confronting Rape and Sexual Assault* (ed. Mary E. Odem and Jody Clay-Wamer; Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1998), 42.

<sup>48</sup> Raine, *After*, 218.

<sup>49</sup> Allison and Wrightsman, *Rape*, 22.

J. Cahill that they had been attacked by “well-liked, upstanding members of the community.”<sup>50</sup> Thus, from this overview of the date rapist another image of the rapist emerges: a man who rapes because he has the power to get away with it.<sup>51</sup>

This review of sociological issues, both ancient and contemporary, suggests possibilities for discerning the relational dynamics in Genesis 34 through frameworks different from the sociological frameworks adduced by scholars whose analyses indicate in some way that Shechem was not a rapist. In my analysis of Genesis 34 in Chapters 6 and 7, I will return to these constructs and apply them to the text. I turn now to an examination of ways in which early translators of Genesis 34 brought their own cultural constructs to their interpretations of this text and, in so doing, how they altered the depiction of Shechem and Dinah in vv. 2-3.

### **Analyzing the translator’s sensibility**

In undertaking a review of the translations of Gen 34:2-3 in the LXX, the OL, the Vulgate, the KJV, the RSV, the NRSV, the JPS, and of v.1 and related verses in the Targums, I offer possible reasons for the interpretive decisions that the translators of these versions made. The information which I bring to my conjectures as to the bases for the decisions that these various translators made is based, first, on each text itself as not only a discourse which is reflective of values held,<sup>52</sup> but also as consisting of “a recognizable pattern of concepts and relations which . . . [can be] relate[d] to recognizable portions of reality.”<sup>53</sup> Second, I bring information about the reality that

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<sup>50</sup> Ann J. Cahill, *Rethinking Rape* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 127.

<sup>51</sup> An integral part of rape is the expression of the social power of the rapist. Wolfthal (*Images*, 22-23) notes that in sixteenth century Italy “erotic representations . . . operated on a political level” for upper class Italian males, in whom ““heroic” rape imagery aroused not only sexual desire but also feelings of omnipotence.”

<sup>52</sup> Hatim and Mason, *The Translator*, 120.

<sup>53</sup> Hatim and Mason, *The Translator*, 16.

informed the decisions that these translators made. Third, since I am speculating about the thought processes of the translators of these versions, I bring the concept of “frame analysis.”

Anthropologist Gregory Bateson introduced the concept of “frame,” which he defines as “an internal psychological state [which] makes up part of our map of the world.”<sup>54</sup> That state is defined by “the participant’s sense of what is being done.”<sup>55</sup> In terms of translation, this refers to the translator’s sense of what is being done in the text under analysis. The participant’s sense of what is being done is influenced by “patterns of experience and assumptions about the world, its inhabitants and objects”<sup>56</sup> and is referred to as our “schema:”<sup>57</sup> the means by which our sense of truth and reality is formed. Thus, internalized frames are endemic to the interpretive process. They “tell us what to expect [and] *we tend to assess or judge in terms of what we expect.*”<sup>58</sup> This conditioning of human beings in terms of certain representations of reality and the expectations engendered by these representations can become so ingrained that when a deviation in the pattern is encountered, the pattern overrides “actual visible evidence to the contrary,”<sup>59</sup> because “perception of reality depends on closeness of fit with, or accessibility to, an “internal organization of a stereotypical event.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> David Katan, *Translating Cultures: An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters, and Mediators* (Manchester, U. K.: St. Jerome Publishing, 1999), 34. Cf. Ellen van Wolde (“The Creation of Coherence, *Semeia* 81 [1998], 172), who asserts that the “text gives rise to inference-making on the part of the reader, but it is the reader who realizes this on the basis of his or her knowledge of the world that has resulted from interactional processes of individual experiences, culturally determined education and previously constructed mental representations.”

<sup>55</sup> Katan, *Translating*, 35.

<sup>56</sup> Katan, *Translating*, 35.

<sup>57</sup> Katan, *Translating*, 35.

<sup>58</sup> Katan, *Translating*, 54, italics mine.

<sup>59</sup> Katan, *Translating*, 91.

<sup>60</sup> Katan, *Translating*, 91.

What these conclusions about the mechanisms of frame analysis point to is the closure of the processing of information. Since it is humanly impossible to process all the information encountered in a situation, closure is an aid to perception, but closing off information input “tends to limit what is perceived to fit recognized patterns.”<sup>61</sup> As a result, “we tend to take more notice of what we expect, our internal image, than what we could theoretically perceive.”<sup>62</sup> This is the sort of knowledge processing which I suggest was part of the formulation of the LXX, the OL and the Vulgate translations of Gen 34:2-3. What I suggest is that, for Jerome and for the translators of the LXX, the presentation of the events in these two verses in the Hebrew texts that they had did not make sense to them and, because of this, they felt the need to alter the text in order to make it conform to culturally-formed internalized concepts of reality. As for the Old Latin, even though its translators probably were culturally closer to the cultural precepts evident in the LXX than Jerome and the translators of the LXX were to the Hebrew texts which served as their sources, the Old Latin still bears the impress of the particular construction of such an event from the standpoint of its translators, for their translation differs from the LXX in significant ways. What is evident in all three of these translations is the impress of cultural views on the way in which the text is interpreted and translated. As for the translators of the Targums, I propose that the realities of their minority position in the world caused them to focus on Dinah’s behavior, rather than Shechem’s. Such an approach to Genesis 34 is not justified by the content of the text itself, since Dinah’s behavior is described only in v. 1, whereas Shechem is described or referred to in vv. 2-24 and in v. 26, thus indicating that the author of Genesis 34 was more concerned with

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<sup>61</sup> Katan, *Translating*, 91.

<sup>62</sup> Katan, *Translating*, 92.

Shechem's behavior than with Dinah's.<sup>63</sup> This misdirected focus by the translators of the Targums, I will argue, led to an interpretation of Genesis 34 that is not reflective of the MT.<sup>64</sup> (For full translations of the ancient texts, see Appendix 2.)

### **Interpreting Genesis 34:1-3 in antiquity**

A review of the LXX, the Old Latin, and the Vulgate indicates that Shechem is depicted differently in these versions from the way in which he is depicted in the MT.<sup>65</sup> Rather than attempting to trace the sources of these differences to different *Vorlagen* which may have underlain these versions, I investigate the possibility that the different images of Shechem that emerge from these versions can be attributed largely to the different way in which the relational dynamics depicted in the translators' sources were construed by the translators whose work resulted in these versions; that is, rather than trying to find my way back to as-yet unattainable original Hebrew sources for the various versions as bases for determining the sources of these different depictions of Shechem, I examine printed texts of these versions now available to interpreters, since these are what many interpreters use when making comparisons with the MT in the hope of finding illumination for passages that they find difficult to understand. In doing this, my focus will be on Gen 34:2-3. My goal is to illuminate the differences in the depictions of Shechem in these various versions as indicative of the reality that those who developed

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<sup>63</sup> Robin Parry ("Feminist Hermeneutics and Evangelical Concerns: The Rape of Dinah as a Case Study," *Tyndale Bulletin* 53 [2002], 7) views "Dinah's 'going out to see the daughters of the land' [as] an element of only minor interest to the narrator of the story."

<sup>64</sup> I do not mean to imply that the MT was the source text for any of the Targums. However, currently, comparisons of the Targums are made to the MT. It is on this basis that I make comparisons—as a heuristic device which enables a possible explanation for the translations found in the Targums.

<sup>65</sup> See Chapter 2, p. 90, n. 185, for Talmon's (*Qumran*, 382, n.3) description of all biblical texts from antiquity being versions of "the now unattainable Hebrew text." I think that this is a useful way to think about the relationship of the MT to what usually are referred to as the Ancient Versions; that is, the other ancient witnesses which have been influential particularly in the Christian tradition. When referring to these versions, not including the MT, I will capitalize the reference. If I refer to the ancient versions and am including the MT in the reference, then I will not capitalize the terminology "ancient versions." The Old Latin is a witness to the LXX: it was translated from that.

these depictions of Shechem which are different from the way in which he is depicted in the MT did so because their understandings of Shechem were developed from a perspective on rape which was different from that of the author of Genesis 34. In Chapter 6, I present a possible *Sitz em Leben* for the composition of Genesis 34 and suggest that Genesis 34 was composed during the early Persian period in Yehud. Even though the author most likely was a member of the upper class in his own community, his view would still be that of the view from below, because he was a member of a community subjected to an overlord. The plot of this story and the characters depicted in it, I will argue, reflect the concerns of a subject people. However, subsequent interpreters/translators of Genesis 34 in Hellenistic and Roman societies did not interpret this text in line with the view from below because they had appropriated the view of rape and rapists which prevailed in the dominant culture. As a result, theirs was a view of rape which had been formulated and perpetrated by an aristocratic elite, who, when constructing their narratives of rape, did not take into account the perspectives of victims of rape; that is, they did not take into account the view from below. As a result, these translators' perceptions of Shechem do not coincide with the way in which he is depicted in MT.

### **Rape is not romantic**

In the MT, rape is not romanticized. Rather, it is presented in all of its ugliness and oppression—not only in the depiction in 2 Samuel 13 of Amnon's rape of Tamar, but also in the presentation of the suffering of Lady Jerusalem in Lamentations, as well as in the prophetic corpus, where it is used, as in Lamentations, to represent Israel's suffering at the hands of her enemies. In Jeremiah 13, the prophet declares: “the LORD'S flock has been taken captive (v. 17). All Judah is taken into exile (v. 19). And if you say in your heart, “Why have these things come upon me?” It is for the greatness of your iniquity that



your skirts are lifted up and your genitals are savaged (v. 22).<sup>66</sup> Even in Ezekiel 23, where the prophet portrays Oholah and Oholibah as enjoying being raped, the point of such a depiction is to excoriate them for their depravity and perversion. In contrast to the destructive horror of rape, true heterosexual love is depicted in the MT in the Song of Songs as “thoroughly egalitarian and mutual, with both lovers desiring, behaving, feeling, and speaking in the same way and with the same intensity. The constraints of the patriarchal society do not seem to determine the lovers’ behavior toward each other, though they do restrict the girl’s freedom of movement.”<sup>67</sup> These observations about rape and love drawn from the MT suggest that the societies out of which the MT arose did not accept the coincidence of rape and love. Such a view might be tenable, if it were not for the prophetic corpus—for just a few verses after the graphic representation of rape in Jeremiah 13 quoted above, God himself, as the ‘righteously’ indignant cuckolded husband, is seen as raping Israel himself: “I, in turn, will lift up your skirts over your face, and your shame will be seen” (Jer 13:26, JPS).<sup>68</sup> However, even though the ‘righteously’ infuriated husband could be imagined as raping the wife he ‘loved,’ the Israelite imagination did not include seeing love as *kindled* in the context of rape: unless one views the encounter between Shechem and Dinah as encompassing such a reality. But it is highly unlikely that an Israelite author would paint a sympathetic

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<sup>66</sup> The translation is from the NRSV, except that I have changed their translation from “you are violated” to “your genitals are savaged” based on “נִקְרָא עֲקָבֶיךָ” in the MT.

<sup>67</sup> Michael V. Fox, “The Song of Solomon” in *The HarperCollins Study Bible*, 1002. It is important to note that Song of Songs most likely was composed by a man; that is, that the representation of the woman’s speech and behavior probably was created from a male perspective. However, it is of equal importance to recognize the significance of his thinking of his beloved in egalitarian terms, rather than in terms of her as sexual property which he had acquired to service his purposes of procreation and pleasure.

<sup>68</sup> Kathleen M. O’Connor (“Jeremiah” in *The Women’s Bible Commentary* [ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992], 172) sees Jeremiah 13 as a reference to God raping the female nation. Marvin Sweeney (“Jeremiah,” in *The Jewish Study Bible* [ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004], 952) sees the marriage metaphor in this chapter of Jeremiah, “used to depict the relationship between God and the people.”

portrait of a Canaanite rapist,<sup>69</sup> since such a depiction was contrary to the expectations of the culture out of which this text arose, a culture that fostered a literary tradition in which “the Egyptians and the Canaanites [were] characterized . . . by rampant sexual licentiousness and perversion.”<sup>70</sup> That being the case, a depiction of a kind and considerate Canaanite—especially in the realm of sexual matters—would not have been recognizable to an Israelite audience. This suggests that the interpretation of Shechem as a rapist/lover reflects perspectives different from that of people who too often witnessed the rapes of their own women at the hands of oppressive occupying forces. The people who cried out in despair, “wives are raped in Zion, virgins in the cities of Judah” (Lam 5:11) would not view rape through rose-colored glasses, especially rape committed by a foreigner. No, the view of Shechem as a rapist/lover developed from other perspectives, perspectives different from the point-of-view of the oppressed author of Genesis 34.

### **The sense of the scene in the Septuagint**

<sup>2</sup> καὶ εἶδεν αὐτὴν Συχεμ ὁ υἱὸς Ἑμμώρ ὁ Χορραῖος ὁ ἀρχὼν τῆς γῆς, καὶ λαβὼν αὐτὴν ἐκοιμήθη μετ’ αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐταπείνωσεν αὐτήν.

<sup>3</sup> καὶ προσέχευεν τὴν ψυχὴν Δίνης τῆς θυγατρὸς Ἰαχὼβ, καὶ ἠγάπησεν τὴν παρθένον, καὶ ἐλάλησεν κατατὴν διάνοιαν τῆς παρθένου αὐτῆς.

<sup>2</sup> Shechem, the son of the local chieftain Hamor the Chorræan saw her and seizing her, he lay with her, mortifying her.

<sup>3</sup> He was held fast by the soul of Jacob’s daughter Dinah. He loved the girl dearly and he addressed himself to the girl’s state of mind.

While, as Frymer-Kensky notes, “sex is . . . at once cultural and physical,”<sup>71</sup> it is

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<sup>69</sup> David Noel Freedman (“Dinah and Shechem, Tamar and Amnon.” *Austin Seminary Bulletin* 105, 5/63 [1990], 57) does not take this into consideration when he asserts that “the author portrays Shechem as repentant and redeemed, newly chastened and in the end admirable, a victim of a horrible revenge.” Freedman does not describe *how* the author does this, nor does he explain *why* a Judean author would create such an image of a Canaanite rapist, given the way in which Canaanites are depicted in the MT—particularly in regard to what is presented as their depraved sexual behavior.

<sup>70</sup> Baruch J. Schwartz, “Leviticus” in *The Jewish Study Bible* (ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler; New York: Oxford University Press [2004], 249. See, for example, Lev 18:3.

<sup>71</sup> Tikva Frymer-Kensky, “Law,” 239.

the physical—and the personal that is associated with the physical—that is emphasized in vv. 2-3 of the LXX. In this way, the LXX is in alignment with the MT; that is, the focus in both the MT and the LXX at this point in the text is not on the cultural effects of what has occurred—which will be revealed later—but on the event itself and the personal responses of the two people most directly involved. In the LXX Dinah's response is discerned by inference; Shechem's feelings are described directly and alluded to indirectly.

The scenario outlined in v. 2 does not present something new and different to Greek consciousness.<sup>72</sup> Greeks had known from antiquity what occurs when a powerful man encounters a girl alone and available—it was often depicted on their pottery: he chases her until he catches her and then he rapes her.<sup>73</sup> The result for the girl is mortification (τᾶπεινóω). Her childhood innocence has been killed, annihilated. It is, as the Demeter-Persephone myth asserts, a descent into hell for her. She is deeply discomfited, disturbed: mortified in both body and soul. As for the man, this is what men with power do.<sup>74</sup> They have their way with a girl and then they are on their way. But this

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<sup>72</sup> In contrast, in the MT, the depiction of Shechem's assault of Dinah is the only depiction of such a thing happening to a girl when she is out on her own, though Deut 22:23-29 refers to the possibility of such a thing occurring. The *pilegish* and Tamar is each delivered to her fate by the owner of her sexual function—they are not depicted as out on their own. In the MT, a girl out on her own was encountered at the well and then properly courted, not immediately set upon. This may have been due to the well's being a public place—others may have been about or could be expected to show up at any moment—and/or to the man's fear of reprisal from her family, should he have taken advantage of her, or simply to the fact that he had no desire to relate to another person in such a way. At any rate, the depiction of Shechem's rape of Dinah is unique in the biblical corpus in this respect. By referring to Greek consciousness, I do not mean to imply that there was a monolithic view of heterosexual relations in ancient Greek thought, any more than there is one construction of that reality evidenced in the MT, but there are certain ways of construing the male/female relationship which can be deemed characteristic of Greek thought. These are ideas which actually have perdured into the present (see n. 94 *infra*).

<sup>73</sup> In addition to visual representation of such scenarios, there were literary representations of such occurrences, as well. Evans-Grubbs ("Abduction," 67) notes that "the violent abduction by a god or hero of a young girl . . . for sexual purposes is a well-known theme in early Greek epic poetry."

<sup>74</sup> The male must have enough power to do this without fear of reprisal. Hence the gods often are depicted as raping goddesses, as well as girls—they are powerful enough to get away with it and they do.

is not what happens in the story of Shechem's rape of Dinah. He does not 'love' her and leave her: he stays. For the Greek mind (and those influenced by the Greek mind), this creates a conundrum: why does he stay? The answer given to that question in the LXX is formulated from the same kind of information as that which is provided in the MT. Both versions describe what went on within Shechem and Dinah individually,<sup>75</sup> as well as how Shechem conducted himself with Dinah. However, Shechem's interiority and his behavior with Dinah are construed differently in the LXX from the way in which Shechem is presented in the MT. Instead of describing directly the proclivity of Shechem's  $\text{שָׁדָד}$  for Dinah, as in the MT, the motivation for Shechem's behavior toward Dinah after he raped her is alluded to in the LXX via a description of the effect of Dinah's  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  on him. In v. 3, the LXX remains focused on Shechem, as in the MT, but rather than describing the active movement of Shechem's  $\text{שָׁדָד}$  toward Dinah via an active verb ( $\text{קָרַב}$ ), as in the MT, in the LXX Shechem *is captivated* by Dinah's  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ , which "holds him fast" ( $\text{προσέχευ}$ ).<sup>76</sup>

It is important to recognize that Shechem is depicted differently in v. 3 in the LXX from the way in which he is depicted in the MT, so that assumptions present in the LXX concerning the way in which Shechem behaved are not transferred to reconstructions of the relational dynamics depicted in the MT without any sort of justification in the MT for such a transference. This sort of caveat is necessary when comparing versions which arise from different cultural milieus, so that the differences between the two cultures can be taken into account when the two versions are compared.

<sup>75</sup> Dinah's sense of mortification ( $\text{ταπεινός}$ ) in the LXX is similar to her traumatization ( $\text{קָרַב}$ ) in the MT.

<sup>76</sup> That this was the nature of Shechem's relationship to Dinah is reiterated in v. 19 of the LXX where the passive form  $\text{ἐνέκειτο}$  is used to affirm that Shechem was strongly attached to Jacob's daughter. The verb in v. 19 in the MT is the active form of  $\text{קָרַב}$ .

This is particularly important in connection with v. 3, because of the long-recognized differences between the Biblical Hebrew word *שָׁרָף* and the Greek word *ψυχή*. Seebass notes that “the basic meaning of *psyché* is ‘breath,’”<sup>77</sup> whereas “the concrete primary meaning of *nepeš* is usually assumed to be “maw, throat, gullet:” the organ used for eating and breathing.”<sup>78</sup> The greater sense of immateriality associated with the Greek word *ψυχή* is encompassed in the English word “soul.”<sup>79</sup> One way to describe the sense of the word “soul” in connection with being in love is to think of a lover looking at his love interest with a ‘soulful look.’ This is a look of deep longing for someone one is not sure one can have. It is not a look of fiery passion at someone one intends to get. This points to another important distinction between the concepts of *שָׁרָף* and *ψυχή*. “*Nepeš* is not a fundamentally passive state of being, but *an active pursuit of something*.”<sup>80</sup> In the MT, Shechem’s *שָׁרָף* is “intensively purposive,”<sup>81</sup> but in the MT it is not Dinah’s *שָׁרָף* which elicits this purposefulness in Shechem. Rather, the sequencing of the events in vv. 2-3 indicates that it is her traumatization which attracts him.<sup>82</sup> In contrast to the presentation of Shechem in the MT, in the presentation in the LXX of the relationship of Shechem to Dinah, he is helplessly drawn to Dinah’s soul. Since in Greek culture the traditional construction of the rape of a girl by a powerful man included only a fleeting engagement of his attention, the LXX translators apparently decided that it could not be

<sup>77</sup> Horst Seebass, “*שָׁרָף*,” *TDOT* 9: 503.

<sup>78</sup> Seebass, *TDOT* 9: 504.

<sup>79</sup> Seebass (*TDOT* 9:508-509) observes that “Westermann rightly notes that the specialized meaning “soul” can be considered in only a small number of passages” in the MT. See n. 97 *infra*.

<sup>80</sup> Seebass, *TDOT* 9:507, quoting Westermann, italics mine.

<sup>81</sup> *TDOT* 9:516. This sense of Shechem’s purposefulness is picked up on in the Latin versions of the story in which Shechem is described in v. 4 as going *pergens*—“directly”—to Hamor to demand that he get Dinah for him as a wife. In the MT it is not clear whether Shechem goes to his father or summons his father to come to him.

<sup>82</sup> Fleishman (“Shechem,” 29, italics mine) notes that the “reflection of Shechem’s internal view [comes] just after the reflection of Dinah’s internal view.”

Shechem's  $\psi\sigma\chi\eta$  which is directly described in the biblical text, but, rather, it must be Dinah's  $\psi\sigma\chi\eta$  which is referred to directly. It was the power of her  $\psi\sigma\chi\eta$  that captured him and held his attention.<sup>83</sup>

Since this was not the usual way of things in Greek thinking, it is not clear on what basis they might have made such a decision. There is the instance in 1 Sam 18:1 of Jonathon's  $\text{נִפְּשׁ}$  being joined (passive of  $\text{קָשַׁר}$ ) to David's  $\text{נִפְּשׁ}$ , thus indicating that it is David's  $\text{נִפְּשׁ}$  which has the drawing power. This may have given the LXX translators the idea that something similar was depicted in Gen 34:3.  $\Sigma\upsilon\nu\delta\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ , the verb that is used to describe the "binding together"<sup>84</sup> of Jonathon's  $\psi\sigma\chi\eta$  to David's  $\psi\sigma\chi\eta$  is used to translate  $\text{דָּבַק בְּ}$  in Ezek 3:26 to refer to Ezekiel's tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth.<sup>85</sup> This lends credence to the possibility that the LXX translators saw the use of  $\text{דָּבַק בְּ}$  with Shechem's  $\text{נִפְּשׁ}$  as conveying a binding of Shechem's  $\text{נִפְּשׁ}$  to Dinah similar to the passive joining of Jonathon's  $\text{נִפְּשׁ}$  to David's  $\text{נִפְּשׁ}$ .<sup>86</sup> This could account for their alteration of the active voice of  $\text{דָּבַק בְּ}$  to the passive voice of  $\text{προσέχω}$ . Such cross-fertilization of ideas between books of the Bible was possible. Anneli Aejmelaesus suggests that, when translating, LXX translators may have looked for "help in a parallel passage in . . . another biblical book."<sup>87</sup> However, the suggestion that the translators of Genesis 34 might have been influenced by 1 Sam 18:1 is tenuous at best, because the relationship among

<sup>83</sup>  $\text{προσέχω}$ , the verb used to translate  $\text{דָּבַק בְּ}$ , is used elsewhere in the LXX to translate  $\text{שָׁמַר}$  (1 time in Gen; 15 times in Exod and Deut) and  $\text{קָשַׁב}$  (12 times in the Psalms, Latter Prophets and Nehemiah) and then various other instances which convey the need for attentiveness, heedfulness or care. (*A Handy Concordance to the Septuagint* [Preface signed by G. M.; London: S. Bagster, 1970], 210). "To attend to" is the active meaning for  $\text{προσέχω}$ , the passive means "to be held fast by a thing." (Liddell and Scott, 601).

<sup>84</sup> Liddell and Scott, 671.

<sup>85</sup> *A Handy*, 232.

<sup>86</sup> It is important to note that 1 Sam 18:1 is a part of the text that is found in the Alexandrian recension and not in the Vatican document.

<sup>87</sup> Anneli Aejmelaesus, "What We Talk about When We Talk about Translation Technique" in the *X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* [ed. Bernard A. Taylor; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature], 549.

the translations of the various books of the LXX has not been fully worked out.<sup>88</sup> It is possible that for the translators the correctness of their conclusion concerning Dinah's ψυχη and its effect on Shechem was verified for them by וַיִּדְהַב אֶת־הַנַּעֲרָה, which they translated "he loved the girl dearly:" ἠγάπησεν.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, he addressed (λαλεω) her state of mind: διάνοια.

"He addressed himself to the girl's state of mind" is very clumsy English, but the clumsiness is necessary in this case in order to convey the picture created of Shechem in v. 3 of the LXX. In the LXX, Shechem, the privileged rapist who could have had his fill of Dinah and moved on, is depicted as 'a real prince of a fellow.' He sticks around and, because he now loves Dinah, he addresses her state of mind—her distress—by helping her come to grips with 'reality.' In Genesis 34 of the LXX "ἐλάλησεν κατά την διάνοιαν τῆν παρθένου αὐτῆς" renders דָּבַר עַל־לֵב הַנַּעֲרָה. In the nine other places in the LXX where the idiom לֵב עַל־ דָּבַר appears in the MT,<sup>90</sup> it is rendered with καρδία, rather than διάνοια. It would appear, then, that the situation depicted in Genesis 34 was viewed differently by the translators of the LXX from the other situations where this Hebrew idiom appears in the text.<sup>91</sup> Rather than just trying to persuade Dinah via encouragement or cajolery,<sup>92</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Anneli Aejmelaeus (*On the Trail of Septuagint Translators* [Kampen, the Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1991], 5) notes that each of the various books of the LXX has "a translation character of its own."

<sup>89</sup> The aorist of ἀγαπάω identifies this as the very moment at which his love for her was ignited.

<sup>90</sup> I do not mean to imply by this statement that the MT served as the source text for the LXX—just that the MT serves as the Hebrew text to which the LXX currently is compared.

<sup>91</sup> I am aware of the problems associated with referring to "the" LXX, but I feel that, since the majority of analysts and translators work from similar contemporary versions of the LXX, there exists currently "an" LXX. Fabry ("לב" *TDOT* 7:399-437, 410) notes that "the LXX generally uses *kardia* to render *lēb/lēbāb* (718 times). Other translations are *diánoia* (51; esp. common in Genesis)." Fabry's observation about the use of *diánoia* in Genesis could imply that the translators used *diánoia* in Genesis 34 because this was their practice. However, the fact that they used *kardia* when translating דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in Gen 50:21 to describe Joseph's speech to his brothers indicates that they construed the situation in Genesis 34 differently from the way in which they construed the situation in Genesis 50—if these two chapters of Genesis were translated by the same translators.

<sup>92</sup> In the LXX, in the other places where דָּבַר עַל־לֵב appears in the Hebrew text, these are the means by which the speaker tries to persuade the recipient(s) of his speech to accept his point of view.

Shechem is depicted as trying to help Dinah understand that her violent initiation into sexual relations was just the way these things happened.<sup>93</sup> Unlike the Shulammite in Song of Songs who is invited to the garden of love (Song: 2:10), in Greek myth the female is hunted down like an animal in the forest<sup>94</sup> and pounced upon. In the Greek mind, the devastation which Dinah was feeling was an unavoidable fact of a young female's initiation into the reality of the use of her sexuality by a man. Whether the girl's initiation occurred on her wedding night<sup>95</sup> or in the woods,<sup>96</sup> the Greeks regarded it as a descent into hell, a representation of the young girl painfully leaving her childhood behind.

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<sup>93</sup> Such an understanding of the significance of δῖάνοιᾶ here is supported by the explanation in Liddell & Scott that δῖάνοιᾶ refers to “*a notion, belief: the sense or meaning of a thing,*” 164. Liddell & Scott's explanation of what δῖάνοιᾶ refers to is supported by Strong's (602, #1271) explanation of δῖάνοιᾶ as “*deep thought, properly the faculty (mind or its disposition), by implication its exercise: understanding.*” Wolfthal (*Images*, 34, italics mine) notes art critic Paul Hennington's observation, when commenting on the construction of male/female sexual relationships in ancient Greece that the “rape of girls was a more *reasonable* thing than it is today, a kind of natural order.”

<sup>94</sup> Wolfthal (*Images*, 13) notes that “since women, the usual victims of “heroic” rape, were associated with the “wild,” this may have compounded the Greek view of sexual relations as a kind of hunt,” thus turning the female into a hunted animal and the male into a hunter who enjoys the thrill of the chase, as well as its denouement. Wolfthal further notes that this is a view of heterosexual relations which still has currency with some people. She (35) quotes the former Solicitor-General of Scotland Nicholas Fairburn as saying recently that “it is part of the business of men and women that they hunt and are hunted, and say “yes” and “no” and mean the opposite.” Fairburn's construction of the relationship between the sexes in terms of sexual relations is actually a composite of Greek and Roman views on this subject, as is clear from Wolfthal's (33) quote from Ovid on the subject of rape, “*vis is pleasing to girls; . . . a woman who has departed untouched, when she could have been forced, though she simulates gladness with her face, will be sad.*”

<sup>95</sup> Wolfthal (17) references “an *Ode* by Horace [in which] Europa [having been raped by Jove] is warned to adjust to her fate: “Wife of mighty Jove, thou knowest not how to be the bride. Stop this sobbing, learn to accept with good will this great destiny.” Even though Horace was a Roman poet, his representation of the speech to raped Europa is reflective of the influence of Greek thought on Roman constructions of reality, something that also is evident in the works of the Roman poet Ovid. Currently young American girls of the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints sect are similarly admonished to accept that rape is the normal exercise of male sexuality. Harriet Ryan (“In Warren Jeffs hearing, former teen bride describes arranged marriage” [<http://www.courtvtv.com/news/polygamy/> 112106, 1-4], italics mine) reports on the trial of cult leader Warren Jeffs, when he was prosecuted for arranging the ‘marriage’ of a fourteen-year-old girl to a nineteen-year-old man. The woman, now twenty, testified that when she told Jeffs that “she felt too young to be a wife,” Jeffs told her “*that to refuse the marriage was to reject God.*” After her ‘marriage,’ the girl fought off her ‘husband’s’ advances for weeks until he forced her to have intercourse, saying, “*This is what men and wives do,*” 2. When she went to Jeffs and “asked to be released from the marriage . . . he reminded her of the FLDS teaching that *a woman’s path to heaven was through her husband . . . and told her “to be obedient and submissive to ‘her husband’.*” The woman reported that “he told me that *I needed to go home and give myself mind, body and soul to Alan because he was my priestly head and he knew what was best*



However, in the Demeter/Persephone myth, another reality is revealed as well: an indication as to its origin from within the ruling class. The provenance of this myth from within the upper reaches of ancient Greek society can be seen in the power which Persephone enjoys as the consort of Hades, the King of the Underworld. Wed to him, she becomes the Queen of the Underworld. This elevation of Persephone's status from being merely the daughter of Demeter and Zeus to being a queen indicates a construction of social/sexual reality that is reflective of 'the way it was' if one were a part of the ruling class. A peasant girl would not find herself similarly elevated politically as a result of a domiciled relationship with one of her own class.

That the depiction of Shechem in the LXX may have influenced some present-day interpreters can be seen in the translations of v. 3 in the RSV, the NRSV, and the JPS, which render the active form of  $\text{נִדְבַק}$  in the MT with a passive verb. The RSV translates  $\text{נִדְבַק}$  as "His soul *was drawn* to Dinah."<sup>97</sup> Such a rendering apparently was preferable to the mid-twentieth century American RSV translators who were re-working the KJV to the rendering of this verse in the KJV: "And his soul clave unto Dinah"—even though the KJV maintains the active form of the verb that is found in the MT. The NRSV repeats the

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*for me,*" 1. About a year after the 'marriage,' the girl miscarried her 'husband's' baby. Her sister described her emotional state at that time as "basically a body with no soul," 4.

<sup>96</sup> Evans-Grubbs ("Abduction," 68) notes that "at Locri . . . a number of votive plaques found in the sanctuary of Persephone illustrate scenes of abduction of a girl by a 'young abductor' (not Hades). . . . The plaques could be interpreted as . . . symbolizing the traumatic taking of the young bride from the nurturing atmosphere of her family into the unknown and frightening world of married life." . . . She further notes that "the iconographic similarities between scenes of abduction and wedding scenes in Greek art . . . reflect a perception deeply rooted in Greek consciousness that sexual pursuit, followed by seizure, and marriage were essentially two sides of the same coin."

<sup>97</sup> Seebass (*TDOT* 9:503) warns English translators from following the LXX translation and translating  $\text{נִדְבַק}$  as "soul," because of "the linguistic development of Greek [which] led to [the] Platonic and post-Platonic usage of *psyche*." The association of the  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  with "breath" led to a far more immaterial, spiritual sense of the meaning of  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  than the sense of the animating principle which is associated with  $\text{נִדְבַק}$ , 506.  $\text{נִדְבַק}$  is associated with the desire and appetite connected with the throat and gullet. In the small number of places where "the translation "soul" can be considered," Seebass (509) feels that the concept of "ego" or "self" is "more accurate." See Chapter 7, pp. 338-339, for this usage in Gen 34: 8.

passive form of the verb found in the RSV. The JPS translates  $\text{נִדְבַקָה}$  with the present passive participle: “Being strongly drawn to Dinah.” Of course, I cannot state definitively that the translators of the RSV and the NRSV rendered  $\text{נִדְבַקָה}$  in the passive because they felt justified in doing so due to the presence of a passive form of this verb in the LXX, but it is possible that the presence of a passive verb in this location in the Greek text suggested to them that this was a justifiable way to render  $\text{נִדְבַקָה}$ .<sup>98</sup> The result is that in the English versions Shechem is depicted as a captivated lover, tenderly comforting the girl he had just traumatized, an image which appears to arise from a mixing of the mores of ancient Greece with current understandings of romantic love. Even though these contemporary translators may have appropriated the passive rendering of  $\text{נִדְבַקָה}$  found in the LXX, they did not maintain the image of Shechem in the LXX as an aristocratic male trying to help the previously uninitiated young girl understand the ways of the world as constructed in ancient Greek culture. Both the Greek and the English versions present Shechem as speaking to Dinah, but the distinction between Shechem’s more rational approach to Dinah in the Greek version and the romanticized version of his approach to her in the English versions needs to be recognized, because Shechem’s explanation to Dinah of ‘the ways of the world’ in the LXX reflects a rendering of this scene from an aristocratic viewpoint—a viewpoint from a different social strata from the viewpoint from which the story of Dinah and Shechem is told in the MT; that is, the view from below. In contrast to the perspective of the author of Genesis 34 as preserved in the MT, in the LXX, the story reflects the ways of the Greek upper class as of old and, as a result,

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<sup>98</sup> Based on the description of translation practice in the *Preface to the 1985 JPS Edition*, it is not clear where their translation of the active verb  $\text{נִדְבַקָה}$  as passive might have come from, unless it was the result of cross-fertilization from other English translations, such as the RSV and the NRSV. The Society states that the translators relied “on the traditional Hebrew text, avoiding emendations.” They state further that “the committee undertook to follow faithfully the traditional Hebrew text,” xiv.

the story is told differently, with a different image of Shechem emerging. Certainly, the author of the *Letter of Aristeas* would not want to acknowledge the influence of Greek culture on the translators of the LXX,<sup>99</sup> but, subtle though it may be, it is there in v. 3 of Gen 34. The appropriation of such an image by contemporary translators is actually a misappropriation, because they are transferring a depiction of Shechem to the MT which is not consonant with the portrait of him presented in that text. Once the LXX's assertion of the effect of Dinah's ψυχη on Shechem is combined in the RSV, the NRSV, and the JPS with what is construed as an assertion of Shechem's 'love' for her in v. 3<sup>100</sup> and all of this is combined with a construal of דָּבַר עֲלֵי־לֵב הַנְּעָר as his sweet, comforting words to her,<sup>101</sup> what emerges in the English versions is a picture of Shechem as just 'a lad in love'<sup>102</sup> who runs to Daddy to get help in making the girl of his dreams his very own forever and ever. This is not what is depicted in the MT. Shechem definitely is depicted

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<sup>99</sup> I am not suggesting that the translators of Hebrew *Vorlagen* into Greek were actually those represented in the *Letter of Aristeas*, but only that the point of view of the author of that letter is that he would not want to admit to any influence of Greek culture on the translators. He claims, instead, that the LXX represents a more authentic rendering of the scriptures than any competing Hebrew texts. (R.J.H. Shutt's, trans, "The Letter of Aristeas" in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* 2 [ed. James H. Charlesworth New York: Doubleday, 1983], 111).

<sup>100</sup> I do not interpret דָּבַר as love. See Chapter 7, pp. 324-332.

<sup>101</sup> Such an understanding of דָּבַר עֲלֵי־לֵב in the RSV, the NRSV, and the JPS may be due to the presence of לֵב in the Hebrew idiom, even though לֵב in Biblical Hebrew refers to the "heart as the seat of intellect and reason." (Seebass, *TDOT* 9:511). The KJV renders דָּבַר עֲלֵי־לֵב as "he spoke kindly," which is closer to the perception of what is going on in v. 3 that is found in the LXX than the rendering "he spoke tenderly" that is found in the RSV and NRSV. The KJV translation of "he spoke kindly" may reflect the aristocratic perception that informed the point of view of the translators of the KJV; that is, a depiction of Shechem speaking kindly to Dinah more closely reflects the Greek view of the adult male, practiced in the ways of the world, explaining these practices to a young girl than the 'tender' speech of a young lover addressing a girl close in age to him. This idiom is translated in the KJV in the other places where that it appears in the Hebrew text as follows: "kindly" in Gen 50:21 (Joseph as his brothers' superior, explaining to them that they have nothing to fear from him); "friendly" in Ruth 2:13 and Judg 19:3, reflecting male to female speech on a personal level; "comfortably" renders the rest of its uses, all of which reflect public, political settings, even though its use in the metaphor of God as husband and Israel as wife in Isaiah 40:2 and Hos 2:16 reflects the interpersonal level of male to female speech in which the KJV translators otherwise chose "friendly" (Ruth 2:13; Judg 19:3).

<sup>102</sup> Bailey (18) refers to Shechem with the forgiving term "lad" and Sternberg ("The Art," 464) refers to his "youthful ardor."

as wanting to make Dinah his very own—at least for as long as he likes—but his motivation for doing so is not “love, sweet love.”<sup>103</sup>

### **Old Latin, new ideas**

<sup>2</sup> *Vidit Sichem filius Emmor Evæi, princeps terrae, Dinam filiam Jacob: et accepit eam, et dormivit cum ea, et humiliavit eam.*

<sup>3</sup> *Et intendit animo Dinæ filiae Jacob, et adamvit virginem, et locutus est secundum sensum virginis ipsi.*

<sup>2</sup> Shechem, the son of Hamor, the prince of the region, saw Jacob’s daughter Dinah and he took her to himself and he slept with her and he humiliated her.

<sup>3</sup> And he paid close attention to the soul of Jacob’s daughter Dinah and he loved the girl and he spoke kindly to the very heart of the girl (*sensum virginis ipsi*: to the very understanding of the girl).

The Old Latin version was translated from the LXX and evidences some similarities to it, but it also exhibits some differences—differences due, to some extent no doubt, to the slippage between the source and receptor languages, but differences also due to a different construction of what is depicted in vv. 2-3. Whereas the use of the verb λαμβάνω in v. 2 of the LXX makes it clear that Shechem seized Dinah, the use of the verb *accipiō* in the Old Latin puts a different face on Shechem’s appropriation of Dinah. *Accipiō* conveys the idea of “acceptance,” of “receiving,” of “taking someone or something to oneself or “of taking someone upon oneself.”<sup>104</sup> As a result, it is used throughout the Old Latin version of Genesis 34 to refer to the taking—or receiving—of wives in marriage (in vv. 4, 6,<sup>105</sup> 9, 16, 21). Thus, due to the use of the verb *accipiō* in the Old Latin, the sense of violent seizure that is present in the LXX is not there. What is presented, instead, is a non-violent appropriation of Dinah, which shamed and

<sup>103</sup> I defend this assertion in Chapters 6 - 8.

<sup>104</sup> William Smith and John Lockwood, *Chambers Murray Latin-English Dictionary* (Cambridge, U. K., Cambridge University Press, 1976), 6.

<sup>105</sup> There is an expansion of this verse in the Old Latin: “In order to get (*accipiō*) Jacob’s daughter Dinah for his son Shechem, Hamor went out . . .”

discomfited her, but which did not traumatize her in the same way that she is depicted as being traumatized in the MT and in the LXX. Shechem is depicted as being immediately aware of and attentive to the discomfiture that Dinah does feel: he strains (*intendō*) toward her soul and, falling in love with her, he addresses himself to her very (*ipsi*) understanding (*sēnsus*) of what has occurred, speaking kindly (*secundum*) to her. The picture that emerges in the Old Latin translation is one of Shechem as a solicitous swain comforting the young girl who is embarrassed by her first sexual experience. Though by contemporary standards Shechem would be considered guilty of statutory rape, by the standards of old, the way in which he is portrayed in the Old Latin he does not appear to be guilty of anything other than the misappropriation of a virgin, which he seeks immediately<sup>106</sup> to set right. The picture of him as the nobleman that he surely is (he is the son of the local chief, after all) is reinforced in vv. 11-12, where he indicates to Dinah's father and brothers that he must speak to them in addition to his father's speaking to them because he wishes to win their approval "personally"—and, of course, he would be ever so glad to allot to them "with pleasure" out of his considerable wealth whatever they ask.<sup>107</sup> In the Old Latin version, Shechem comes across as such a lovely man—if a bit condescending.

The translators of the Old Latin clearly have construed the relationship between Shechem and Dinah differently from the way in which it is presented in the LXX. Gone is the violent rapist who initiated Dinah into the ways of the world—to be replaced by a

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<sup>106</sup> In v. 4 of both the Old Latin and the Vulgate, Shechem goes *pergens* (directly, immediately) to his father to ask his father to get Dinah for him as a wife. In the MT it is not clear whether Shechem goes to his father or whether he summons his father to come to him.

<sup>107</sup> <sup>11</sup> *Sed et Sichem ad patrem et ad fratres ejus ait: Inveniam gratiam coram vobis, et quaecumque statueritis, dabo.* <sup>12</sup> *Augete dotem, et munera postulate, et libenter tribuam, quod petieritis: tantum date mihi puellam hanc uxorem.* <sup>11</sup> In addition, Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me personally get your approval and whatever you specify, I will give. <sup>12</sup> Increase the bride-price and request gifts and I will give whatever you ask with pleasure. Only give me this girl as a wife."

true nobleman, whose sexual relations with the young girl naturally upsets her a bit, but which is nothing that this solicitous, charming, and competent young man cannot handle.

### **Jerome's views as seen in the Vulgate**

<sup>2</sup> *Quam cum vidisset Sichem filius Hamor Hevæi, princeps terræ illius, adamvit eam: et rapuit, et dormivit cum illa, vi opprimens virginem.*

<sup>3</sup> *Et conglutinata est anima ejus cum ea, tristemque delinivit blanditiis.*

<sup>2</sup> When Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, ruler of that land, saw her, he loved her and he abducted and lay with her, overpowering the girl with force.

<sup>3</sup> And his soul was closely bound to her and, because she was sad, he spoke soothingly and coaxingly.

There are significant differences between vv. 2-3 in the MT and vv. 2-3 in the Vulgate. Though the possibility exists that the differences can be attributed to different *Vorlagen* for the two texts,<sup>108</sup> it is also possible that the differences are attributable to Jerome's exercising his translation maxim to translate *non verbum e verbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu*<sup>109</sup> and that he made sense of these verses in a way that made sense to him; that is, in a way that reflected what he perceived to be the social dynamics at play in these verses.

Jerome's construction of what occurred between Shechem and Dinah resembles what Evans-Grubbs relates was considered the scenario for an abduction marriage in the fourth century C. E. Roman Empire.<sup>110</sup> A young man, unable to secure the girl he loved by contracting for her with her parents,<sup>111</sup> would abduct her and rape her, in that way

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<sup>108</sup> I am not trying to make the case for a single Ur-text serving as the source of all of the ancient versions. Rather, I am suggesting that the Ancient Versions are used currently by scholars for comparative purposes even though there is not certainty as to the sources of the various ancient versions.

<sup>109</sup> James Barr, *The Typology*, 39.

<sup>110</sup> Evans-Grubbs, "Abduction," 61. Evans-Grubbs' discussion of abduction marriage informs my discussion of Jerome's understanding of such events. The time period in Roman history which is the focus of Evans-Grubbs' study is the fourth century C. E. Jerome's life spanned the last half of that century and almost the first quarter of the next: c347-c420 (W. J. Burghardt, "Jerome, Saint." *Encyclopedia Britannica* 12: 1003-1004; Chicago: William Benton, 1966).

<sup>111</sup> Due to their disapproval of him or due to his inability to pay the expected amount of money.

making sure that she would be unwanted by any other man.<sup>112</sup> Evans-Grubbs further relates that the phenomenon of abduction marriage had been crystallized much earlier in literature in just this manner and, in so doing, had explained the abductor's motivation. She notes that "by the Roman imperial period abduction marriage seems to have become something of a literary topos. *Raptus* appears as a popular topic for rhetorical declamation. . . . Six of the *Controversiae* of the elder Seneca<sup>113</sup> and sixteen of the lesser *Declamations* attributed to Quintilian<sup>114</sup> concern *raptus*."<sup>115</sup> She observes that "the premise in almost all of these is that . . . the *raptor* . . . fell in love and asked for the girl in marriage, but the father delayed, so the suitor took matters into his own hands," abducting the girl and raping her very violently . . . (*stuprum per vim*)."<sup>116</sup> Evans-Grubbs notes that "these literary references span the first two centuries of the Empire,"<sup>117</sup> but she asserts that, nonetheless, "the lurid and violent *raptus* of rhetoric colored the [later, fourth century] imperial perception of a custom for which classical law provided no

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<sup>112</sup> Even though the abduction itself was enough to ruin the girl's reputation so that it was most likely that she no longer would be considered marriageable to another man, raping her would virtually ensure that she would not be considered marriageable to anyone else but him.

<sup>113</sup> Seneca the Elder lived from c. 55 B. C. E. to c. 39 C. E. (A. E. Douglas, "Seneca, Annaeus." *Encyclopedia Britannica* 20:321; Chicago: William Benton, 1966).

<sup>114</sup> Quintilian lived from c. 35 to c. 100 C. E. (Harry Caplan, "Quintillian." *Encyclopedia Britannica* 18: 970-971; Chicago: William Benton, 1966).

<sup>115</sup> Evans-Grubbs, "Abduction," 68. Evans-Grubbs (60-62, 69) notes that "the crime of *raptus* against which [Constantine's law] is directed is not rape. Rather, Constantine's law attacks the abduction of an unmarried girl by a man who has not made a formal betrothal agreement with her but who hopes to force her parents' consent to what is essentially a *de facto* marriage. . . . *Raptus* referred to the abduction itself and not to the rape that usually followed upon the abduction. . . . The verb usually used to denote rape in classical Roman law is *violare* not *rapere*." The Latin verb *rapiō-ere* refers not only to the seizing but also to the rapidity with which it was done: "to hurry off, quickly seize" (*Cassell's Latin and English Dictionary*, com. D. P. Simpson; New York: Macmillan [1987], 614). Thus, the Latin verb is related to the English word "rapid," as well as to the "rape" (*Webster's Third International Dictionary* 2:1882; ed. Philip B. Gove; Chicago: William Benton, 1962). The Latin word *raptor* refers to the abductor. The meaning in English of a predatory bird which preys on the small and insouciant—or careless—is indicative of the origin of these connotations in the human experience of abduction. Likewise, the sexual violation of a female under duress became so closely associated with the crime of *raptus* that "rape" in English came to refer more specifically to sexual violation than the word "violation" itself.

<sup>116</sup> Evans-Grubbs, "Abduction," 69.

<sup>117</sup> Evans-Grubbs, "Abduction," 71.

precedent.”<sup>118</sup> The emperor Constantine responded with particularly harsh laws in an attempt to put an end to the practice. Evans-Grubbs hastens to add that in making such a law, Constantine would not have been responding to situations which existed only literarily and not in actuality, but, even so, the degree to which the literary representations of the cultural practice influenced the formulation of Constantine’s regulations against it indicates the considerable currency that the views of the ancient rhetoricians and poets on the topic still exercised in fourth century Roman society. As a result, Evans-Grubbs asserts the importance of taking into account the relationship between “rhetoric and reality.”<sup>119</sup>

It is just this relationship between literature and reality which I wish to examine in terms of Jerome’s construction of the reality that he sees reflected in Gen 34:2-3 and to suggest that it is possible that the differences between the presentation of the events in vv. 2-3 in the Vulgate from the way in which they are presented in the MT is due to Jerome’s arranging vv. 2-3 according to the way he *knew* such a situation must have been. The fact that the arrangement of the events in the Vulgate parallels the construction of abduction marriage in the Roman literature and law of his era suggests that it was possible that Jerome put the events in vv. 2-3 in the order that he did and with the feelings attributed to the characters in the way that he did because he felt his reconstructions of the characters and events represented the way such things really occurred. Jerome could be certain that his construction of the characters of Shechem and Dinah and his ordering of the events in vv. 2-3 was correct, because the construction of that reality in his cultural environment told him so. It was not only Constantinian legislation and the disputations of the

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<sup>118</sup> Evans-Grubbs, “Abduction,” 83.

<sup>119</sup> Evans-Grubbs, “Abduction,” 83.



rhetoricians that helped to confirm that he knew the ‘truth’ of these situations, but also the declamations of the poet Ovid,<sup>120</sup> who, at the same time that the rhetoricians were addressing the topic of abduction, had opined “almost in one act did Pluto see and love and carry [Proserpina] away; so precipitate was his love.”<sup>121</sup> Jerome’s construction of Gen 34:2 mirrors Ovid’s depiction of Pluto’s abduction of Proserpina. Verse 2 in the Vulgate begins “*Quam cum vidisset Sichem filius Hemor Hevæi, princeps terræ illius, adamavit eam; et rapuit.*” like Pluto’s immediate attraction to Proserpina, Shechem, upon seeing Dinah, also experienced love at first sight, a love which precipitated his abduction of Dinah. However, this is not what is depicted in the MT. In the MT, Shechem’s attachment to Dinah is triggered *after* he has raped her, *not* before. But, even if Jerome’s Hebrew text presented the events in the same order as they are presented in the MT, Jerome *knew* that this was not the correct order for such an occurrence. He *knew* that the motivation for such an abduction was the attraction that the *raptor* had for the *rapta* *before* he took her that *caused* him to take her, in this way creating a situation where she would have to marry him. After all, Shechem *did* want to marry Dinah—so Jerome must have been sure that his ordering of the event was the correct one. His sense that his version of what was depicted in vv. 2-3 was the right one would have been confirmed by the words וַיִּשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ וַיַּעֲבֹדָהָ following on Shechem’s seizure of Dinah,<sup>122</sup> because Jerome

<sup>120</sup> Ovid lived from 43 B. C. E. to 18 C. E. (E. J. Kenney, “Ovid.” *Encyclopedia Britannica* 16:1169-1172).

<sup>121</sup> Wolfthal, *Images*, 13.

<sup>122</sup> This would be the case, if Jerome’s source text did indeed resemble the MT, which, according to H. F. D. Sparks (“Jerome as Biblical Scholar,” in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* [ed. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970], 532), it did. Sparks asserts that the Hebrew text of Jerome’s day “was substantially the same as our own standard Massoretic text.” Sparks adds that “whereas Jerome’s Latin and Greek manuscripts differed repeatedly and widely among themselves, his Hebrew manuscripts did not. . . . The *Hebraica veritas*, it must have seemed, was self-authenticating.” Whether or not Jerome’s *Vorlage* was the same as the *Vorlage* of the MT, there is a consistency in the presentation of vv. 2-3 in the versions, with the exception of the Vulgate. In other words, this consistency

also *knew* that such an abduction was followed by violent rape. Thus v. 2 in the Vulgate concludes with the words “*et dormivit cum illa, vi opprimens virginem,*” with Jerome probably interpreting  $\text{הָיָה וְיָדָה}$  as reflective only of the violence with which Shechem treated Dinah—as other interpreters have done.<sup>123</sup> However, if v. 2 is interpreted in this way, then the recognition in the MT ( $\text{הָיָה}$ ), the LXX ( $\text{ταπεινώω}$ ), and the OL (*humiliare*) of Dinah’s response to the situation is not taken into account. But this ends up not being a problem for Jerome, for he adds Dinah’s response to v. 3 and makes it the motivation for Shechem’s cajoling her and jollyng her along. His construction of v. 3 suggests Jerome’s dependence on the LXX and the OL for such an understanding of what had occurred between Shechem and Dinah, for this is the way in which Shechem is depicted in these versions—as interested in addressing Dinah’s discomfiture in a positive manner.

Jerome’s addition of Dinah’s state of mind to v. 3 of the Vulgate is one of several ways in which this verse in the Vulgate differs from the depiction of Shechem and Dinah in the MT. However, in the Vulgate, as in the MT, it is Shechem’s  $\text{וְיָדָה}/\text{animus}$  that is directly featured, rather than Dinah’s  $\text{ψυχή}/\text{animus}$ , as in the LXX and the OL. Nonetheless in the Vulgate, Shechem’s *animus* is not depicted as directing itself toward Dinah via an active verb, as in the MT, but, rather, his *animus* is depicted as it is in the LXX: as being bound closely *by* Dinah.<sup>124</sup> The next thing that appears in v. 3 in the MT is a further expression of the *nature* of Shechem’s attachment to Dinah, the declaration of

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in the LXX and the Targums indicates that there was a consistency in the ordering of the event in the *Vorlagen* of these versions, suggesting a consistency in the ordering of the event in all *Vorlagen*.

<sup>123</sup> This is noted by Bechtel. See Chapter 4, p. 150.

<sup>124</sup> In the LXX, it is Dinah’s soul that has Shechem held fast, not just “her,” as in the Vulgate. The passive form of the verb here suggests that Jerome might have relied on the LXX here, for both the MT and the OL have active verb forms in v. 3, unlike the LXX. Sparks (“Jerome,” 521) asserts that it was possible that Jerome did rely on the LXX to some extent. Sparks claims that even though Jerome had “abandon[ed] the Septuagint as his base [and] cast aspersions on the inspiration of the Seventy. . . the influence . . . of the Septuagint” can be discerned at places in the Vulgate.

which opens v. 3 in the MT, but, since in the Vulgate Shechem's attachment to Dinah already has been declared and defined in v. 2, Jerome makes use of the lacuna created in v. 3 by this previous interpretive move and adds Dinah's response to the situation at this point in v. 3, in order to provide the motivation for Shechem cajoling Dinah and attempting to coax her out of her post-coital funk. The way in which Jerome describes Shechem's speech to Dinah indicates the influence of the Old Latin here, though Jerome may have been equally influenced by the Hebrew idiom דָּבַר עַל־לֵב and felt that "*delinivit blanditiis*"<sup>125</sup> was the appropriate way to render the Hebrew.

The view that Jerome reconstructed the relational dynamics between Shechem and Dinah along the lines of abduction marriage laid out for him by Roman law and literature also is supported by his addition to v. 7 of the accusation against Shechem that not only had he done a foul thing against Israel by violating Jacob's daughter, but that he also "had committed an unlawful act" which, according to the laws of the Roman Empire in Jerome's time, he had. However, as I noted above, in the archaic world depicted in Genesis 34 there was no overarching government to whose laws Shechem would have been answerable. There was only the accepted custom of paying for the rights to a female's sexuality before availing oneself of those rights. Shechem's failure to do this exposed the Jacob and his sons for what they were: a family group too small to be taken into account.<sup>126</sup>

Even though Jerome asserted that when it came to the Bible, "*et verborum orde*

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<sup>125</sup> Jerome does not seem to be sure what it is that Dinah is supposed to be feeling, just that what she was feeling was negative, so he describes her as "sad" and Shechem as trying to coax her out of her despondency. Jerome's use of "*delinivit blanditiis*" indicates that he did not think that Dinah's funk was a very serious condition. She was just a child who could be jollied out of her adverse reaction to what had occurred. In the other places in which דָּבַר עַל־לֵב appears in the Vulgate, *blandior* is used in Gen 50:21 of Joseph coaxing his brothers and in Judg 19:3 of the Levite's plan of the way in which he will approach his wife; in all other places the idiom is translated with *loquor* and *cor*.

<sup>126</sup> In v. 30, Jacob laments the smallness of his family group over against the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

*mysteriolum est,*”<sup>127</sup> his translation of Gen 34:2-3 indicates that he translated with more freedom than his statement concerning biblical syntax indicates and that—if he were interpreting the same or a similar *Vorlage* as that which underlies the MT—he was not able to counter his cultural conditioning when interpreting vv. 2-3. According to those who assess his work, Jerome would not have felt the need to do so. Sparks asserts that “Jerome was always arbitrary.”<sup>128</sup> Therefore, according to J. N. D. Kelly, “where the Hebrew presented difficulties or inconsistencies [to Jerome’s mind]...he frequently papered over them by deft re-writing.”<sup>129</sup> That this is a distinct possibility in his approach to vv. 2-3 is supported by the fact that in the rest of Genesis 34, he followed the order of events as presented in the MT.<sup>130</sup>

In terms of the possible effects of the Jerome’s “deft re-writing” on current translations, the RSV appears to have been untouched. The translators of the NRSV, however, may have taken a cue from Jerome’s translation of v. 2 when translating this verse themselves. Rather than translating *וַיַּעֲבֹדָהּ* as “he defiled her” (KJV) or as “he humbled her” (RSV), the NRSV translators translate *וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֶת הָאִשָּׁה וַיַּעֲבֹדָהּ* as “he lay with her by force,” apparently regarding the inclusion of “by force” as an adequate way to take into account the presence of *וַיַּעֲבֹדָהּ* in v. 2 of the MT.<sup>131</sup> The NRSV translators may have felt

<sup>127</sup> Harvey Minkoff, “How Bible Translations Differ,” *BAR* 18 (1992), 66.

<sup>128</sup> Sparks, “Jerome,” 529.

<sup>129</sup> J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 162.

James Barr’s (“*Typology*, 40) assessment of Jerome’s work supports Kelly’s. Barr asserts that in comparison to “earlier biblical translation,” Jerome “stood for freedom rather than literality.”

<sup>130</sup> With a slight exception in v. 16. Verse 16 in Vulgate reads, “Then we will take your daughters and also give ours, reciprocally, and we will live with you and be one people.” MT reads, “[Then] we will give our daughters to you and your daughters we will take for ourselves and we will live with you and become one people.” The order in the MT is significant in that the sons mimic exactly what Hamor had said, thus indicating to him that they had ‘bought into’ his offer completely.

<sup>131</sup> In doing this, they read Gen 34:2 similarly to the way in which Claus Westermann (*Genesis 12-36: A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Augsburg [1985]) does. Westermann (533) translates v. 2 as “When Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, chief of the land, saw her, he seized her, lay with her, and dishonored her.”

justified in making this decision by the presence of *vi opprimens virginem* in the Vulgate in the same position syntactically as עָנָה is in the MT, since עָנָה *can* indicate the use of force (as indicated by Sarah's mistreatment of Hagar) and *vi does* indicate the use of force. By making this decision, the NRSV translators indicate that they concur with those scholars who think that the primary indication of עָנָה here is the force that Shechem used against Dinah, rather than denoting the traumatic effects on Dinah of Shechem's having raped her. The problem with such a decision, however, is that, as a result, the NRSV includes no reference to the effects on Dinah of what Shechem has done, unlike other ancient versions and more recent translations which include some reference to the effects on Dinah of Shechem's actions, because of the way in which וַיַּעַנְהָ is translated in all of these versions. The exception in terms of the Ancient Versions which I have reviewed is the Vulgate, but Jerome adds a reference to Dinah's feelings in v. 3. The NRSV does not. The result of the kind of approach to the use of the Ancient Versions indicated by the NRSV translation is that elements which are a part of the MT can end up being left out. The indication is, then, that a return to the MT raises the possibility of giving Dinah her due by returning her to the text in a way that is crucial to understanding not only her but, I will argue in Chapters 6-8, also to understanding the text as a whole.

### **The Targums**

*Targum Neofiti*:<sup>1</sup> ונפקת דינה ברת לאה די ילדת ליעקב למתחמייא עם בנתהון דעמא דארע

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Westermann (534) recommends pointing אַתָּה with שָׁכַב “אָתָּה with Gk.” The Greek is ἐκοιμήθη μετ’ αὐτῆς. Westermann (537) views Genesis 34 as a compilation of three narratives. In terms of what is represented in v. 2, he (538) asserts that “the three narratives are not narrating a seduction, but a forceful violation, as the word וַיַּעַנְהָ underscores (also Judg. 19:24; 20:5; 2 Sam 13:12).” Thus Westermann reads עָנָה as representing the force used against Dinah, as Bechtel notes many scholars do (see n. 123 *supra*). Westermann's unexplained decision to read with the Greek suggests that he made this decision without exegeting the entire chapter in the LXX, as Greenberg recommends. His decision that עָנָה represents the force used against Dinah, since it represents “force” in Judg 19:24, 20:5, and 2 Sam 13:12, suggests that he did not investigate the usage of עָנָה in the form in which it is found in Gen 34:2 in comparison to all the usages of that form in the MT, as Barr recommends.

<sup>1</sup> Dinah, the daughter whom Leah bore to Jacob, went out to be seen with the daughters of the people of the land.

*Targum Onkelos:* <sup>1</sup> תפקת דינה בת לאה די לידת ליעקב למחזי בנתב ארעא

<sup>1</sup> Dinah, the daughter whom Leah bore to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.

*Targum Pseudo-Jonathon:* <sup>1</sup> ונפקת דינה ברת לאה די לידת ליעקב למיחמי בנימוס בנת עמי ארעא

<sup>1</sup> Dinah, the daughter whom Leah bore to Jacob, went out to see the customs of the daughters of the people of the land.

As with the translations which have been influential in the Christian tradition, the Aramaic translations of Genesis 34 exhibit differences from the MT that can be attributed to a lack of correspondence between the conceptual world in which the source text was composed and the conceptual world in which the translations were made.<sup>132</sup> What is revealed in the Aramaic translations of Genesis 34 is a concern with the *social* consequences of *Dinah's going out*, whereas, I will argue, in the MT the concern is with the *political* consequences of *Shechem's deciding to keep her*. Both *Tg. Neof.* and *Tg. Ps.-J.* evidence a concern with *why* Dinah went out. In *Tg. Neof.*, rather than Dinah being described as going out “to look at the daughters of the land,” as she is described as doing in the MT,<sup>133</sup> Dinah is represented as going out (נפק) “to be seen with the daughters of the people of the land.” In his study of *Tg. Neof.*, Barry Levy acknowledges the issue that this raises in connection with Dinah. He states, “The implications for the story of Dinah are clear. N suggests that she may have been looking for trouble.”<sup>134</sup> Levy suggests that a possible reason for the translators’ decision to render the active form of the Biblical Hebrew verb נפק with the passive form of the Aramaic verb נפק may have been the fact that this form appears in E 34:24, D 31:11 and Is. 1:12, and inflected forms

<sup>132</sup> I do not analyze the Targums in light of the different dialects recognized in *Tg. Neof.*, *Tg. Onq.*, or *Tg. Ps.-J.*, but rather in terms of a general concern which I see as characterizing all three Targums. Thus, I refer to Aramaic in general and not in terms of its realization in various dialects.

<sup>133</sup> See Chapter 4, pp. 187-190.

<sup>134</sup> Barry Levy, *Targum Neophyti I: A Textual Study* [New York: University Press of America, 1986], 209.

are found in E 34:23, D 16:16. All of these words are vocalized as passive forms and . . . all are translated in N as passive. The translation and vocalization of these words reflect the wish to eliminate any reference to seeing God and deviate from the simple meaning of the text in order to achieve this goal. Since no such theological problem exists here, the Massorah has opted for lire'ot, but the Aramaic translations followed the other established pattern and translated the word as a passive form.<sup>135</sup>

This is a possible reason for the translators of *Tg. Neof.* having rendered רָאָה as they did, but a more likely reason was the way in which a female's going out was viewed in the culture which gave rise to *Tg. Neof.* In Aramaic, the terminology used to denote a prostitute is בְּרֵא בְּרָא: "a daughter of going out."<sup>136</sup> From this perspective, it is possible to view Dinah's goal in going out as a desire "to be seen." The fact, as Levy suggests, that the verb רָאָה had been rendered in the passive elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures may have made the translators of *Tg. Neof.* feel justified in rendering רָאָה as they did in Gen 34:1. However, the fact that the Targumic translations were associated with giving "the proper meaning of the text" was probably warrant enough for them to render what they thought was the true meaning of Gen 34:1,<sup>137</sup> for, as Levy notes, the situation in which רָאָה occurs in Gen 34:1 does not parallel the situations of the occurrences of רָאָה in the passive in the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures. As for their translation of v. 2, the translators of *Tg. Neof.* apparently decided that Dinah got what she was looking for in terms of a sexual experience: Shechem took her, slept with her (שָׁמַשׁ עִמָּה),<sup>138</sup> and thereby ruined (צָעַר) her.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Levy, *Targum*, 209.

<sup>136</sup> Jastrow, 926.

<sup>137</sup> John Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature: An Introduction to Jewish Interpretations of Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 25.

<sup>138</sup> Jastrow ("שָׁמַשׁ," 1602) "to couple." Grossfeld (*Tg. Neof.*, 164) notes that in *Tg. Neof.* where "the Heb. שכב merely signifies the act of "lying down/sleeping", N translates it by the term דָּמַרְמַר."

<sup>139</sup> Sokoloff, "צָעַר", 468. צָעַר is used to translate עָנָה in Deut 22:24 and 29 in *Tg. Neof.*

As for *Tg. Ps.-J.*, in his translation of this text, Michael Maher sees the description of Dinah going out to look at the “*customs* (בנימוט) of the daughters of the people of the land” in *Tg. Ps.-J.* as a reference to the assertion in *Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer* that “Shechem . . . brought dancing girls who were (also) playing the pipes in the streets. Dinah went forth to see those girls;”<sup>140</sup> in other words, Shechem lured her out, after which he took her against her will (ודבר יתה באונסא),<sup>141</sup> raped her and hurt (סגף) her.

In *Tg. Onq.* the translation closely resembles the MT and the perspective from which the translators viewed the situation is not apparent until the consequence of what Shechem has done is described at the end of v. 2, which they chose to describe by using the verb עָנַי (“ruin”).<sup>142</sup> This same verb is used in *Tg. Onq.* to describe the consequence of what the man has done in Deut 22:24. Thus Shechem ‘ruined’ Dinah and “deprived her of other connections.”<sup>143</sup> The translators of *Tg. Onq.* most likely found support for their view that Shechem’s raping Dinah ‘ruined’ her, because of the use of טָמָא in v. 5 of the Hebrew text to describe Jacob’s assessment of what Shechem had done to Dinah. The verb טָמָא is part of the Aramaic lexicon, conveying ritual impurity,<sup>144</sup> but the translators of all three Targums chose to use the verb קָאָב in v. 5, which also refers to defilement, but

<sup>140</sup> Michael Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathon: Genesis. The Aramaic Bible 1B* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 117, n.1. Maher asserts that *Tg. Ps.-J.* “often depended on *PRE*,” 8. That this was perceived in late antiquity as a way in which rapists ensnared their victims can be seen as well in Augustine’s comments on the rapes of the Sabine women, whom he regarded as having “been decoyed and trapped by the pretense of a spectacle” (Wolfthal, *Images*, 36).

<sup>141</sup> Maher, *Targum*, 117, n. 2.

<sup>142</sup> The translators of *Tg. Onq.* should not be seen as selecting עָנַי because of the view that they stuck closer to the Hebrew text and did not expand on it as the translators of both *Tg. Neof.* and *Tg. Ps.-J.* did. Their selection of עָנַי can be considered as reflective of their perspective on what the situation is in Genesis 34 and not merely a choice made because of the similarity between עָנַי in the Aramaic dialect reflected in *Tg. Onq.* and Biblical Hebrew עָנָה. Bowker (*The Targums*, 23) asserts that “Onqelos contains a great deal of interpretative material . . . that is not immediately obvious because it has been reduced and compressed, sometimes being limited to a single word.”

<sup>143</sup> Jastrow, “עָנַי,” 1093. This is the way in which Gen 34:2 is interpreted in the Talmudic tractate Yoma.

<sup>144</sup> Jastrow, “טָמָא,” 539.



which has connotations of “soiling.”<sup>145</sup> This indicates that from the perspective of the translators of the Targums this is what Shechem has done to Dinah by having sexual contact with her.

Nonetheless, this negative view of the results of what Shechem had done to Dinah did not prevent the Targumic translators from depicting his post-coital reaction to Dinah positively. The translators of all three Targums used the words נָפֵשׁ (“soul”), רָעִי in the *itpe‘el* (“delight in,” “choose”),<sup>146</sup> and רָחַם (“love”) to describe his response to her. As for the Biblical Hebrew idiom דָּבַר עַל-לֵב, they rendered it in such a way that Shechem’s speech is seen as his trying to make amends to Dinah. In rendering דָּבַר עַל-לֵב, the translator of *Tg. Onq.* used the verb מָלִי—“to fill;” “to compensate”<sup>147</sup>—rather than the verb מָלַל, “to speak.”<sup>148</sup> Jastrow’s citation of *B. Mets.* 105<sup>a</sup>—“he took pains to make up for the loss”—captures the sense of the verb מָלִי in *Tg. Onq.*: Shechem tried to “(re-)fill” the heart that he had just ‘emptied.’ In *Tg. Ps.-J.*, the translator uses the verb מָלַל. Since the preposition עַל with this verb can convey the idea of speaking *against* someone, the

<sup>145</sup> Jastrow, “סָעָב,” 947.

<sup>146</sup> Jastrow, “רָעִי,” 1486. The translators of all three Targums used the verb רָעִי in both verses 3 and 8. נָפֵשׁ also appears in v. 8 in the Hebrew and is rendered in v. 8 in the Targums by נָפֵשׁ. It is possible that the meaning of הִשָּׁק in Aramaic as “bandaging, saddling, or harnessing” may have been part of the decision to use רָעִי, because in v. 8, in the Hebrew text, the verb הִשָּׁק is used. Thus the possibility exists that the translators viewed the use of דָּבַר with נָפֵשׁ in Biblical Hebrew in v. 3 as sufficiently similar to the ‘close binding’ conveyed by Aramaic הִשָּׁק to correspond to Shechem’s נָפֵשׁ דָּבַר לְ דִינָה, since דָּבַר לְ in Aramaic refers to “adhering to”—that is, Aramaic הִשָּׁק resembled Biblical Hebrew דָּבַר לְ closely enough that the use of the verb רָעִי in both vv. 3 and 8 appeared justified. Apparently the translators viewed someone’s נָפֵשׁ “clinging to” someone else as conveying that that someone’s נָפֵשׁ “delighted in/chose” that someone else. Thus, if Shechem is perceived as loving Dinah—and the translators’ construal of v. 3 indicates that they conceived of him in this way—then the choice of רָעִי is adequate for v. 3 and suits as well what becomes in the Targums Hamor’s reiteration in v. 8 that Shechem’s נָפֵשׁ “delighted in” Dinah. The translators of *Tg. Onq.* and *Tg. Neof.* use רָעִי as well in v. 19 to render the Biblical Hebrew verb הִפְעִי. In the MT הִפְעִי is used in the clause which gives Shechem’s motivation for hastening to be circumcised and conveys a sense of his purpose for doing so. Since the translators have construed Shechem’s post-coital actions as motivated by his “delight in” and “love” for Dinah, then רָעִי serves equally well in v. 19 as reflective of his motivation for his wasting no time in being circumcised.

<sup>147</sup> Jastrow, 789.

<sup>148</sup> Jastrow, 792.

translator added the noun פייסון to the text. Sokoloff glosses פייסון as “intercessor.”<sup>149</sup> The idea is, then, that Shechem did not speak *against* Dinah’s heart, but *upon* her heart, as a mediator does; that is, as one who tries to make peace. In *Tg. Neof.*, the translator uses the verb מלל, but with the preposition עם. The idea of compensation or consolation comes from the addition to the text of “words of peace;” that is, Shechem spoke “comforting words” to Dinah. The result is that in v. 3 in the Targums Shechem is depicted as emotionally responsive to Dinah in a positive way.<sup>150</sup>

The question arises concerning the translators’ rationales for these depictions of Shechem’s positive reaction to Dinah in the context of his having raped her; that is, on what basis did they decide that a rapist instantaneously could fall in love with his victim? The fact that Shechem raped Dinah is clear in *Tg. Ps.-J.* and in *Tg. Onq.* In *Tg. Onq.*, the direct object marker with the feminine pronoun, יתה, is used after the verbs ודבר, וזוא and ושכיב. The usage with שכיב indicates that Shechem is represented as raping Dinah. This is indicated by the sparse use of ית in *Tg. Onq.*,<sup>151</sup> that is, the translators used it with שכיב here intentionally. That its use in v. 3 with שכיב is intentional and not just the translators of *Tg. Onq.* mimicking the usage in a Hebrew text is indicated by their use of it with שכיב in v. 7, where, in the MT, the direct object marker אַת is not found with שכיב, but, rather,

<sup>149</sup> Sokoloff, *Dictionary*, 432.

<sup>150</sup> Aramaic שפּ more closely resembles Biblical Hebrew לב in its capacity as the decision-making center of a person than it resembles Biblical Hebrew נפש in terms of its primary meaning of “desire” or “appetite.” This can be seen in Jastrow’s citation for Aramaic שפּ under the English gloss “soul.” He references *Baba M’tsi’a*, which states that “the refusal of a coin on the ground of a slight abrasion proves merely a malevolent soul (illiberality in dealing).” It is evident in this reference that שפּ refers to the ‘location’ where the decision about the coin was made. As for Aramaic לב, Sokoloff’s (*Dictionary*, 275) references for the usage of לב in *Tg. Neof.* and in the *Frg. Tg.* indicate that לב in Aramaic refers more to affect, the will, and the ability or skill that people have; that is, to decisions already made, either in terms of the emotions and/or the will or to intrinsic abilities which people have—rather than to the ‘location’ where decisions are made.

<sup>151</sup> Maher (*Tg. Ps.-J: Genesis*, 9) notes that *Tg. Onq.* “prefers to use pronominal suffixes attached to the verb rather than denote the direct object by using the particle *yt* followed by the pronominal suffixes.”

the preposition  $\text{ל}$ .<sup>152</sup> Thus, the translators of *Tg. Onq.* can be seen as focused on their own interpretation of Genesis 34, not on attempting to render the Hebrew as closely as possible, their interpretation being centered on Shechem's rape of Dinah, but not in terms of rescuing her from her rapist—as I will argue in Chapter 6 is the way in which Jacob is presented in the MT—but in terms of the social diminishment she has suffered as a result of her unauthorized coitus with a man. As for *Tg. Neof.*, Dinah is depicted as getting what she wanted, so no trauma is indicated and the love depicted in v. 3 of *Tg. Neof.* is possible, coming as it does in the context of mutually desired sexual relations.

As for *Tg. Ps.-J.* and *Tg. Onq.*, in which rape is depicted, a possible explanation for the depiction of love in the aftermath of rape can be found in *Genesis Rabbah*. There the rabbis search for a reason that this terrible thing happened to Jacob and his family and determine that it happened because Jacob hid Dinah in a chest at the time when he met Esau upon returning to Canaan. According to the rabbis, Jacob did this because Dinah was so attractive and he feared that, if Esau saw her, he would take her. However, the rabbis reasoned, if Jacob *had* allowed Esau to have Dinah, then the terrible thing that happened in Shechem would not have befallen Jacob and his family. Their reasoning was that Dinah's goodness would have converted Esau to Judaism and that Jacob's action interfered with the conversion of Esau and therefore Jacob was punished by God for having prevented Esau's conversion.<sup>153</sup> One thing which is indicated by the rabbinical

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<sup>152</sup> In my reading of Genesis 34, a distinction is made between Jacob's focus in v. 5 on Dinah's situation and his sons' focus in v. 7 on the issue which the family as a whole faced: the problem which Shechem's coitus with Dinah has created for them. One way in which this distinction is conveyed is the fact that in v. 7 Shechem is not depicted as raping Dinah, only as having slept with her, thus indicating that the sons' concern is with the fact that Shechem's action has made it appear that the boundaries of Jacob's family are easily breached, thus endangering the whole family. This is what they are concerned about. Verse 30 reveals that Jacob also had the well-being of the entire family in mind as well.

<sup>153</sup> H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, ed. *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, Vol. 2 (trans. H. Freedman; London: The Soncino Press, 1983), 737.

reasoning is that it was not outside the realm of possibility to them for a powerful man to fall in love with a lovely young Jewish girl upon seeing her; in other words, to them, it would have been possible for Shechem to be immediately attracted to Dinah and to act upon that attraction in an unfortunate way. If Shechem is viewed from this perspective, then his desire to marry Dinah (v. 4), his father's reiteration of his delight in her (v. 8), and his own behavior as depicted in vv. 10-11 and 19 would have confirmed for them the accuracy of such a view. The rabbis' reconstruction of the events leading up to Shechem's assault on Dinah suggest the kind of thinking which could have informed the translators of the Targums—as the translators would be men who would have had a religious and educational background similar to that of those whose speculations regarding Genesis are found in *Genesis Rabbah*.

For the translators of *Tg. Neof.* and *Tg. Ps.-J.*, however, Shechem's post-coital attraction to Dinah is not enough to overcome the fact that in having sex with her (*Tg. Neof.*) or raping her (*Tg. Ps.-J.*) he has *treated* her like an available woman, like a בְּרִיָּה, <sup>154</sup> thereby “creating disgrace for Israel” (v. 7), an offense which could not go unanswered. That the translators of these Targums viewed this as a fatal misstep on Shechem's part can be seen in the justification for Simeon and Levi's behavior which they added to v. 31. What becomes evident in their defense of Simeon and Levi is that their basic concern was the effect of the reception of this story. In *Tg. Neof.*, the expansion of v. 31 takes into consideration the reception of Genesis 34 not only in “the assemblies of Israel and their houses of study,” but also in the “assemblies and

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<sup>154</sup>In the view of the translators of *Tg. Neof.*, Shechem is still guilty of an offense, even though they apparently viewed Dinah as having *behaved* like a בְּרִיָּה בְּקִלְתָּא.

expositions” of the gentiles,<sup>155</sup> who must not be allowed to view “the defil[ing] of virgins” by “the uncircumcised” and “the defil[ing] of the daughter of Jacob” by the “worshippers of idols” to be activities which would go unanswered by the sons of Israel.<sup>156</sup> So egregious was the disrespect of these “uncircumcised” for Israel that it was not just any Jewish virgin whom “*they* [had] defiled,”<sup>157</sup> but “the daughter of Jacob.” What appears to have been at stake in this expansion of *Tg. Neof.* was the self-esteem of Jewish males, for their expansion closes with the assertion that Simeon and Levi’s execution of Shechem prevented Shechem from “derid[ing us] to himself [and] vilifying [us] in his heart and saying ‘[She] was like a woman who did not have anyone to avenge her—her humiliation.’” It also appears to be the case in *Tg. Ps.-J.* that it was the self-image of Jews which was at stake in their expansion of Genesis 34, which expresses concern about the reception of this story in “the assemblies of the children of Israel.” In both expansions what is important to the Targumists is that the Israelites avenge the wrong done to Dinah and her family.

When the Targums are compared to the Hebrew text available to current interpreters, the MT, what is evident is that נָצַף does not indicate the same concern with Dinah’s going out as is indicated in the Targums. That this is the case can be seen in Robin Parry’s study of the use of נָצַף in the MT. Parry found that, even though “the OT often describes women who ‘go out’” (she cites seventeen examples), there is only one

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<sup>155</sup> The gentiles are not identified per se, but rather are contrasted with the assemblies of Israel, thus indicating that the reference is to those who are not Jewish.

<sup>156</sup> It is important to note that in this expansion Shechem’s singular act has been turned into one of a possible general activity by the uncircumcised and by the worshippers of idols.

<sup>157</sup> Support in Genesis 34 for the view that Dinah was defiled (נָצַף) by “them” is found in v. 27.

case of a woman who goes out as a prostitute (Prov 7: 15).”<sup>158</sup> This indicates that, even though there are biblical texts such as Deut 22:13-27 and Prov 7:6-27 which give voice to men’s fears about women “going out,” these texts do not represent a monolithic view that prevailed at all times and in all places in which the texts which now make up the MT were composed; in other words, fears about women ‘going out’ were not prevalent in the cultural setting in which Genesis 34 was composed,<sup>159</sup> whereas these concerns were prevalent in the cultural settings in which the Targums were composed.

The concern with Dinah’s behavior that is evident in the Targums reflects the situation of a minority group; that is, the point of view of a subjected people who had no power over the behavior of the gentiles to whom they were subjected and whose worst behavior is represented by Shechem.<sup>160</sup> The translators do not focus on his behavior, but merely accept it as the kind of thing that can happen when a lovely Jewish girl captures the attention of a powerful gentile man; that is, it can happen unless the community takes steps to prevent it. These steps include keeping Jewish girls safe at home and, according to *Gen. Rab.*, Jewish fathers exhibiting more faithfulness than Jacob did when he hid Dinah from Esau. Thus, when reading Genesis 34, the Targumic translators did not blame Shechem for what he did to Dinah, because this was what gentiles did, and the behavior of gentile overlords was not anything they could control. Therefore, the translators of *Tg. Neof.* and of *Tg. Ps.-J.* focused on the behavior in the text which they could control and ‘explained’ what was wrong with that behavior: that Dinah went out on her own in search

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<sup>158</sup> Parry, “Feminist,” 13-14. In Prov 7:6-27 the promiscuous woman is out looking for men while her husband is away (v. 19), whereas in Prov 31:10-31, the worthy woman is the one who stays home and looks after the well-being of her family—or, if she leaves home, her forays away from home are directed toward that same worthwhile end (vv. 13, 14, 16, 24).

<sup>159</sup> Westermann (*Genesis*, 538) notes that “it is presupposed that the girl is able to move about freely.”

<sup>160</sup> Jastrow, (*Dictionary*, V), observes that “the subjects of [the] literature” which his dictionary covers “reflect the mental condition of the Jewish world in its exclusion from the outer world, as well as in its contact with the same.”

of a sexual experience or that she was lured out. Either way the message was that Jewish fathers should keep their daughters under tight control, so that the terrible event which took place in Genesis 34—the rape of a Jewish girl and her ruination—would not take place in *their* own time and place.

The negative view of Dinah’s behavior found in *Tg.Neof.* is the view which prevailed in Jewish interpretation and can be seen to have affected both Sheres’ and Frymer-Kensky’s interpretations of Genesis 34. Frymer-Kensky assumes that Dinah was ‘out looking for it’<sup>161</sup> and part of Sheres’ goal in interpreting Genesis 34 as she does is to change the traditional negative Jewish view of Dinah’s behavior into a positive one.<sup>162</sup> Both Nahum Sarna, in his commentary on Genesis, as well as Jacob Neusner, in his commentary on *Genesis Rabbah*, also give expression to this negative view of Dinah. Sarna asserts that “the text casts a critical eye upon Dinah’s *unconventional* behavior through the use of the verbal stem *y-ts-*’, “to go out.” Like its Akkadian and Aramaic equivalents, the verb can connote coquettish or promiscuous conduct.”<sup>163</sup> However, as Parry’s analysis made clear, when *סָצָה* is used to describe a woman’s “going out,” it is does *not* describe unconventional behavior and it is *not* like its Aramaic equivalent and thus it is not like its Akkadian equivalent either. Like Sarna, Neusner claims that “the verb “go out,” when associated with a woman, carries the sense of “awhoring.””<sup>164</sup> This is correct in terms of Aramaic, but not in terms of Biblical Hebrew. Thus, it is evident that, like the Ancient Versions, the Targums also have contributed to the creation of certain assumptions about Genesis 34 which are not reflective of the content of the text as

<sup>161</sup> See Chapter 3, pp. 98-99.

<sup>162</sup> See quote in Chapter 3, p. 111.

<sup>163</sup> Nahum Sarna, *Genesis* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 233, italics mine.

<sup>164</sup> Neusner, *Genesis*, Parashah 80:4, 149.

found in the MT. As a result, we find that, when we read Genesis 34 in translation, we are not reading a narrative which merely has been brought forward in time and in translation, but, rather, we are reading a text tinged with the predilections and presuppositions which time and translation have brought to the reading of it. As Rashkow notes, translations themselves “may enshrine beliefs far removed from the original text [and] for many readers these have become part of the text.”<sup>165</sup>

### **“The Use of the Ancient Versions for Interpreting the Hebrew Text”**

The title to this section is the title of Moshe Greenberg’s article in which he addresses the issue of the relationship of the Ancient Versions to the MT. Greenberg’s recommendation is that the best route open to interpreters who turn to the Ancient Versions in order to illuminate meanings in the MT is to exegete each text in its own right, so that a determination can be made as to the meaning of each text in its own context before any comparisons are made between the main text under consideration and other texts brought to the interpretive process as a means of explicating the text the analyst is exegeting.<sup>166</sup> The exegetical reward of such an approach, according to Greenberg, is that the coherence of each text can be taken into account and a determination made as to whether or not the message in one text can “be made the criterion for the other.”<sup>167</sup> Greenberg’s position is the one that I sought to illustrate in my review of the translation of Gen 34: 2-3 in three of the Ancient Versions. I undertook the analysis of the Ancient Versions in order to reveal the origins of what I believe to be an inaccurate perception of Shechem as a rapist/lover in some of the earliest translations of Gen 34:2-3. In addition, I wanted to be able to account for what I perceive to be effects

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<sup>165</sup> Rashkow, *Upon*, 51.

<sup>166</sup> Greenberg, “The Use,” 137, 140.

<sup>167</sup> Greenberg. “The Use,” 140, 136.



on the translations of the RSV and the NRSV which I suggested resulted from the translators of these versions having turned to the Ancient Versions for assistance in making sense of Genesis 34. One result of what appears to have been recourse both to the LXX and the Vulgate on the part of the NRSV translators is, as I noted above, that any reference to the effects on Dinah of Shechem's rape of her are left out of the NRSV translation. This may be due to the fact that, even though two of the prior translations in this stream of translation—the KJV and the RSV—make reference to her being “defiled” or to her being “humbled,” the NRSV translators decided that contemporary recipients do not think that way any more about women who have been raped and therefore that sort of reference to Dinah was sexist:<sup>168</sup> what should be emphasized instead is the force that Shechem used against Dinah. Jerome's reference to Shechem's use of *vis* may have suggested to them the basis for making such a move. Whatever the basis for the decision by the NRSV translators to translate an active verb in the MT (פָּרַעַף) with an adverbial form in English (“by force”), the result is that they “have supplanted the Hebrew . . . without realizing that what is at stake is not an isolated reading, but an entire context and message, or without awareness that they may be contaminating the text of one edition by that of another.”<sup>169</sup> In order to avoid this sort of contamination, Greenberg asserts that the best use of the Ancient Versions by those who wish to interpret the MT with the help of

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<sup>168</sup> Bruce M. Metzger (“To the Reader,” *The HarperCollins Study Bible*, NRSV, xxviii): “among the mandates given to the Committee in 1980 . . . was the directive to continue in the tradition of the King James Bible, but to introduce such changes as are warranted on the basis of accuracy, clarity, euphony and current English usage. . . . During the almost half a century since the publication of the RSV, many in the churches have become sensitive to the danger of linguistic sexism arising from the inherent bias of the English language toward the masculine gender. . . .” While Metzger's statement does not indicate that the mandate given to the Committee included eliminating sexism in all of its forms in the Bible (in fact, the Committee tried not to alter “passages that reflect[ed] the historical situation of ancient patriarchal culture”), the concern about sexism associated with this particular version of the Bible indicates that changing v. 2 on this basis could have been a motive for the change made in Gen 34:2. Even though such a change may have been made with the best of intentions, it has obscured an important aspect of the MT.

<sup>169</sup> Greenberg, “The Use,” 147.

the Ancient Versions is to use them as a “heuristic resource.”<sup>170</sup> Methodologically, this means paying attention to divergences which “may suggest differences in conception that illuminate the Hebrew by their very contrast with it.”<sup>171</sup> The possibility of this sort of result can be seen in my exegesis of vv. 2-3 in the MT, the LXX, the OL and the Vulgate, each on its own terms, before each text was compared, in turn, to the MT. The result was a clearer picture of who and what Shechem is not, thus providing the promise of assistance in determining who and what he is.

What stands out about Greenberg’s approach is that his is a methodological approach that emphasizes attention to the particularity of each text; that is, the same emphasis on the particular that Fewell and Phillips contend is the most ethical way to approach the interpretation of biblical texts.<sup>172</sup> Greenberg’s essay on methodology coincides with the recommendations of these other scholars because of his insistence on taking into account the integrity of each text which is being analyzed. What this does, in terms of the concerns that I have laid out as central to me, is take into account the reality of the lives behind the text which are represented in some way in the efforts of the authors and redactors who created the texts under consideration, because the efforts of the authors and redactors are taken into account in their own right to the greatest degree possible before interpreters resort to other interpretations of the text in order to make sense of the text they are exegeting. Such an approach also promises, by its very commitment to the integrity of each text under examination, the possibility that the reality of the lives in front of the text also will be taken into account; that is, that they will be addressed as they need to be by this sacred text. This is an understanding of interpretation

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<sup>170</sup> Greenberg, “The Use,” 140.

<sup>171</sup> Greenberg, “The Use,” 148.

<sup>172</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 15.

that is based on the idea that honoring the integrity of the source text to the greatest degree possible will result in a well-integrated and cohesive translation, one which will be closer to reality—to the really real<sup>173</sup> that real people experience.

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<sup>173</sup> Claudia Camp and Carole R. Fontaine (Preface: “On Women, War, Metaphor and the Really Real,” *Semeia* 61[1993], xi) rightly claim that “rape in war is no metaphor—it is real.” It is this kind of reality—the reality which lies at the base of biblical prose and poetry—that interpreters need to get in touch with.

## **Chapter 6: Making sense of Genesis 34 in terms of a proposed authorial intent**

### **Introduction**

My review of the LXX, the Old Latin, the Vulgate, and the Targums brought into view the reality that decisions of the translators of these versions concerning Genesis 34 were affected by the social scripts which they brought to their interpretations/translations of a Hebrew text—social scripts which differed from that of the composer of the Hebrew text. Because the blurring of conceptual worlds across these cultural divides, as well as across the cultural divides which exist among the Ancient Versions, was not taken into account, an interpretation of Shechem as a rapist/lover developed and became the dominant perception of what Genesis 34 is about in terms of Shechem. However, examination of the Vulgate in the societal setting in which Jerome created this translation indicates that the view that love can be ignited in conjunction with violence is reflective of cultural constructions of the crime of *raptus* in the Roman Empire of Jerome's time, not of the thought processes of a Judean subject in the Persian Empire; that is, of the thought processes of the kind of person I propose as the author of Genesis 34.

I will argue that comparison with Second Temple texts with which Genesis 34 has affinities suggests the possibility of a Second Temple provenance for Genesis 34 as well. In regard to the Book of Judith and the Levi-Priestly Tradition (LPT), the affinity with Genesis 34 can be seen in the form of similar content: each of these texts contains a version of the events believed to have taken place at the ancient city of Shechem. The LPT includes Aramaic Levi Document (ALD), *Jubilees* 30.1-32-9 (*Jub.*), and the *Testament of Levi* (*T. Levi*). I will argue that, when Genesis 34 is compared to these texts (and Judith) in light of the questions which Fewell and Phillips recommend an interpreter

ask in order to contextualize a text—“who would need to tell a story like this; what abyss inspired it”<sup>1</sup>—a possible ‘need to tell a story like’ Genesis 34 comes into view.

I will argue as well that these texts also help to explain why the author of Genesis 34 told his story in the way that he did—as do two other texts with which Genesis 34 has affinities: 2 Samuel 13 and the Book of Esther. Genesis 34 long has been recognized as having affinities with 2 Samuel 13—so much so that David Noel Freedman suggests that the two stories may have been “written (!) by the same hand.”<sup>2</sup> As for Esther, Susan Niditch considers this book, along with the Book of Judith and Genesis 34, to be “trickster tales of war.”<sup>3</sup> The affinity of Genesis 34 with these two texts has to do not only with this mode of storytelling but also with the message which the authors of these text wished to convey. Comparison with all of these texts—the LPT, the Books of Esther and Judith, and 2 Samuel 13—can help makes sense of Genesis 34.

Making sense of Genesis 34 requires taking the various parts of the text into account in relationship to each other. In order to do this with Genesis 34, I divide the text into five sections. Section one encompasses verses 1-7. These verses not only introduce the main characters in the story and their relationships to each other, but also the plot complication (v. 3).<sup>4</sup> Section two is comprised of verses 8-17 and presents the negotiations between the Shechemites and Jacob and his sons over Dinah’s fate—and their fate as well. Verses 18-24 make up the third section and present the Shechemite response to the outcome of the negotiations. The fourth section is comprised of the response of Simeon and Levi and their brothers to the Shechemite response to the

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<sup>1</sup> Fewell and Phillips, “Ethics,” 9.

<sup>2</sup> Freedman, “Dinah,” 51, exclamation point his.

<sup>3</sup> Susan Niditch, “The Ideology of Tricksterism,” ch. 5 in her *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 107.

<sup>4</sup> Westermann (*Genesis*, 538) notes that “the narrative takes a turn at v. 3.”

negotiations. This section includes vv. 25-29. The last section is comprised of vv. 30-31 and includes Jacob's response to what Simeon and Levi have done and led their brothers to do, as well as Simeon and Levi's response to Jacob's excoriation of them. The fact that Jacob's speech in v. 30 is one of the longest speeches in the text, is placed in a summarizing position at the end of the narrative, and is the only place in which Jacob is depicted speaking overtly indicates its importance in this text: it needs to be taken into account in terms of its significance to the text as a whole.

When contextualizing a biblical text, it is important to remember Abraham Smith's caveat that "the text's context is elusive simply because the recovery of an earlier context is precisely refracted through one's own context."<sup>5</sup> What this means in terms of contextualizing biblical texts such as Genesis 34 is that one's contextualization is supposition: one cannot claim to *know with certainty* that one's suppositions in any way reflect the reality which one is claiming for them. However, Smith also asserts that "we may all profit from imaginative reconstructions" of a text's context. Paul Noble also acknowledges the benefit of analysis which "enable[s] us to recreate the social and cultural milieu of the original audience" because this "can help us to perceive how the narrator might have expected his story to be received."<sup>6</sup> My contextualization of Genesis 34 is undertaken on the basis of Smith's and Noble's claims concerning the benefits of constructing possible social settings for biblical texts—in order not only to illuminate Dinah's experience but also in order to make sense of this "gnarled knot of a tale."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Abraham Smith, "The Productive Role of English Bible Translators," *Semeia* 76 [1996], 55.

<sup>6</sup> Noble, "A "Balanced"," 191.

<sup>7</sup> Geller, "The Sack," 2.

### **Genesis 34 and the Books of Esther and Judith as trickster tales of war**

As examples of trickster tales of war, Genesis 34 and the Books of Esther and Judith are stories in which “the hero or heroine achieves victory by deceiving the enemy.”<sup>8</sup> In addition to this similarity, all three narratives present themselves as historical accounts, yet there are elements of the improbable in them which attest to their essentially fictional nature.<sup>9</sup> In these narratives, historical memories, persons and locations are deployed in conjunction with fictional figures (and sometimes fictional locations) in a narrative composed to teach a lesson.<sup>10</sup>

The lessons which the authors of these works sought to teach their proposed recipients were related to the circumstances of those recipients. In terms of the Book of Judith, Carey A. Moore’s conclusion that the book was composed after John Hyrcanus’ destruction of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim creates the possibility of seeing this narrative as teaching the rewards of Pharisaic piety to those in the Samaritan territory who were being ““integrated” into the Judean state.”<sup>11</sup> The author of the Book of Judith

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<sup>8</sup> Niditch, “The Ideology,” 121.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Brueggemann (*Genesis: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* [Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982], 275) refers to the narrative in Genesis 34 as “a bit artificial for an actual event.” Improbable elements in Genesis 34 include an entire tribe of men agreeing to be circumcised—especially all at once—and the proposition that circumcision would so impair them that two men could kill them all. Carey A. Moore (“Esther, Book of,” *ABD* II: 638-639), in his comments on the Book of Esther, observes that Esther is not regarded as an historical account. He, as well as W. Lee Humphreys (“Esther,” *The HarperCollins Study Bible*, 741), note many improbable elements in the Book of Esther. See the references given for a list of these elements. Toni Craven (“Judith,” *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, 1460) asserts “that Judith was meant as didactic fiction.” Improbable elements in the Book of Judith include the size of the walls around Ecbatana, the size of Holofernes’ army, the impossibly far distance that his army marched in three days, and the narrowness of the mountain passes around Bethulia.

<sup>10</sup> I do not use the term “historical” to indicate that the events and people depicted in Genesis 34 were actually historical, but, rather, I use it to indicate that to the author and original recipients of Genesis 34 at least Jacob, Leah, and Jacob’s children were believed actually to have lived—and that the rape of an Israelite girl at the ancient city of Shechem and the retaliatory slaughter of the Shechemites were perceived of as events which actually had occurred in the nation’s past.

<sup>11</sup> Carey A. Moore’s (“Judith, Book of,” *ABD* III: 1122, 1123) argument for this setting for the composition of the Book of Judith is based on several elements in the narrative in which he sees reflected cultural aspects and historical events of the Hasmonean period. See references noted for Moore’s evidence for this claim.

taught this lesson via the valorization of the exemplary piety of the widow Judith,<sup>12</sup> piety that enabled Judith to meet head-on the crisis faced by her town of Bethulia (Shechem),<sup>13</sup> when it was running out of water and besieged by the Assyrian general Holofernes. In order to screw her courage to the sticking point, Judith recalls, in a fervent prayer, the ‘heroism’ of her ancestor Simeon. What Judith remembers is that, when his family also was up against it, Simeon, full of the zealotry of a pious lay person and relying on the Almighty, had been able, single-handedly, to defeat an overwhelming foe—right here at this same location of Bethulia/Shechem. Because Judith is descended from Simeon, there is the implication that her bloodline is the source of her insight and wisdom. In Judith’s case, this happens to *be* the case—unlike the town’s chief magistrate, Uzziah, who also is descended from Simeon, but who does not demonstrate proper leadership in this time of crisis.<sup>14</sup> In terms of the point which the author of the Book of Judith wishes to make, Uzziah also must be presented as descended from Simeon in order to indicate that descent from a ‘hero’ of one of the ‘original tribes of Israel’ was not enough to provide the insight to be a good leader. To have that, one must be connected to Jerusalem religiosity and engage in proper Pharisaic practices like Judith. These proper religious connections and practices are the most recent indications of Judith’s “true heart” (Jdt 8: 28), which has been evident “from the beginning of her life” (Jdt 8:29). Judith’s spiritual acumen is indicated by the fact that, unlike her fellow Bethulians, she is properly connected to the worship which takes place in the Temple in Jerusalem: she alone of all

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<sup>12</sup> Once widowed, Judith had “set up a tent for herself on the roof of her house. She [had] put sackcloth around her waist and dressed in widow’s clothing. She [had] fasted all the days of her widowhood”—except when fasting was not allowed (Jdt 8:5-7).

<sup>13</sup> Sidnie Ann White (“Bethulia,” *ABD* I: 716) concludes that Shechem was “the most likely candidate” as the model for Bethulia, “but that does not lead to an absolute identification.”

<sup>14</sup> Instead of knowing what to do in the face of the crisis which the besieged Bethulians face Uzziah puts God to the test, something which the properly pious do not do (Jdt 7:30; 8:9-17).



Bethulians prays “at the very time that the incense [is] being offered in the house of God in Jerusalem” (Jdt 9:1). Her appropriate religiosity gives her the insight to know God’s plan for the deliverance of her people,<sup>15</sup> as well as the courage to enact it. Thus enabled, Judith enters the enemy camp and, like her ancestor Simeon, single-handedly defeats the enemy—by seducing the enemy general Holofernes and cutting off his head when he is in a drunken stupor. When the Assyrians discover that they are quite literally headless, they flee in a panic. Then, for the next thirty days, the Bethulians loot the Assyrian camp from which they acquire “great riches” (Jdt 15: 11, 6). Thus, the message could not be clearer for those whom the author of the Book of Judith wished to convince of the superiority of Pharisaic piety and Jerusalem-based religiosity:<sup>16</sup> adopt the ways of those well-connected to God and reap the rewards—for it is Judith’s Jerusalem-based Pharisaic piety which has made all of this possible.<sup>17</sup>

Even though they are also trickster tales, Genesis 34 and the Book of Esther teach different lessons from the Book of Judith. Unlike the Book of Judith, which was written at a time of Jewish ascendancy, Genesis 34 and the Book of Esther were written for a subject people in an empire.<sup>18</sup> These two works can be seen as answering for these subject people the question asked by the prophet Amos at another time in their history:

“How can Jacob survive? He is so small.” (Amos 7:2, 5; NRSV). The answer which these

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<sup>15</sup> Part of Judith’s prayer is the acknowledgement that all of God’s “ways are prepared in advance” (Jdt 9:6). Because she is well-connected to God, Judith is able to discern what these ways are.

<sup>16</sup> The importance of the sanctuary in Jerusalem and the responsibility of the northerners to it and for it is repeatedly emphasized in the Book of Judith (Jdt 4:2-3, 6-7, 11-13; 8:24; 9:1, 8, 13; 13:4; 15:8-10).

<sup>17</sup> Judith does not keep her share of the plunder. She offers her share to the temple in Jerusalem—thus once again highlighting the importance of the temple in Jerusalem, as well as providing another shining example of what the truly pious do (Jdt 16:19).

<sup>18</sup> I defend this claim about Genesis 34 *infra*. As for the Book of Esther, Moore (“Esther,” 641) states that one of the issues addressed by the Book of Esther is “the significance of the Esther story for Jewish life under foreign control.” See reference noted for the basis of Moore’s conclusions concerning the date of Esther.

narratives give to this question is that ‘we will survive if we have courageous leaders who make use of their well-honed intelligence when faced with a threat to our survival and if we exercise self-control on those occasions when our leaders gain the upper hand we need in order to overcome this threat.’ For a subject people, seeing their leaders—in the case of the Book of Esther, Esther and Mordecai, and, I will argue, in the case of Genesis 34, Jacob and his sons—outwit the well-placed and the powerful creates the self-esteem and confidence they need in order to know that they have what it takes to survive in a world in which they are “so small.”<sup>19</sup> They learn that they will survive because they are smarter than those who have power over them.<sup>20</sup> But they also learn from these narratives that, *once they gain the upper hand, they must not overstep the limits of their momentary power*. In the Book of Esther, this message is conveyed by the fact that the Jews defend themselves against “those who had sought their ruin” (Esth 9:2), but they do not take any plunder (Esth 9:10b, 9:15b, 9:16b), even though they had been granted the right to do so (Esth 8:11). In this way they demonstrate that they are fighting merely to secure their survival<sup>21</sup> and that they are not interested in taking advantage of the limited power<sup>22</sup> they had been granted by the king’s edict. The Jews were free to do as *they* pleased (Esth

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<sup>19</sup> In this way, both Genesis 34 and the Book of Esther can be seen as addressing issues of “leadership and community self-definition,” which Peter Bedford (“On Models and Texts: A Response to Blenkinsopp and Petersen,” in *Second Temple Studies* [ed. Philip R. Davies; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991], 159) sees as “in need of resolution in the new social and political context of Achaemenid Judah.”

<sup>20</sup> The Book of Esther indicates this in Esth 6:13, when Haman’s wife and friends all caution him that “if Mordecai before whom your downfall has begun, is of the Jewish people, you will not prevail against him, but will surely fall before him” (NRSV). Genesis 34 indicates the same thing in that Hamor is presented as astute and capable and yet the Jacobites outwit him.

<sup>21</sup> In his article on the Bedouin, Bailey (“Bedouin,” 21) notes that “in a case of murder, the victim’s *khamisa* may exact only actual blood vengeance and must desist from plunder; this is so that acts possibly perceived as motivated by greed do not dilute the impression that one is interested only in defending one’s rights.”

<sup>22</sup> The Jews in the provinces must do what they can in one day (Esth 8:12), while the Jews in Susa were granted two days to defend themselves (Esth 9:15).

9:5)<sup>23</sup> during the limited time that they had to defend themselves. In the world created in the Book of Esther, this was an unusual position for anyone other than Ahasuerus to be in and the Jews are depicted as using well their rare opportunity to exercise discretionary power. What pleased them was to not take unfair advantage of their momentary power.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, I will argue that in Genesis 34 Jacob expected his sons not to overstep the family's self-imposed limits only to retrieve Dinah and flee once the Shechemites had been disabled via circumcision: hence his anger at Simeon and Levi for aborting this original plan and, by doing so, possibly bringing lethal attention to the family from the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

### **The principle of peripety: how the author of Genesis 34 got his message across**

In spite of their differences, Genesis 34 and the Books of Esther and Judith all are concerned with the means by which the community's leaders can secure the community's safety when a threat to its survival arises. These narratives teach that the wise person's response in such a situation is "the clever and successful use of deception to achieve good ends,"<sup>25</sup> deception being a necessary and acceptable means of achieving survival because of their threatened situation. The successful use of deception by the heroes and heroines

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<sup>23</sup> רָצוּן is used in Esther 1:8 to describe the unrestricted drinking at the king's banquet, which, like the freedom of the Jews to defend themselves, had been granted by the king. The king is the only one in the kingdom with the complete freedom to choose whatever he wants whenever he wants it.

<sup>24</sup> For this reason the translation in the NRSV of פָּרְצוּנָם as "the Jews . . . did as they pleased to those who hated them" is not a good translation of פָּרְצוּנָם, for it sounds like the translation of הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיהֶם (עֲשֵׂה). The NRSV translates "do what is good in your eyes" as "do as you please to her" to describe Abram's handing Hagar over to Sarai (Gen 16:6) and "do whatever you want to them" to describe the perverse host's willingness to abandon his daughter and the *pilegish* to a mob bent on rape and abuse (Judg 19:24). However, unlike the self-indulgence of the angry mistress or the frenzied mob, the Jews did *not* overstep their bounds. A translation of "the Jews . . . did as they saw fit" better conveys the restraint they exercised.

<sup>25</sup> Niditch, "The Ideology," 121.

is part of the emotionally satisfying—to the text’s original recipients—use by the authors of these narratives of the “principle of peripety, i.e., the unexpected reversal of affairs.”<sup>26</sup> This principle is most prevalent in the Book of Esther,<sup>27</sup> but it also is evident in the Book of Judith in that it is the Assyrians who end up defeated and plundered and not Judith and her co-religionists.

As for Genesis 34, the author used the principle of peripety in an unusual way. Its deployment is connected with Jacob’s excoriation of Simeon and Levi. Jacob’s castigation of Simeon and Levi is one of the most confusing aspects of Genesis 34. If the family’s plan had been to kill all of the Shechemite men in order to rescue Dinah, since that is what Simeon and Levi did, then why is Jacob furious with them for doing it? He cannot be angry with Simeon and Levi for doing what they all had agreed to do: he must be angry with them for doing what they had not agreed to do. This is precisely what West proposes is the source of Jacob’s fury. West suggests that “the original plan was not to kill the Shechemites, but rather to trick them into powerlessness through the pain of circumcision, so that the brothers could free their sister without opposition. However, Simeon and Levi, on their own initiative, went further.”<sup>28</sup> West’s proposal is lent support by the realization that if the original plan had been to kill all of the Shechemite men, then, since all of Jacob’s sons were in agreement as to what to do (“*they* answered with . . . deceit,” v.13a ), why did they not all execute the plan?<sup>29</sup> West’s proposal concerning the nature of the Jacobites’ plan makes sense not only of the family’s use of deceit, but also

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<sup>26</sup> Moore, “Esther,” 640.

<sup>27</sup> Moore (“Esther,” 637) notes that the unexpected reversal of affairs is “a part of the book’s literary structure from 2:10 . . . to the end of the book.”

<sup>28</sup> Stuart West, “The Rape of Dinah and the Conquest of Shechem,” *Dor le Dor* 8:3 (1980), 151. West credits Ramban with this idea.

<sup>29</sup> Fretheim (*Genesis*, 578) notes that, during the negotiations, there is “no sign of the violence that is to come.” This is because there was no violence planned.

of Jacob's anger: Simeon and Levi have deviated from the original plan only to disable the Shechemites, rescue Dinah, and flee.<sup>30</sup> By doing this, they have endangered the entire family by making them the target of the more populous and powerful Canaanites and the Perizzites, who, understandably, would want to rid the land of such dangerous people. Thus Simeon and Levi's actions and those of their brothers have put the very survival of the family at risk.<sup>31</sup>

Even so, it appears that the murders of the Shechemite men and the sack of the city constitute the moment of peripety in Genesis 34, for the tables *are* turned on the Shechemites at this point. Instead of their acquiring all of Jacob's wealth as Hamor had predicted (v. 23), Jacob's sons had acquired all of the Shechemites' wealth—and their wives and children as well. But Niditch's definition of a trickster tale, cited above, is that the deception is undertaken in order to achieve good ends. Jacob's denunciation of what Simeon and Levi have done indicates that the author of Genesis 34 did not consider what Simeon and Levi had done to be a good thing. Rather Jacob's castigation of his sons reflects the author's view that a subjugated people could never participate in the kind of violence which Simeon and Levi had engaged in and hope to survive intact within the Persian Empire. In order to get his point across to his original recipients, the author indulged them in fantasies of having the Shechemite men be wounded in the bodily organ with which Shechem had wounded Dinah, of having Simeon and Levi overcome the two most powerful men in Shechem, as well as kill all of the Shechemite men, and of having

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<sup>30</sup> The flight of Jacob and his family away from Shechem has to be a part of this scenario. They would not have been able to deceive the Shechemites in this way, retrieve Dinah, and expect to remain in the area. In addition, Shechem would not have let their retrieval of Dinah stand. His popularity in the community (v. 19), indicates that he would have had no trouble garnering support in an effort to get her back.

<sup>31</sup> That securing the survival of the family is the main concern of the author of Genesis 34 can be seen in the fact that Jacob does not castigate his sons because of the reprehensible nature of what they have done, but because they have put the family at risk.

Jacob's sons confiscate all of the wealth of the house of Hamor, as well as all of its surviving members. This can be seen as the author's appeal to the desires of his recipients to see the tables turned on those perverse, greedy Shechemites, who had expected that *they* would subsume the Jacob and his family and his wealth, not the other way around. But *then* the author turns the tables on his recipients by saying to them, through Jacob, 'enjoy this in your dreams, because *in reality* you cannot engage in this sort of thing, no matter how much you might want to or feel that you had the right to.' This is the real moment of peripety in Genesis 34, when the tables were turned on the original recipients of this narrative. However, once these recipients had recovered from their surprise they would have had to be able to realize that violence had never been a part of their ancestors' plan—that the plan had been only to retrieve Dinah and then to retreat.

#### **The context for the composition of Genesis 34**

In my reading of Genesis 34, I see the author trying to point the way forward for the people 'Israel' now that they no longer were subjects to their own monarch, but, rather were subject people in the Persian Empire.<sup>32</sup> Jacob's furious denunciation of the violence perpetrated by Simeon and Levi because it created a threat to the family's survival indicates that the author of Genesis 34 viewed the survival of the people to be of the utmost importance and as resting on an avoidance of the kind of violence that is part of the core story (see *infra*) of what had happened at Shechem long ago. He can be seen as saying to his proposed recipients: 'As subject people in an empire, survival is not achieved by creating carnage, but by claiming quietism. Forswear the revolts which arise

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<sup>32</sup> The reference in v. 7 to *Israel* as the offended party suggests an appeal to a group in the Second Temple period who viewed themselves as currently constituting the entity 'Israel.' I view this group as the author's intended recipients, whom the author wanted to instruct on how to protect and maintain that entity.

around you.<sup>33</sup> Do not join them based on an ancient and inspiring legend of the success of our ancestors over an entrenched and powerful foe. And even if a situation should arise between an Israelite girl and the occupying overlord which is the same as that which transpired between Shechem and Dinah, once again carnage is not the answer, but rather cleverness—lest you bring the wrath of the Persian Empire down on us for creating civil disorder.’

The emphasis which I see in Genesis 34 on Jacob’s insisting that the survival of the family depended on the proper use of the power they temporarily had gained for themselves coincides with Jon Berquist’s claims concerning the situation of the people in the province Beyond the River as they learned to cope with the limits of being a subject people.<sup>34</sup> Berquist asserts that

through the temple and creation, wisdom, and legal literature of the period, Yehud’s symbolic construction of reality encouraged the sense of Yehud as a unified state within a much larger world. . . . All of these symbols describe *a reality that is sharply limited*. . . . *Observation of and respect for these limits provides the secret to proper action. Proper relationships are important. . . especially between Yehud and Persia. . . . Both through the law and through the creation account, God’s control of the world and God’s desire that each human take a divinely preordained place within that world offer dominant themes that reflect the Persian desire for a harmonious, integrated society that would honor its own limits and live within the empire as productive contributors to the greater welfare of the whole. To a great extent this strategy was successful.*<sup>35</sup>

I contend that part of the reason that this strategy was successful in terms of the residents in the province Beyond the River was that early in the Persian period the author of Genesis 34 *successfully* made the case—via his telling of this story—that the survival of the

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<sup>33</sup> Jon Berquist (*Judaism in Persia’s Shadow: A Social and Historical Approach* [Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003], 45) notes that nearby Egypt “revolted often and successfully.”

<sup>34</sup> Berquist (*Judaism*, 10) claims that “Persia limited [Yehud’s] options severely.”

<sup>35</sup> Berquist, *Judaism*, 135, 139, italics mine.

people ‘Israel’ depended on their acceptance of their limits as subject people in an empire.<sup>36</sup>

### **The ‘facts’ concerning what happened at Shechem long ago**

The existence of a tradition concerning events long ago at Shechem is suggested by the claims of Speiser, Geller, and Wyatt that, in the telling of this story, the author of Genesis 34 made use of some existing material. Speiser thinks that the narrative rests “somehow on a historical foundation.”<sup>37</sup> Geller asserts that Genesis 34 “certainly preserves some shreds of ancient tradition.”<sup>38</sup> Wyatt contends that “whatever the processes involved, a primitive story has been considerably embellished.”<sup>39</sup>

What the basic ‘facts’ of that primitive story were are indicated by the similarities to and differences from each other of Genesis 34, the ALD, *Jubilees*, the *Testament of Levi*, and the Book of Judith. These similarities and differences suggest that there are two elements which constituted the legendary account; that is, that these two elements were what everyone ‘knew’ about what had happened long ago at Shechem and, if one were going to tell a story concerning that ancient occurrence, one would have to include these

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<sup>36</sup> Berquist (*Judaism*, 89) notes that there is no “remembrance of a revolt [on the part of Judeans] . . . at any . . . time in the Persian Empire.”

<sup>37</sup> Speiser, *Genesis*, 267. Lawrence E. Toombs’ (“Shechem (Place).” ABD 5:1183) review of the archaeological evidence in relation to Shechem suggests that an historical basis for the story of the rape of Dinah is unlikely. Toombs recognizes that “while the powerful walls of MB and LB Shechem stood, semi-nomadic tribes would have been powerless to breach the defenses of the city.” Since this was the case, Toombs suggests that “the period of abandonment after the destruction of the MB Age city, when the ruins may have housed a small village or have been the headquarters of a tribal group, or the period of decline at the end of the LB Age are the only likely contexts for the story”—if the story were based on an actual historical occurrence. However, the story itself suggests that the city was walled, thereby indicating that the story of rape and retaliation at the city of Shechem is fiction. There are two references to the gate of the city (vv. 20 and 24). The fact that the city is walled is part of the reason that the Jacobites must trick the Shechemites in order to gain entrance to it. I contend that all that is necessary to the telling of Genesis 34 is the *belief* on the part of its recipients that their ancestors had overcome a more powerful and entrenched foe at the city of Shechem.

<sup>38</sup> Geller, “The Sack,” 8.

<sup>39</sup> Wyatt, “The Story,” 436.



two elements in one's story in order to be seen to be relating in some manner what had occurred at Shechem.

	<b>VICTIM</b>	<b>RAPIST</b>	<b>INTERMARRIAGE</b>	<b>CIRCUMCISION</b>
<b>Genesis 34</b>	Jacob's daughter Dinah	Shechem	part of deception	to disable Shechemites
<b>ALD</b>	our daughter	more than one man	Levi opposed to intermarriage	as a prelude to marriage
<b>Jub</b>	Dinah, daughter of Israel	Shechem assisted in abduction by others	Levi opposed to intermarriage	occasion for an angelic disquisition against exogamy
<b>T. Levi</b>	Dinah	Shechem	Levi opposed to intermarriage	as a prelude to marriage
<b>Jdt</b>	a virgin	more than one man	no marriage	no circumcision

	<b>THE KILLERS</b>	<b>AFTERMATH OF SLAUGHTER</b>	<b>JACOB'S ANGER</b>
<b>Genesis 34</b>	Simeon and Levi	Plunder	Because put the family at risk
<b>ALD:</b>	Simeon and Levi	Stopped the marriages from going forward	Text breaks off
<b>Jub</b>	Simeon and Levi	Plunder	Rebuke for the extremity of their acts

<b>T. Levi</b>	Simeon and Levi	no plunder	angry at sons
<b>Jdt</b>	Simeon	plunder	no anger

Beyond the two basic elements of rape and retaliatory slaughter, the free elaboration which is evident in the different accounts of the story of what had taken place at Shechem were then allowable—including the glorification of the violent response to the rape of an Israelite girl that is part of the telling of the story in the Book of Judith and the LPT. This is where Genesis 34 differs from the other accounts of the events at Shechem, whose authors embraced the violent response, rather than rejecting the violence, as the author of Genesis 34 did.

It is important to note, however, that the compositional desires of the authors of Judith and the LPT were not associated with the valorization of violence per se, but with the valorization of certain qualities exemplified by Levi and Judith, which they thought were admirable. The commitment of these two heroes even unto death—albeit the deaths of others—indicates how deeply imbued they were with the qualities which the authors of these texts considered to be exemplary. In terms of Levi, the narratives found in the LPT assert via the behavior of this eponymous founder of the priesthood<sup>40</sup> the commitment of the priesthood to the purity of the people. In all three accounts found in the LPT, it is Levi's actions at Shechem that are regarded as his primary qualification for the priesthood,<sup>41</sup> because his actions there are perceived as indicative of his passion for the purity of his people—and ethnic purity was a perspective on relationships with other

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<sup>40</sup> The LPT claims, on the basis of Mal 2:4-7, that God had made a covenant with Levi, assuring him and his descendants the priesthood.

<sup>41</sup> In the ALD, Levi learns via a vision after his slaughter of the Shechemites that he is to be rewarded with the priesthood for his murderous actions. (Henryk Drawnel, *An Aramaic Wisdom Text from Qumran: A New Interpretation of the Levi Document* [Boston: Brill, 2004], 44-45). In *Jubilees*, “the seed of Levi was chosen for the priesthood and levitical [service], to minister before the Lord always, just as we [angels] do. And Levi and his sons will be blessed forever, because he was zealous to do righteousness and judgment and vengeance” (*Jub.* 30.18). In *Jubilees*, because of his actions at Shechem, “Levi received the priesthood.” (James Kugel, “Levi’s Elevation to the Priesthood in Second Temple Writings,” *HTR* 86 [1993], 45). In *T. Levi*, Levi is appointed to the priesthood in a direct encounter with God himself and equipped for his murderous duty with a heavenly sword and angelic support (*T. Levi.* 5.1-3).

peoples which was highly valued by the priestly class. As for Judith, it is her Pharisaic piety which makes possible her valor and her victory, thus indicating the value of relating in this way to God. In contrast to these accounts in which God approves of the violence perpetrated at Shechem (ALD and *Jub.*), or instigates the violence himself (*T. Levi* and Judith)<sup>42</sup> or participates in the violence (Judith)<sup>43</sup> the author of Genesis 34 composed a story in which God is noticeably absent.<sup>44</sup> Because these other texts embrace the violence that is part of the core story of the events at Shechem, they reveal the capacity of this story to lend itself to narrative accounts which evaluated positively the violence believed to have taken place there. It was this kind of use of the story of the events at Shechem which the author of Genesis 34 rejected, and he did so via Jacob's denunciation of Simeon and Levi.

### **Dating Genesis 34**

Because I view Genesis 34 as the result of the efforts of its author to get the residents in the province Beyond the River off on the right foot in terms of their relationship to their overwhelming overlord,<sup>45</sup> I see it as having been composed relatively early in the Persian period. There are several indicators which point to its composition early in that era. First, in terms of its relationship to the LPT and Judith, each of them shows a dependence in some way on Genesis 34: something which is a part of their

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<sup>42</sup> For *T. Levi*, see previous note. In the Book of Judith, Simeon also is given a sword by God.

<sup>43</sup> In the Book of Judith, all of the retaliatory acts against the Shechemites are attributed to God.

<sup>44</sup> James Kugel ("The Story of Dinah in the *Testament of Levi*," *HTR* 85:1 [1992], 4) notes that "in the biblical narrative Simeon and Levi act entirely on their own initiative." He (25) further observes that "the biblical narrative . . . gives no indication of divine approval for the brothers' action, still less of divine sponsorship."

<sup>45</sup> In reference to Darius' march against Egypt, Berquist (*Judaism*, 80) asserts that "the slow progression of this huge force exerted pressure to submit to Persian will, not only upon Egypt but also upon Yehud and the numerous other colonies along or near the army's path. Persia attacked neither Egypt nor Yehud, but the presence of such a large army exerted strong force nonetheless. The army's presence threatened an immediate violent reaction to any independent action, and thus there was a strongly controlling aspect to the army's nonviolent presence."

telling of the story—beyond the core story of rape and retaliation—which is not necessary to the telling of that story.<sup>46</sup> This suggests that Genesis 34 was the earliest of the accounts of the events at Shechem. The earliest dating of these other accounts of what happened at the ancient city of Shechem is the third century B. C. E.<sup>47</sup> This serves, then, as a preliminary *terminus ad quem* for the composition of Genesis 34.

As for a *terminus ad quo*, the fact that נָחֵץ is used in Genesis 34 the same way in which it is used in Ezek 18: 6, 11, 15; 22:11; 23:17; and 33:26 suggests that Genesis 34 was composed close to the time of the composition of Ezekiel—that is, נָחֵץ in this text refers to Shechem’s (forced) penetration of Dinah and does not refer to ritual impurity nor to any concerns about the impurity that came, in the Second Temple period, to be associated with marriage to a non-Israelite. That נָחֵץ in Genesis 34 does not refer to ritual impurity is clarified by Noble’s observation concerning the meaning of נָחֵץ in Genesis 34 which he made in response to Fewell and Gunn’s assessment that נָחֵץ in v. 5 is merely a technical reference to not being “in the correct state.” Noble observes that

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<sup>46</sup> Dependence of the LPT on Genesis 34 is indicated by the inclusion of the prospect of intermarriage with the Shechemites, the accompanying circumcision, and Jacob’s anger. The concern about intermarriage is indicative of the dependence of this tradition on Genesis 34, because an Israelite girl being raped by one or more men does not lead *necessarily* to the arranging of a marriage alliance between the two peoples. If the story told in Genesis 34 were to be viewed from the perspective reflected in Deut 22:28-29—that a rapist should be made to marry his victim (a possible vantage point from which to interpret this text)—then this could account for a marriage being arranged between Shechem and Dinah, but this does not account for Hamor’s offer to Jacob of a marriage alliance between the two peoples. The fact that the LPT assumes this situation indicates the influence of Genesis 34 on this tradition. As for Jacob’s anger, the fact that the authors of *Jub* and *T. Levi* felt the need to address it in some way which did not reflect too badly on Levi also is indicative of the influence of Genesis 34 on this tradition. Dependence of Judith on Genesis 34 perhaps is indicated by the plundering in the aftermath of the slaughter and by the fact that in Judith Dinah is raped by more than one man. Textual support for the view that there was more than one rapist is found in Gen 34:27.

<sup>47</sup> This is the date Robert A. Kugler (*From Patriarch to Priest: the Levi-priestly tradition from Aramaic Levi to the Testament of Levi* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996], 134-135) suggests for the ALD. However, Kugel (“Levi’s, 53) argues for the dependence of ALD on *Jubilees* and Michael Stone dates *Jubilees* to the first half of the second century BCE (Kugler, *From*, 134, n. 254). It is not necessary for me to solve this dispute in order to assert that the earliest possible date for any document of the LPT is the third century BCE.

““being in the right state” is . . . a central issue when אָמַץ is used in connection with the cult; but since Dinah’s eligibility to participate in religious rituals is entirely outside the concerns of Genesis 34, this is hardly an appropriate sense for אָמַץ *in this context*.”<sup>48</sup>

Recourse to the texts in Ezekiel listed above and to Numbers 5—texts in which אָמַץ in the *pi’el* with a female as its object is used<sup>49</sup>—lends support to Noble’s assertion concerning the non-ritual nature of the use of אָמַץ in Genesis 34. This is because the uses of אָמַץ in Numbers 5 and in the Ezekiel passages also are not ritual in nature. All of these uses of אָמַץ in a non-ritual sense suggest the presence of such a concept alongside (or preceding and then existing alongside?) the belief that sexual intercourse occasioned ritual impurity. In Numbers 5:13a and 19a, the source of the ‘defilement’ of the wife is the memory of a man’s penetration other than that of her husband.<sup>50</sup> Likewise, in the Ezekiel texts, אָמַץ also refers to penetration. In Ezek 22:11, a man penetrates (אָמַץ) his daughter-in-law אִשְׁתֵּי בְּרִיתָא (“with incest”).<sup>51</sup> In Ezek 23:17, the Babylonians אָמַץ the metaphorical character Oholibah בְּתֻלְוֹתָהּ: “with their perversion.” אָ in both of these passages points to “the ‘material’ with which the act was performed;”<sup>52</sup> that is, אָ is attached to the word which describes what makes these penetrations particularly defiling: incest and some sort of perverse sexual practice (perhaps, in this case, rape, as this is the perversion with which תְּוֹנִית is paralleled in Ezek 23:8).

Other references in Ezekiel which refer to penetration which is defiling in a non-ritual sense occur in 18:6, 11, 15, and 33: 26. All of these uses refer to the penetration of a man’s wife by another man. As for the references in Ezekiel 18, they occur in a passage

<sup>48</sup> Noble, “A Balanced,” 190, n. 34, italics mine.

<sup>49</sup> These are the only texts in the MT other than Genesis 34 in which this grammatical construction occurs.

<sup>50</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 49-50.

<sup>51</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 81-82 for this interpretation of Ezek 22:11.

<sup>52</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 197.

in which the prophet addresses an issue of central concern to the exilic community: who bears the guilt for sins committed. Ezekiel assures a community who felt that the sins of centuries had come down on their heads that God no longer wants to hear the proverb, “the parents have eaten sour grapes and the children’s teeth are set on edge,” for this is not the way things will be: from now on, each man will be answerable for his own sins (Ezek 18:1-4). Ezekiel makes the point that each man will reap the rewards of his own actions by reviewing the possible actions of three generations in a succession of lists of behavior that can come to characterize a man’s life for good or ill. These lists include both sacral and secular acts. The secular acts which offend God are penetrating (אֲנָפֵץ) a neighbor’s wife, oppression of the needy, taking advance or accrued interest, or committing robbery. Ezek 33:26 also refers to penetrating (אֲנָפֵץ) a neighbor’s wife. Since these uses in Ezekiel do not have an accompanying description of what makes these penetrations particularly defiling, as do the uses in Ezek 22:11 and 23:17, then the penetration itself can be seen to be defiling in the same way in which the penetration itself is seen as defiling in Numbers 5: the defilement refers to the wife’s memory of another man’s erection. This conclusion is supported by the fact that in Lev 18:20, which also references a man putting his “ejaculating erection” in his neighbor’s wife—as in Num 5:13—the man is seen to defile *himself* with this action, not her; that is, the concern is his having had contact with that which is taboo, his neighbor’s wife.<sup>53</sup> In the four

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<sup>53</sup> Jacob Milgrom (“Leviticus,” *The HarperCollins Study Bible*, 152) notes that “pollution for H [the Holiness Code] is nonritualistic, as shown by its metaphoric usage (e.g., 18.20, 24; 19.31).” אֲנָפֵץ is used in this metaphorical sense in Ezekiel as well. André (*TDOT* :331) notes that “metaphorically, certain activities [are unclean], especially those associated with the foreign cult.” Reference to this sort of impurity is found in Ezek 20:7, 18, 31; 22:3, 4; 23:7, 30; 36:18, 25. Reference to impurity occasioned by transgression also is found in Ezekiel: in 14:11; 36:17; 43:7. There is also reference to ritual impurity in Ezekiel, in 44:25, where the prophet is outlining the regulations for the priests in the restored temple. The defilement associated with the penetration of another man’s wife is ‘actual’ in the same way in which

Ezekiel passages and the Numbers passage, the concern is with the defilement of the woman; thus the source of the defilement can be seen to be the same in all five of these passages: the fact of the penetration itself, with its accompanying ‘defiling’ remembrance of that penetration in the mind of the woman.

This review of these uses of נָטַף in Ezekiel 18, 22, 23 and 33, which are in the same grammatical form as that found in Genesis 34 and are reflective of the meaning of נָטַף in Numbers 5 (the non-ritual ‘defilement’ of a man’s wife via another man’s penetration of her) indicates that what is referred to when נָטַף is used in this way is *penetration*. When the reference is to forced penetration, as in Genesis 34 and Num 5:13a and 19a, then the reference is to rape.

In addition to the fact that נָטַף in Genesis 34 does not refer to ritual impurity, neither does it reflect a concern with Dinah’s potential marriage to a non-Israelite. This is evident from the fact that נָטַף is used to describe Jacob’s assessment of what Shechem had done to Dinah when marriage was nowhere on the horizon—at least as far as Jacob knew.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, the same use of נָטַף in Genesis 34 as in the Ezekiel passages suggests that Genesis 34 was composed close in time to the composition of these passages in Ezekiel—a time at which the concept of נָטַף was not so closely related to ritual impurity as it

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ritual defilement was ‘actual.’ It existed only in the minds of those who believed in it, but for those who believed in it it was real.

<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, concern with intermarriage often has been read ‘back’ into the usage of נָטַף in this text. Josephus’ (trans., William Whiston, *The Life of Flavius Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews* I-VII [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974], 117) retelling of this story reflects this kind of reading. Josephus relates that Shechem “defiled Dinah by violence”—exactly what I am claiming נָטַף reflects in Genesis 34—but, when Josephus describes Jacob’s reluctance to marry Dinah to Shechem, it is not because of Shechem’s having raped Dinah. It is because Shechem is a foreigner and thus she should not marry him.



ultimately came to be<sup>55</sup> nor was it yet reflective of the extended metaphorical sense of an Israelite marrying a non-Israelite. This explains the author of Genesis 34's freedom to use Hamor's offer of intermarriage in Genesis 34 without the fear of such usage being misinterpreted as a reference either to ritual impurity or to the impurity associated with marriage to a foreigner which certain factions in the Second Temple period ultimately came to abhor: Kugel notes that "in post-exilic time . . . the issue [of intermarriage from the time of Ezra-Nehemiah onward] remained a major concern."<sup>56</sup>

Even Dinah's curiosity about the local people fits a setting of newly-returned 'exiles' interested in their new surroundings; that is, her foray into her new surroundings would have seemed perfectly natural to the original recipients of Genesis 34.<sup>57</sup> All of these factors suggest that the composition of Genesis 34 took place in the homeland sometime during the first hundred years or so after the 'return' of some of the descendants of those who had been exiled to Babylon early in the fifth century B. C. E.

### **How the author of Genesis 34 created the story he wanted to tell**

There are two main issues which the author of Genesis 34 had to address in order to tell the story he wanted to tell. First, a narrative based on the events believed to have taken place at the ancient city of Shechem must answer the question of *how* the Israelites overcame an enemy entrenched behind city walls. The answer provided by Genesis 34 is that, like the Greeks in the *Iliad*, they had to come up with some ruse to get inside the city. However, since the author chose Jacob to be the main player in his story (see *infra*),

<sup>55</sup> The three different uses of *tamme* in Ezekiel indicate a lack of rigidity in terms of what it referred to during the time in which the Book of Ezekiel was composed (see n. 53 *supra*).

<sup>56</sup> Kugel ("The Story," 6, n.8) cites Tob 4:12; Jub 20.4, 22.40, 25.4-9, 30.5; Philo *Spec. leg.* 3.29; Test. Job 45.3; Jos. Asen. 7.6; Bib. Ant. 9.5, 44.7, 45.3 as evidence of this concern in post-exilic literature.

<sup>57</sup> See Chapter 5, pp. 244-245 for Robin Parry's study of נָצַח, which indicates that disapproval of a female's going out is not the dominant perspective in the MT.

his version of the sack of Shechem is placed in the time period when Israel consisted of only Jacob and his family. This means that there were not enough of them to overcome a city full of men, so the men must be disabled in some way. The second issue that the author must address in order to meet his compositional goals, is that he must devise some way to reject the violence which was intrinsic to the story of what had happened at Shechem.

As is well known about biblical narrative, it is via the speech and actions of the characters in these narratives that authors conveyed their messages to their recipients.<sup>58</sup> The author of Genesis 34 was no exception in this regard. It is via the speech and actions of his characters that he conveyed to his Second Temple recipients his message of non-confrontation with their overlords. Because of this, his characters had to speak and act in ways that would convey that message, as well as in ways that would have been believable—or ‘recognizable’—to the original recipients of these texts.

Because the crux of his plot required a daring act of deception, the author chose Jacob to be the central figure of his narrative. Well-known for successfully deceiving others in order to enhance or protect his position in the world, Jacob fit this role.<sup>59</sup> So, too, did Simeon and Levi fit the role they received in this narrative—as the instigators of the violence that was ‘known’ to have taken place at Shechem. Casting Simeon and Levi

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<sup>58</sup> Rashkow (*Upon*, 117) notes this about Genesis 34, which she observes “achieves characterization in two ways, by means of the narrator’s description and by the discourse of the characters themselves.” She (16) describes this more fully elsewhere, stating that “frequently, the narrator provides reports of the actions, appearance, gestures, and posture of a character in the narrative. Character descriptions are also conveyed by the discourse, the words of the character himself, and/or what other characters say about him.”

<sup>59</sup> I am not suggesting canonization of any parts of the biblical text at the time at which I suggest Genesis 34 was composed, but merely the existence of the traditions about Jacob as deceiver of Esau in order to get him to sell him his birthright, deceiver of his father in order to receive the blessing of the firstborn, deceiver of Laban in order to build his personal wealth and deceiver of Esau again when he returned to Canaan—traditions known to the author’s proposed recipients and traditions which fit the purposes of the author of Genesis 34. Michael Fishbane (“Composition and Structure in the Jacob Cycle (Gen. 25:19-35:22).” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 26 [1975], 16) asserts that “Jacob enjoyed a lively place in ancient Israelite imagination.”

in this role also fit the author's recipients' expectations, since Simeon and Levi long had been known for their predisposition to violence.<sup>60</sup> This choice fulfilled as well the author's desire to cast the violence perpetrated at Shechem in a negative light, for Simeon and Levi also had long been disapproved of because of their propensity for violence.<sup>61</sup>

Having selected three of the characters for his narrative, the author then needed to create a story which not only stuck to the 'facts' about what had happened at Shechem, but also a story which rejected the violent response to the rape of an Israelite girl. This meant that Jacob, the eponymous ancestor of Israel, must lead the way in repudiating the violence associated with the events at Shechem. Therefore the deception engaged in by the Jacobites could not be seen as serving a violent purpose, but only a necessary one; that is, the retrieval of Dinah, not the destruction of Shechem. But the tradition claimed that Shechem *had* been destroyed. The way in which the author chose to deal with his desire to repudiate the violence associated with the events at Shechem was to draw out the depiction of violence in details which were bound to appeal to the desires of his proposed recipients—and then have Jacob reject it in no uncertain terms, his revered position in Israelite tradition lending considerable weight to his denunciation of the violence that Simeon and Levi had engaged in and had inspired in their brothers as well.

A key element in the fulfillment of the author's compositional desire was the way in which the author chose to appeal to the desires of his recipients by deciding that the

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<sup>60</sup> My proposal is based on the antiquity of the words assigned to Jacob in his deathbed speech to his sons in Genesis 49 and the connection often made between Genesis 49:5-7 and Simeon and Levi's actions in Genesis 34. Noble ("A 'Balanced,'" 193) sees the narrator of Genesis 34's "own attitude . . . made clear by Jacob's deathbed curse upon Simeon and Levi." Kugel ("The Story," 14) notes that "Gen 49:5-7 . . . ancient interpreters generally held to refer to the incident at Shechem." Kugel further notes that in Jacob's deathbed blessing Simeon and Levi are joined, "the only brothers to be so joined," 30. This suggests that they were 'known' as a violent pair and thus were linked together in this ancient poem in terms of their aggressive behavior.

<sup>61</sup> The LPT and the Book of Judith turn this tradition of disapproval on its head.

Shechemites would be disabled via circumcision. This would have been very satisfying to those deeply offended by the thought of Jacob's daughter being raped by a perverse 'Canaanite'<sup>62</sup>—that is, the Shechemites would suffer a wound to the very organ by which Shechem had so deeply wounded Dinah. How, then, did the author arrange the events in Genesis 34 in order to reach this point?

A partial answer to this question was to have Hamor offer a marriage alliance to Jacob and his sons and to have them counter with the requirement of circumcision as a means of disabling the Shechemites. However, the Jacobites were parleying with the Shechemites from such a disadvantage that a *quid pro quo* situation did not obtain; that is, with just Hamor's offer of a marriage alliance, the Jacobites really had no basis upon which to require anything of the Shechemites. The answer to this problem, then, was to have the precipitate and uncontrolled Shechem offer to pay an over-the-top bride-price. Then there would be a basis for the requirement of an *immediate* mass circumcision of all the Shechemite males: this would serve as the bride-price and Shechem would not be protected from retaliation from Dinah's family until the entire bride-price had been paid; that is, until all of the Shechemite men had been circumcised.

While the double offers from the Shechemites not only solve the problem of the basis upon which the Jacobites can require the mass circumcision of the Shechemites and thereby create the condition by which they can enter the city and retrieve Dinah, the double offers also create the situation whereby Jacob's sons can be presented as excelling—just as their father always had—at the deployment of deceit which ensures the survival of the family. The author was able to create this image for his recipients because of the conventions associated with the arrangement of marriages in cultures where fathers

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<sup>62</sup> Geller ("The Sack," 10) notes that Shechem's rape of Dinah is "an example of a Canaanite sexual crime."

own the sexuality of their daughters. In such a setting, it is the fathers of the proposed bride and groom who are to negotiate with each other. Any interested junior parties, if present, must stand by silently.<sup>63</sup> Because of this, it would be beneath Jacob, as patriarch and Shechem's superior, to dignify Shechem's interruption of the proceedings between his elders with a response. Therefore his sons must do it for him. As men (v. 7aα) it is not out of place for them to speak. The sons' skillful deception of the Shechemites enables the author to convey to his original recipients that, just as the first generation of Jacob's sons had in their very blood the capacity to carry off a necessary deception, so did they—Jacob's more distant descendants—have that same capacity. This helps to explain why a single spokesperson is not designated for the sons—in order to convey that *all* the sons of Jacob have this ability. Implicit in their flawless performance here is a judgment passed on their reprehensible behavior later; that is, the author can be seen as saying 'look how well they did when they followed their father's way and look how poorly they did when they followed Simeon and Levi's way.' This is one reason why five verses are devoted to presenting their behavior here<sup>64</sup>—in order to offset, via a solid presentation of the type of

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<sup>63</sup> Josephus's (*The Life*, 117-118) re-telling of this story depicts marriage arrangements as they are supposed to be carried out when the father of a girl owns her sexuality. In Josephus' version, Hamor alone approaches Jacob alone. Likewise, the fragment of Theodotus's poem preserved in Eusebius' *Praeparatio evangelicae* (Eusèbe de Césarée, *La Préparation Évangélique*, trans., Édouard des Places, s.j. [Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1991], 259) also presents a proper suit for marriage. Shechem is depicted as approaching Jacob with his father to ask for Dinah. In Theodotus's poem, it is Jacob, not his sons, who responds. Hamor responds to Jacob. In other words, Theodotus depicts marriage arrangements as they customarily were undertaken. This is precisely the proper behavior that Shechem ignores in Genesis 34. Even though Josephus's and Theodotus's reconstructions of the events depicted in Genesis 34 come from a time period and cultural setting much later and different from the time period and cultural setting which I propose is imaginatively projected in Genesis 34 the laws adduced by Fleishman, as well as the anthropological studies adduced by Evans-Grubbs (see Chapter 5, p. 201 and p. 205, n. 31) indicate that when a daughter's sexuality is owned by her father, it is the fathers of the couple-to-be who contract a marriage. (Kugel ["The Story," 34] suggests that Theodotus' poem "may go back to the second century BCE.") Thus, in Genesis 34, Shechem is depicted as transgressing the acceptable way in which a marriage is to be arranged in such cultural settings.

<sup>64</sup> Verses 13-17 comprise one half of the second section of the narrative, the first half of this section being devoted to the presentation of Hamor and Shechem.

behavior the situation called for, the necessarily explicit presentation of their undesirable behavior.<sup>65</sup>

In addition, in terms of the plot, the depiction of all of Jacob's sons speaking as their father would if he could and on the basis of his perception of what the basic problem is that the family faces—Shechem's having  $\text{סָחַף}$  Dinah—also indicates the sons' agreement with their father at this point,<sup>66</sup> a situation which obtains until Simeon and Levi break with the family and strike out on their own (v. 25).<sup>67</sup> The depiction of Jacob's sons successfully deceiving the Shechemites helps—in part—to explain why the author kept Jacob in the background until the end of the narrative—in order to let his sons shine in the enactment of behavior that traditionally had been associated with him: in order to indicate that they had inherited his abilities and could respond effectively to a crisis situation.

Thus it is possible to see the author of Genesis 34 building his narrative around characters who were familiar to his recipients and who behaved in ways which met the expectations of these recipients. It was also the case that behaving as expected had to be true for the other major characters in the text as well: Shechem and Hamor.<sup>68</sup> However, these were characters who were not familiar to the original recipients because they knew

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<sup>65</sup> The explicit presentation of their undesirable behavior is necessary, in order to build up to the moment of peripety for the original recipients. See *supra*.

<sup>66</sup> Camp ("The (E)stranged," 296, n. 18) sees evidence of alignment between Jacob and his sons in vv. 13 and 17. Sternberg ("The Art," 474) sees Jacob's sons speaking "as if in [his] voice" in v. 17. I see their speaking as if in his voice beginning in v. 14.

<sup>67</sup> Kugel ("The Story," 8, italics his) asserts that in v. 25 "Simeon and Levi are presented *as if for the first time*." I concur with Kugel and think that their introduction by name and their designation as "two of Jacob's sons" effectively separates them from Jacob's other sons; that is, it indicates that their slaughter of the Shechemites was aberrant behavior and "not a familywide plot" (Kugel, "The Story," 8).

<sup>68</sup> There are three major characters in this text: Jacob, whose presence could be described as "muted" until v. 30, and Shechem and Hamor. Serving as extensions of Jacob, Jacob's sons remain an unindividuated group entity until Simeon and Levi stage their breakaway from the group in v. 25. Sternberg ("The Art," 473) refers to Jacob's sons as an "amorphous mass."

them from the ancient past. Rather, they were familiar to them because they knew them from their difficult present. In the roles they fill in Genesis 34 Hamor and Shechem represent their current overlords and the kind of difficulties that such people created for the subjected people in the province of Beyond the River. A review of Hamor's and Shechem's parts in the interaction with Jacob and his sons reveals what sorts of problems they posed for the original recipients of this text.

### **Hamor's offer**

At first look Hamor's offer of a marriage alliance to Jacob is puzzling, when it appears that all he needed to do was pay the required bride-price and be done with the situation. That is all that Shechem had demanded of him: to 'get' him this *girl-child* as a wife. In that cultural setting that is how you got girls as wives: by paying the agreed-upon price. However, recourse to the insights provided by Bailey's study of the Bedouin helps to make sense of why Hamor approached Jacob and his sons as he did.

First, consideration of the threat voiced by Jacob's sons in v. 17 in light of the inter-tribal relationships illuminated by Bailey helps to explain Hamor's offer of a marriage alliance to Jacob and his sons. Even though Hamor was sure that there was no way that they could succeed should they mount some sort of campaign against the city-dwelling Shechemites,<sup>69</sup> they still might try some sort of attack in a futile attempt to prove their strength to the Canaanites and the Perizzites and Hamor knew that he and Shechem were bound to be the primary targets of such an assault.<sup>70</sup> In order to avoid any sort of bloodshed and also to provide the Jacob and his family the protection they needed

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<sup>69</sup> If Hamor had had any fear that the Jacobites could overcome the Shechemites, he would not have allowed his entire fighting force to be disabled at the same time.

<sup>70</sup> The fact that the rapist and his primary facilitator would be the main target in any attack is indicated by v. 26, which singles out the murders of Shechem and Hamor for special attention.

from the surrounding tribes—now that Shechem had made evident their vulnerability—the sensible thing to do was to offer them a marriage alliance. The aplomb with which Hamor later assured his fellow tribesmen that everything that belonged to Jacob and his family would become theirs indicates that Hamor is sure that a marriage alliance with this small group of pastoralists will work to their advantage.

However, Hamor presents the situation to Jacob and his sons as though it is entirely to *their* advantage. The shared knowledge that Hamor and Shechem and Jacob and his sons had of what Shechem had done to Dinah put the Jacobites at a psychological and social disadvantage with the Shechemites. If Jacob agreed to intermarry with the Shechemites, then they would be joining people who knew that, in addition to being outnumbered by them and socially inferior to them, he and his sons were people for whom Shechem had shown flagrant disregard. Hamor had to counter this knowledge by making them appear quite worthy of his generous offer; in other words, he makes it appear as though he thinks that they certainly would not agree to terms any less than these—even though he has Dinah behind city-walls with a fighting force which is quite enamored of their favorite son, Shechem, and thus would be willing to fight for him (v. 19).<sup>71</sup> Just in case Jacob and his sons missed the significance of what Hamor is offering them, he spells out exactly what this agreement will mean to them. Shechemite protection will ensure for them freedom of movement and settlement and will ease their way in their efforts to acquire more land and more property. In light of Bailey's presentation of negotiations between two unequal tribes, Hamor can be seen playing the face-saving card

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<sup>71</sup> See Chapter 5, pp. 201-203.



here—in order to protect the Jacobites’ dignity and sensibilities and, in that way, forestall unnecessary violence.<sup>72</sup>

By devoting three verses to this depiction of Hamor, the author of Genesis 34 indicates the importance to the narrative as a whole of this particular presentation of “the chief of the land.” By presenting Hamor as he does, the author accomplishes two of his narrative goals. First, by depicting the overlord Hamor as a consummate diplomat with a full grasp of the relational difficulties of the situation, the author gives his original recipients the pleasure—and the confidence—of knowing that their ancestors were able to counter the efforts of a powerful, clever, and capable man. Thus, they learn, as I asserted above, that they, as descendants of these clever forebears, also can cope equally well in a crisis situation involving an equally adept opponent. Second, by having Hamor spell out the full details of what he is offering Jacob and his sons, the author makes it clear that nothing needs to be added to what Hamor has offered. It is quite generous and should more than compensate for Shechem’s wanting to keep Dinah.

### **Shechem’s offer**

However, before Jacob has a chance to respond to Hamor’s offer, Shechem interrupts the proceedings<sup>73</sup> with his recommendation that Dinah’s family get over what he has done, name their price and relinquish their rights to the girl. His abrupt intrusion into the negotiations between his elders indicates Shechem’s lack of regard for “the way things are done,” something already apparent in his presumptuous taking of Dinah and something already commented on by the narrator (and Jacob’s sons) in v. 7bα. As a נִעַר

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<sup>72</sup> See Chapter 5, pp. 197-198.

<sup>73</sup> Jeansonne (“The Fractured,” 93) notes that “before Jacob can respond, Shechem interrupts.” Cf. Caspi (“The Story,” 35), who notes that Shechem’s “desires move him to interrupt his father who is bargaining with Jacob’s family.”

(v. 19a) under the supervision of his father, it was not his place to speak at the marriage negotiations.<sup>74</sup> That this is the social situation which is assumed in Genesis 34 can be seen in the fact that Shechem demands of his father that he make the necessary arrangements in order to secure Dinah as his wife (v. 4); it is not Shechem who goes out to speak to Jacob or Hamor and Shechem together who go out to speak to Jacob and his sons together, but Hamor who goes out to speak to Jacob and it is Jacob whom Hamor addresses: his referring to “your *daughter*” in v. 8 indicates this.

The Biblical Hebrew idiom in which Shechem’s speech to Dinah’s family is couched when he first speaks to them makes him sound obsequious in his approach to them: “let me find favor in your eyes” (v. 11a). However, when compared to his father’s carefully measured speech, the tone of Shechem’s *entire* speech sounds peremptory.<sup>75</sup> It is possible to read v. 11 as his saying to Dinah’s family: “be willing to deal with me and I will make it worth your while.”<sup>76</sup>

The original recipients of this text would have found shocking Shechem’s interruption of the negotiations between his elders and would not have regarded such a breach of propriety as merely the eagerness of a “lad in love”<sup>77</sup>—as it was not. It was, instead, Shechem’s desire to cut to the heart of the matter, as far as he was concerned, in

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<sup>74</sup> See n. 63 *supra*.

<sup>75</sup> Caspi (“The Story,” 35) notes that “the father and son contradict each other’s tone in asking for Dinah’s hand.”

<sup>76</sup> Jonathon Magonet (*A Rabbi’s Bible* [London: Soncino Press, 1991] 20) comments on the possibility of reading the biblical text differently from the way it has been read traditionally. As an example of reading the Bible differently from the traditional reading, he cites Isa 1:18, where Magonet acknowledges that “God seems to hold out here a promise of endless forgiveness. . . . But, without the least change of the Masoretic text, or even any unusual interpretation, the entire passage could be read instead as sarcastic and scornful, that is to say, . . . [as] a direct continuation of the mood and mode of the powerful polemic that precedes it.” What influences our reading of the Bible, according to Magonet (21), are “our expectations when we do so.” If our expectations of Shechem are that he is merely a lad in love, then we will read the text that way—the traditional way. If we view him as something other than a lover, then it is possible to read the text from a different perspective. (See Chapters 7 and 8).

<sup>77</sup> Bailey (“Bedouin,” 18) refers to Shechem with the forgiving term “lad.” Sternberg (“The Art,” 464) refers to Shechem’s “youthful ardor.”

order to get to the *payment of a definitive bride-price*, which would make clear to all concerned that his possession of Dinah was legal—and final.<sup>78</sup> In wanting to pay the price in order to ensure that the property was *his*, he resembles Abraham who would not accept Ephron’s offer of the gift of his field and cave in which to bury Sarah, but who insisted on *paying for it publicly*, so that the property would pass to him “as a possession in the presence of the Hittites” (Gen 23: 18a). Sternberg notes the mercenary quality of Shechem’s approach to Dinah’s family,<sup>79</sup> the sense of which is captured in the smallest of details: Shechem does not demand that her father ‘give’ him Dinah—that is, sell to him his rights to her sexuality—to be “my” wife, as the NRSV has it, but he demands that they sell “the girl” to him as “a” wife: as a piece of sexual property.

Thus in his approach to Dinah’s family, Shechem remains ‘in character.’ He is still the self-absorbed rapist who takes what he wants when he wants it and expects to keep what he has taken if he wants to. As such, he represents a stock character in a biblical trickster tale of war, one who easily would have been recognizable to a Second Temple audience: the tyrant who creates the problems which beset God’s people, because their fate is subject to his will and his whims and his wants.<sup>80</sup> The tyrant is powerful, with no apparent limits on his power or, at least none that he takes into account. Not taking

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<sup>78</sup> See Chapter 3, p. 136, n.185, for the necessity of a man’s *paying* for a bride in some manner in order to assure his incontrovertible rights over her. *Pace* Fewell and Gunn (“Tipping,” 206), I do not see Shechem’s eagerness to pay for Dinah as arising out of his desire “to redress the wrong” he has done to Dinah. Like Absalom’s murder of Amnon, which avails Tamar nothing (which is verified by the statement that she dwelt in Absalom’s house as a “desolate woman), Shechem’s payment to Dinah’s family avails *her* nothing. Rather, it puts her completely in Shechem’s control, as Washington (“Lest,” 213) notes is the case with Deut 22:28-29: “if a man rapes an unbetrothed woman, the effect of the law is to seal the rapist’s control of his victim.”

<sup>79</sup> Sternberg, “The Art,” 460.

<sup>80</sup> In the Book of Esther, this role is filled by Ahasuerus, who is depicted as excessively indulgent of his senses, both gustatory and sexual, and who also is depicted as blissfully unaware and unconcerned about the consequences of his edicts. His self-indulgence and inattentiveness to the affairs of state make possible the machinations of a junior tyrant like Haman. In the Book of Judith, the role of tyrant is filled by both Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes. Holofernes plays the role of the tyrant ‘on-the-scene,’ who, similarly to Ahasuerus, is interested in indulging himself sensually.

others—or consequences—into account is another hallmark of the tyrant, as is his indulgence of himself sensually. This last trait is his Achilles' heel. It is his self-indulgent sexuality which ensnares the tyrant. This is the case with Shechem, because, as noted above, it is his precipitous offer of an ask-whatever-you-want bride-price which makes possible the Jacobite requirement of immediate mass circumcision of all the Shechemite males—and thus their disablement and, it also, ultimately, brings about their destruction.

### **Jacob as master trickster**

As I noted above, Jacob's sons reply to Shechem and Hamor, because Shechem has usurped his father's position in the proceedings. That Shechem has usurped his father's position is indicated in v. 13, which describes Jacob's sons addressing the Shechemites: Shechem is mentioned first and then his father—who is identified in relation to Shechem, not Shechem in relation to him. Then, in v. 18, when Shechem thinks things are going his way, his relationship to his father is presented as back in the proper order: Hamor is referenced first and then Shechem as his son.

In terms of Jacob and his sons, even though it is his sons who speak, there are indications in the text that it is Jacob who is the source of their deceptive plan. This is suggested by the fact that his sons speak *בְּמִרְמָה*—just like their father had when *his* mother had assisted *him* in a fateful act of deception.<sup>81</sup> Because the terminology *בְּמִרְמָה* is used in a story which concerns Jacob, a connection is made between Jacob's original act of deceitfulness in Gen 27:35 (the only other place in Genesis in which *בְּמִרְמָה* appears)

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<sup>81</sup> Fishbane (“Composition,” 24) notes that Jacob is not called “trickster” until Gen 27:36, “even though Jacob the deceiver is already operative in Genesis 25” (vv. 29-34). Thus, Rebecca and Isaac's second-born son is seen to have a predisposition to surviving in a difficult world via skillfully-deployed deception.

and the way in which the approach of Jacob's sons to the Shechemites is characterized.<sup>82</sup> Harold Fisch notes the reliance of writers on such 'loaded' words in order to evoke the memory of other occurrences of these same words and of the associations which those remembrances bring to mind. Fisch asserts that "the signifiers here are all important . . . reminding us of the other occasions and contexts in which the same words were potent."<sup>83</sup> Because of the association of the word *בְּמִרְמָה* with Jacob, its use here broadens the view of what is happening at this moment to include Jacob in the depiction of his sons' behavior. *He* is the one whose life has been characterized by *בְּמִרְמָה*: with Esau, with his father, with Laban, and, most recently, again with Esau. Because of this, he is seen as the source of the behavior which the sons adopt here—"deceptive compliance,"<sup>84</sup> —the *modus operandi* which is reflective of their father's use of deception. When he stole the birthright and blessing from his brother Esau, Jacob was deceptively compliant with the social customs which favored the firstborn. Jacob was deceptively compliant with Laban in the management of Laban's flocks (Gen 30:37-43), and, most recently, with Esau again in his encounter with his brother upon his return to Canaan (Gen 33: 12-17). The sons' use of this same approach with Shechem and Hamor suggests that Jacob is the source of the plan which requires this type of execution. In addition, the *immediate* combination of Hamor's offer and Shechem's offer into a plan which would disable the Shechemites and make the retrieval of Dinah possible had to have been devised by a master schemer—such as Jacob himself. He already had been presented as a man who

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<sup>82</sup> This requires the familiarity on the parts of the original recipients of the narrative with the traditions about Jacob which I already have asserted (see n. 59 *supra*), so that in the reference to *בְּמִרְמָה* they would have recognized the work of the master trickster.

<sup>83</sup> Fisch, *Poetry*, 117, 118.

<sup>84</sup> Jeansonne ("The Fractured," 90) notes that Jacob is "skilled in deception." She refers to Jacob's use of "quiet deception" and "deceptive compliance" in his negotiations with Esau.

remains cool and collected in the face of a crisis. Thus, he is the one who could keep his head and come up with a plan like this instantaneously.<sup>85</sup> In v. 7, the description of the reaction of Jacob's sons indicates that they are overwhelmed with emotion—and they have no time to pull themselves together before the negotiations begin. Thus, his sons did not have sufficient time to gather their wits in order to come up with a plan such as this—and to come up with it immediately. Further, the fact that this plan is not reflective of a group effort is supported by the reality that group efforts take time and coordination. The pace at which the narrative proceeds in Genesis 34 means that there was no time for group consultation. There was only time for Jacob to tell his spokesperson what to say and the reason for saying it.<sup>86</sup>

Other indications that Jacob was the one who developed the plan which his sons present to Shechem and Hamor are the fact that the text makes it clear that Jacob is very much present: he is the primary addressee of Hamor's and Shechem's proposals.<sup>87</sup> In addition, Jacob's sons' concurrence with his assessment of the situation—that the basic problem the family faces is Shechem's having *ḥḥ* Dinah—is another indication that it is Jacob who is presiding over his family (and prevailing with them as well) at this moment in the narrative. Also, when in v. 17, Dinah is referred to as “our daughter,” Jacob is not being superseded. Rather, the speaker is merely concluding his speech in the formal

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<sup>85</sup> Jacob's plan reflects the fact that he had taken the measure of the men before him correctly. The strength of Shechem's obsessive desire means that Hamor would see to it that the Shechemite men were circumcised because he *had* to make it happen and he was persuasive enough to succeed in doing so.

<sup>86</sup> Ramban (*Commentary on the Torah*, trans. C. B. Chavel [New York: Shilo Publishing, 1971], 416, italics mine) recognizes the significance of Jacob's presence, for he asserts that “it would appear that they answered with the concurrence of [Dinah's] father and *his advice* for they were in his presence.” I differ from Ramban, however, in claiming that it is Jacob who is the *source* of the plan and his sons who concur with *him*.

<sup>87</sup> Though in v. 8 Hamor speaks to both father and sons, he refers to Dinah as “your daughter.” When Shechem speaks to father and sons in v. 11, Jacob is referenced first and then his sons.

language of a marriage treaty by continuing in the same vein as v. 16, with its references to “our daughters” and “your daughters.”

**Verses 18-24: Building up to the moment of peripety**

The central hemistich of the narrative is v. 15b $\alpha$ , when Jacob’s sons tell Shechem and Hamor that the Shechemites must be circumcised, as they themselves are. This is the turning point in the narrative and, upon the conclusion of the sons’ speech in v. 17, it appears that events are turning in the Jacobites’ favor, for Hamor and Shechem not only accept the Jacobite requirement, *they are pleased with it*. The original recipients of this text could only have been pleased with this moment in the narrative as well—and with the subsequent verses which describe Shechem’s hastening to be circumcised and then with Hamor’s successfully convincing his fellow Shechemites to be circumcised as well. How enjoyable to think of their pain in the very organ which had caused Dinah so much pain! In these verses, then, the author can be seen as beginning to set up his recipients for his surprising reversal at the end of the narrative. There is only one disturbing note in vv. 18-24: Hamor’s assurance to his fellow tribesmen that they would, in fact, control all of Jacob’s wealth ultimately—and thus Jacob and his household.

**Verses 25-29: The preparation for the moment of peripety reaches its crescendo point**

However, once the killing commences and the plundering follows, it appears that the author of Genesis 34 has addressed the problem for Jacob and his family inherent in Hamor’s self-confident boasting about the outcome of the alliance between the two peoples. Sternberg notes the amount of narrative space allotted to the description of the plundering and concludes that “the lingering over the despoilment [is] much in excess of

plot requirements.”<sup>88</sup> Yet, if the plot requirements are to give one’s recipients the full enjoyment of seeing the Shechemites utterly defeated and despoiled before telling them, through their ancestor Jacob, that they could *never* engage in anything resembling this kind of behavior in real life, then the extended depiction of the killing and of the collecting—of Shechemite goods and women and children—is exactly what the plot requires.

**Verses 30-31: The trick played on the original recipients and the author’s message conveyed**

Jacob’s thunderous denunciation of what Simeon and Levi have done and led their brothers to do could only have come as a surprise to the subjugated original recipients of this narrative. Just at the moment of the complete triumph of their ancestors, Jacob says unequivocally: ‘No! Never!—for this kind of behavior threatens the very survival of the family.’ The length and positioning of Jacob’s speech—as well as the fact that it is the only speech of his that is overtly presented in the text—indicates that it was meant to carry the day. By keeping Jacob in the background until this moment, the author makes Jacob’s emergence in v. 30 surprising—even stunning—and in this way creates a powerful and arresting moment of peripety, more so than if Jacob had been depicted front and center earlier in the narrative.<sup>89</sup>

The final verse in the narrative—Simeon and Levi’s question—should not be seen as countering Jacob’s denunciation of them, but, actually can be seen as a summation of the narrative and as an indication that they shared their father’s concern about the well-being of the family. This can be seen, if their response is viewed through the lens of the

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<sup>88</sup> Sternberg, “The Art,” 471.

<sup>89</sup> Nonetheless, the fact that Jacob is referred to frequently by name, unlike his sons, who until v. 25, are referred to en masse, means that the recipient is not *totally* unprepared for his emergence. The author has maintained Jacob as an individuated presence in the text since v. 1.



reputation/retaliation method of managing social interaction. Their question, “should he have treated our sister as a prostitute” indicates this. A woman who was a prostitute had no men to protect her,<sup>90</sup> so Shechem’s treating Dinah in this way meant that he did not take her family into account as a force to be reckoned with. Simeon and Levi’s decision to murder the Shechemite men indicates that their actions were based on the perceived need on their part to demonstrate to the Canaanites and the Perizzites that this was not the case; that is, they saw the solution to the problem the family faced to be the necessity of establishing the reputation for strength of Jacob and his household with the surrounding tribes and, in this way, protecting the family by fending off any future intrusions.

It is appropriate that Genesis 34 ends with their question, because their question raises an issue that must have arisen frequently for a subject people: what is the appropriate way to respond not only to a call to arms but also to an overlord who takes advantage of his power over you?<sup>91</sup> In order to answer this question, one must return to Jacob’s denunciation of what Simeon and Levi did. The answer which Jacob’s excoriation provides is to say in the most emphatic way possible that one can never respond to a more powerful overlord with a direct, violent assault—even if he has abducted and raped your sister, you must find some other way to handle the situation.

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<sup>90</sup> Phylis Bird (“The Harlot As Heroine,” ch. 9 in her *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997], 199) observes that a prostitute was “an outcast, . . . a woman . . . not under the authority of a husband.”

<sup>91</sup> An overlord could take advantage of those under him in a myriad number of ways, but the stories of the misappropriation of the matriarchs Sarah and Rebecca indicates that being subject to the sexual whims of their overlords was an on-going problem for subject people. All three of these stories about the matriarchs indicate that the appropriation of the women of less powerful groups by those with power was something that the less powerful feared and had to deal with. On all three occasions of the appropriation of the matriarchs, the problem was addressed *just as it is in Genesis 34: with deceit*. Kenneth Hoglund (“The Achaemenid Context” in *Second Temple Studies* [ed. Philip R. Davies; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991], 63) relates that a number of “fortresses of the Persian period, founded in the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BCE” have been identified stretching “from the Palestinian coast to the Jordan Valley and down into the Negev.” These forts testify to the reality of the presence of occupying forces in the province Beyond the River and thus to the possibility of the appropriation of the local women by these forces.

Thus, it is in Jacob's denunciation of Simeon and Levi's actions that the author's message to his Second Temple audience can be found—the future of God's people under their Persian overlords lay in quietism and cleverness, not carnage. The way in which Jacob is depicted in the narrative models this very behavior: he remains in the background, but, in my construal of the text, in charge and operating with maximum shrewdness. That he is in charge—or thought that he was—is made very clear when he speaks out so emphatically against what Simeon and Levi have done. He should not be seen as speaking egotistically, for he is concerned not just for himself, but for his entire house (v. 30bβ). Jacob's reference here to 'himself and his house' can be seen as his setting himself and his way of doing things over against Simeon and Levi and their way of doing things. Simeon and Levi are not included in this reference to "I and my house," but are referred to in v. 30a as the ones who have brought trouble on Jacob—and his house. Jacob says, in effect, '*me and mine* have been put in mortal danger by *you* two and *your* ways.' In this narrative, Jacob's way of doing things is set over against Simeon's and Levi's way of doing things: Jacob's way is presented as the right way, Simeon and Levi's way as the way which results in unnecessary carnage, thievery, and an exacerbation of the family's already precarious position.

### **Verses 1-7: Meeting the characters**

That Jacob would prevail in this way is indicated by the sequencing of the introduction of the characters in the first seven verses of Genesis 34. Comparison of these verses with the opening verses of 2 Samuel 13:1-22 can help to clarify that this is the case. Comparison of Genesis 34 with 2 Samuel 13 is justified on the basis, noted above, of long-noted similarities between the two narratives.

In her reading of 2 Sam 13:1-22, Phylis Tribble indicates that the characters are introduced in a particular order, according to the kind of role they play in the story. Tribble notes that “tellingly, Absalom’s [the one with the lust for power] name comes first,”<sup>92</sup> then his beautiful sister Tamar, and then their half-brother Amnon, the one with the lust for Tamar. As the narrative in 2 Samuel 13 proceeds to its end with Amnon’s death (v. 39b), it becomes apparent that Absalom has worked through Tamar to eliminate Amnon. Both Tamar and Amnon were pawns in Absalom’s quest for power because Amnon’s obsession with Tamar made possible Absalom’s—not Jonadab’s—plot to eliminate him. That it was Absalom’s plot and not Jonadab’s is indicated by the way in which both Jonadab and Absalom are presented in the entirety of 2 Samuel 13.

Jonadab, as the son of David’s brother, is far removed from being able to possess the throne himself.<sup>93</sup> He has to content himself with aligning himself with the man who would be king—and that is Absalom, not an easily-led lecher like Amnon: before Jonadab shows up with a plan by which Amnon can get Tamar to himself, Amnon is depicted as immobilized by his obsession with his beautiful half-sister. Jonadab must tell him what to do. That Jonadab had ingratiated himself to Amnon on Absalom’s behalf is indicated by the fact that, when Absalom had Amnon assassinated, Jonadab knew about the murder even though he was far removed from the murder scene. In fact, Jonadab shared with King David that Absalom had decided to murder Amnon on the very day on which Amnon had ‘ruined’ Tamar (vv. 32-33). This indicates that Jonadab knew Absalom’s plans, but that he did not see fit to share them with Amnon. The second indication that Absalom was behind the plot by which both Tamar and Amnon were

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<sup>92</sup> Tribble, “Tamar,” 54.

<sup>93</sup> For a list of David’s sons who would precede Jonadab in any claims to the throne, see 2 Sam 3:2-5. And then, of course, there was Solomon as well.

ensnared is that Absalom is the first person whom Tamar encounters after Amnon has her thrown out of his quarters, and Absalom knows precisely what has happened to her (v. 20). If he were not privy to what was going on, how would he know that her distress and her appearance were related specifically with her having ‘been’ with Amnon? The third indication that it was Absalom who was behind the plot to create the condition that gave him an excuse to murder Amnon is the fact that Absalom profits more from the elimination of Amnon than Jonadab does.

Thus Tribble is correct when she observes that Absalom’s “presence hovers over the entire tale, though he himself appears only near the end” of 2 Sam 13:1-22.<sup>94</sup> Absalom is not front and center until v. 20, but he is *there*, watchful and waiting—and counting on the disinterest of his father in the affairs of state and the loutishness of his brother Amnon; that is, Absalom uses Jonadab to relay to Amnon the plan to get Tamar alone with him, and then once Amnon rapes Tamar, Absalom counts on Amnon not to ‘do the right thing’ by marrying Tamar. And Absalom counts on the fact that David will not see to it that Amnon does the right thing either—and Absalom’s gambles pay off. He was right. Each man did nothing, just as he hoped they would, leaving Amnon open to Absalom’s revenge.

When Genesis 34 is viewed through the same kind of sequential prism, the same convention can be seen to be in play: the characters are introduced according to the role that they will play in the story. In Genesis 34, Dinah is introduced first, thus alerting readers to the fact that her fate is a central concern in this story.<sup>95</sup> Her presence pervades this story in that getting her back remains Jacob’s goal—in opposition to Shechem’s

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<sup>94</sup> Tribble, “Tamar,” 38.

<sup>95</sup> Rashkow (*Upon*, 99) asserts that “although she has no speaking lines, Dinah is not forgotten. She is referred to again and again, by name and by familial relationship.”

desire to keep her. Jacob comes next after Dinah, indicating that his presence also pervades this story<sup>96</sup>—just as Absalom’s presence pervades 2 Sam 13:1-19. And, like Absalom in 2 Sam 13:1-22, in Genesis 34, Jacob’s is the controlling presence behind the scenes, until Simeon and Levi go against his will. In response to this, Jacob emerges from the background in full-fledged fury and reasserts his control over his wayward and violent sons. That he would prevail is indicated at the beginning of Genesis 34, because, like Absalom in 2 Samuel 13, he is introduced prior to the other male characters.

After Jacob, comes Shechem, the one who is diametrically opposed to him in terms of their goals concerning Dinah and who is also the one who will be defeated. Shechem is followed by his father, Hamor: the one who will become his son’s compatriot in crime and also share his fate. Then in v. 7, come Jacob’s sons: the last and, by the end of the story, the least—at least of those left among the living—for by the end of Genesis 34 they have become criminals like Shechem, misusing the upper hand they had gained over the Shechemites by murdering the men, capturing their families, and plundering their city.

### **A family affair**

The first indication that Genesis 34 is a family affair is the introduction in the first two verses of who is aligned with whom: father and daughter Jacob and Dinah are aligned with each other over against father and son Hamor and Shechem. The conclusion that Genesis 34 is a family affair is supported by the fact that in thirty-one verses, only

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<sup>96</sup> Gila Ramras-Rauch (“Fathers and Daughters” in *Mappings of the Biblical Terrain: The Bible as Text* [ed. Vincent L. Tollers and John Maier; Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1990], 166) sees Jacob as the main protagonist. Sternberg (“The Art,” 450) also sees Jacob as “the key to the whole affair . . . as the social center of authority.” I agree with both Ramras-Rauch and Sternberg that this is the way in which Jacob is presented in Genesis 34. However, *pace* Sternberg, I do not see Jacob as forfeiting his role as patriarch, but as fulfilling it.

five—vv. 10, 15, 22, 23, 28—have no reference to some sort of familial relationship. In a text that is short on details concerning many of the aspects of the story, these repeated references to family relationships indicate their importance in this story.<sup>97</sup> This is so, even though the information that the author shares about Dinah’s mother in v. 1 may just be the result of stylistic needs; that is, he had information concerning Shechem’s status that he wished to convey in v. 2 and in order to balance v. 1 with v. 2, he included the biographical information about Dinah. The syntactical sameness of vv. 1a and 2a lends support to this supposition. The picture which emerges of Dinah in v. 1 is that she is a girl who is to be known in relation to her family, while those girls whom she is going to look at are known in terms of their settled position in the land.<sup>98</sup>

### **Shechem and Dinah and Jacob**

As noted above, the first two verses of Genesis 34 introduce the father-child pairs who are placed in opposition to each other. When the way Dinah is represented in relation to Shechem is taken into account, her pairing with her father here by name and subsequently in vv. 3, 5, as well as the references to her as “Jacob’s daughter” in vv. 7 and 19, and her being joined to him by the use of the personal pronoun in vv. 8 and 11 indicate that Jacob is the one who takes her personhood into account.<sup>99</sup> The fact that it is her family to whom her personhood matters is reinforced by the references to her in relation to her brothers in vv. 11, 13, 14, 17, 25, 27, 31, either by name or via the use of

<sup>97</sup> Genesis 34 is revealed to be similar to 2 Samuel 13 in this regard as well. William H. Propp (“Kinship in 2 Samuel 13.” *CBQ* 55 [1993] 43, n. 16) notes the extensive “use of *’āh* and *’āhôt* [in 2 Samuel 13 which] emphasizes blood ties among characters.”

<sup>98</sup> Fishbane (“Composition,” 25) views the Shechemites as the “autochthonous population of Canaan.”

<sup>99</sup> Rashkow (*Upon*, 100) observes that the repeated references to “family ties . . . remind the reader that Dinah is included as a real person, a separate entity, an individual.” Jacob also is paired with his sons—in vv. 8 and 11. Verse 5 refers to “his sons.” Verses 7, 13, 25, 27 refer to “Jacob’s sons.” Thus, Dinah is paired with her father to the same extent that his sons are.

the personal pronoun.<sup>100</sup> In contrast to these *personal* references, Shechem sees Dinah as *the girl*. Unlike his father, who, when speaking to Dinah’s family about her, refers to her as “your daughter” (v. 8), Shechem, when he speaks to them, refers to her merely as “the girl” (v. 12), the same way in which she is referenced when he speaks to her לַבָּיִת in v. 3: she is not “Dinah” to him—then or ever—she is just “the girl.” He also refers to her in this impersonal, objective way, when he demands of his father that he get for him “*this* הַלְוָיָה” as a wife (v. 4). He does not refer to her as *Dinah*, not even as *her*—just this הַלְוָיָה. The impersonal language that Shechem uses when he refers to Dinah indicates that he is not demanding that his father get Dinah as his bride, but that he secure her as his sexual property. Shechem wants her bought and paid for, as his words to her family in vv. 11-12 make clear.

### **Jacob and Dinah**

The repeated pairing of Dinah with her father suggests that she is his most immediate concern: he is focused on her. This indication is lent support by the fact that at the point at which he hears about what Shechem has done, it is not Shechem’s ethnicity which concerns Jacob, but the fact that Shechem has אָרָבָה Dinah. Jacob’s most immediate response is to wait until his sons come in from the field, for he can do nothing on his own.<sup>101</sup> The implication is that he intends to discuss with his sons how the family will respond to what Shechem has done—and perhaps even to act in concert with them against the Shechemites. Readers learn in v. 30, however, that Jacob would not have

<sup>100</sup> Rashkow (*Upon*, 98) notes that Dinah “is described in relational terms, and these relational terms are significant.”

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Fewell and Gunn (“Tipping,” 198), who note that “the narrator links the father’s restraint to the fact that his sons are away in the fields. The phrase “he held his peace until they came” suggests that he deliberately waits to consult with his sons, or at least to act only when all the men are present. After all, what is he, one man alone, to do?”

engaged in a frontal assault against the Shechemites, but the reality is that, at this point, if Jacob wants to get Dinah back—and his focus on the fact that Shechem has raped her indicates that he does<sup>102</sup>—he really has very few options by which to pursue that goal.

### **Shechem and Hamor**

Jeansonne notes that, when Shechem demands of his father that he secure his possession of Dinah by getting her as a wife for him, Shechem dominates the scene—Hamor does not respond to Shechem.<sup>103</sup> Alter notes that when dialogue is used in the MT, seldom is anything “allowed to enter the scene which will detract attention from the dialogue itself.”<sup>104</sup> Here, even a response from Hamor is not allowed to intrude on the import of this moment when he, silent and complicit, is drawn into the orbit of his son’s criminal behavior.<sup>105</sup> Though Dinah is present<sup>106</sup> and Hamor can see what shape she is in, he raises no protest. Rather, his silence, as well as his later actions, signals his agreement with Shechem’s decision to secure his possession of this אִשָּׁהּ via the institution of marriage. Shechem’s dominance suggests that Hamor may be less than secure in his relationship with his son and that he acts on Shechem’s behalf not necessarily because he is in accord with him, but perhaps because he fears him. That Hamor might have reason to fear Shechem is indicated by the violent and self-indulgent behavior that Shechem

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<sup>102</sup> See the discussion of אִשָּׁהּ *supra*. Since the use of אִשָּׁהּ in this text indicates that Jacob is focused on the most specific part of the act of rape itself—Shechem’s penetration of Dinah—and that Jacob’s focus is not on Shechem’s having made Dinah ritually impure or on his having defiled her with his ethnicity, but on his defiling her with the memory of forced penetration, then Jacob’s wanting to get her away from a situation in which she would suffer repeated forced penetrations is a reasonable conclusion to draw here.

<sup>103</sup> Jeansonne (“The Fracturing,” 92) observes that “Hamor does not respond to his son’s demanding tone, indicating that Shechem is more powerful than his father in this scene. He makes demands of his father and his father has no response.” Likewise, Lockwood (“Jacob’s, 100”) regards Shechem as “commanding” his father.

<sup>104</sup> Alter, *The Art*, 70.

<sup>105</sup> Bailey (“Bedouin,” 18) refers to Shechem as Hamor’s “favorite son.” This is nowhere mentioned in the text and Bailey’s interpretation of the relationship between Shechem and Hamor perhaps arises from Hamor’s unquestioning adherence to Shechem’s demand and the effort which he exerts in order to fulfill Shechem’s desire.

<sup>106</sup> Shechem refers to Dinah as *this* “girl-child.”



already had exhibited by raping Dinah. In addition, Shechem's popularity within the community is noted in v. 19. Thus, his relationship to his father might be considered as comparable to that of Absalom's to David—the young and popular son vis-à-vis an aging and fading father.

What appears to be an odd oversight in the text—the lack of a description of Shechem's accompanying his father to the marriage negotiations—is as an indication that he and his father are not in agreement as to how the Jacobites should be approached.<sup>107</sup> This supposition is supported by the fact that when they are in accord—a situation which is made apparent in v. 18—they then are depicted in v. 20 as going out *together* to speak to their fellow tribesmen. The text also describes *them* as speaking to the other Shechemite men, unlike the situation with the Jacobites in which father and son address the Jacobites separately (vv. 8-12).

### **Jacob's sons**

As I noted above, the response of Jacob's sons to what Shechem has done to Dinah should not be viewed as reflective of a shame/honor system, but rather as reflective of a reputation/retaliation system of social control. In a shame/honor system the sexual-offense laws function on the level of the individual, whereas the practices engaged in relation to this kind of offense in the reputation/retaliation system function in relation to the group as a whole. In a shame/honor system, it is the honor of the individual male as the head of a household or the honor of the individual male in the process of establishing a household which is damaged by the violation of the sexuality of the females whose sexual functions he owns. The sexual offense laws in Deut 22:13-29

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<sup>107</sup> Westermann (*Genesis*, 539) notes that “according to v. 6 Shechem is not present” at the negotiations. He further notes that Hamor and Shechem make two separate offers to the Jacobites.

existed not in order to protect females from sexual assault but rather *in order to protect the interests of the males who are invested in some way in the sexuality of the females depicted in these scenarios*. In contrast to this, in a reputation/retaliation system, the means of social control exists *to protect the individual members of the group* from assault or robbery. The protection provided the members of the group does not reside in the maintenance of the honor of the individual head of the group but in the reputation of the group as a whole for demonstrated strength. Thus, the concern of Jacob's sons about the  $\text{הַבְּלָה}$  that Shechem had committed against *Israel*<sup>108</sup> should not be seen as reflective of their sense of offense to their father as head of the family, but rather as their concern about the danger posed to the group as a whole by Shechem's cavalier acquisition of Dinah, because this indicates that he did not consider her menfolk a force to be reckoned with.

The fact that the major male characters in the text contend with each other over Dinah's fate—and, by extension, the fates of their families—is indicative of another way in which Genesis 34 is a family affair. There is no higher governmental authority for the Jacobites and the Shechemites to turn to for resolution. The men must settle the situation themselves and, as the weaker party, the Jacobites must do it in terms of the conditions laid out by the Shechemites.

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<sup>108</sup> The use of "Israel" in Genesis 34 to refer to the family is anachronistic. However, because I posit the time of the composition of Genesis 34 to have been during the period of the Persian Empire, then I view the narrative as directed toward a group of recipients who viewed themselves as the entity 'Israel.' If this is seen as the setting in which Genesis 34 was composed, then the author and his recipients can be viewed as projecting their self-description into the imagined past as a description of their ancestors who overcame a superior foe in the city of Shechem.

**“And no one shall rescue her out of my hand” (Hosea 2:12)**

As for Dinah, even though she is paired with her father, unlike the men in the story, she must function in her separate sphere: a young girl at the mercy of her rapist. Since there is little information in Genesis 34 directly shared about Dinah, in order to ‘fill out’ what being in the hands of a man who rapes you and is obsessed with you can be like, I turn to the story of Madge Oberholtzer, who was abducted, raped, and held against her will by Steve Stephenson. I do this on the basis of my assertion that this kind of account is needed in order to bring into view the perspectives of characters in the biblical text who are only slightly in view and who are not heard from. Accessing the possibilities of their situations in this way is done with an eye toward presenting with the greatest possible accuracy not only the situation of such characters but also the situation which obtains in the entire text.<sup>109</sup> Such accounts assist in doing this because they play a part in the re-contextualization of the text from the perspective of the victim.

**Madge Oberholtzer**

Twenty-nine-year-old Madge lived with her parents in the neighborhood of Irvington, a fashionable section of Indianapolis. The Oberholtzer home was a few blocks from the palatial home of D. C. “Steve” Stephenson, Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana and twenty-two other northern states.<sup>110</sup> Madge, employed as the “manager of the young people’s reading circle within the Indiana State Department of Education,”<sup>111</sup> met Steve, who was active in Indiana state politics, at a dinner for state employees in January, 1925. Over the next two months, Steve courted Madge, calling for her in his

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<sup>109</sup> See Chapter 1, pp. 11-13.

<sup>110</sup> In the 1920’s, the Klan did not have the reputation for evil which now accurately conveys what it is about.

<sup>111</sup> Judge Charles A. Riccio, Jr., “The Downfall of the Klan in the 1920s,” <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/academic/klan-downfall.htm> (2/23/2009), 3.

chauffeur driven Cadillac and escorting her to fine restaurants and even inviting her to a party at his home where many people prominent in the Klan and in state government were present. On all of these occasions he had “deposited her early and safely at her front door.”<sup>112</sup>

On March 15, 1925, Madge returned home about 9:30 P.M. from visiting friends and learned from her mother that “Steve had been phoning her all afternoon.”<sup>113</sup> When Madge returned his call, “Steve whispered hoarsely that he “had to see her at once on a matter of great importance.” Steve’s tone of voice and the message itself unsettled Madge but before she had decided how to respond to the call, one of Steve’s retainers, a big . . . man named Earl Gentry, arrived at her front door and escorted her . . . to Steve’s house.”<sup>114</sup>

Upon arriving at Steve’s home, Madge found that Steve had been drinking. She also found that she was alone in the company of four men: Steve, Gentry, the chauffeur (a man named Shorty) and another of Steve’s bodyguards, Earl Klinck. The men were all drinking and forced Madge to drink three glasses of straight whiskey. Madge became ill and “pleaded to be allowed to go home.”<sup>115</sup> In response to her pleas, Steve informed her that she could not go home, that they were going to Chicago, and that he loved her “more

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<sup>112</sup> Riccio, “The Downfall,” 3.

<sup>113</sup> Riccio, “The Downfall,” 3.

<sup>114</sup> Riccio, “The Downfall,” 3.

<sup>115</sup> Riccio, “The Downfall,” 3. Once Steve and his bodyguard had spirited Madge away to Hammond by train, Steve “forced Madge to write the following telegram to her mother: “Driving through to Chicago. Be home on night train.” When Madge’s parents received this telegram, they went to the railroad station and remained all night, anxiously awaiting the daughter who never arrived,” Riccio, 4. Such a move on Steve’s part forestalled Madge’s parents calling the police when she did not return.

than any woman [he had] ever known. What might have been a tender expression of love in other circumstances now only served to frighten and confound Madge.”<sup>116</sup>

Instead of allowing Madge to call her mother as she begged to do, Steve armed himself and his three compatriots with revolvers and in the company of four armed men Madge was taken to the train station where she, Steve, and Gentry boarded the midnight train, going immediately to a *reserved* drawing room.<sup>117</sup> Once there, Gentry climbed into the upper berth. Below him Steve ripped off Madge’s clothes and began assaulting her, “biting her and bruising her all over her body.”<sup>118</sup> He bit her so many times that one man who saw her described her condition as looking as though she had been “chewed by a cannibal.”<sup>119</sup>

At 6:00 A.M., the train pulled into Hammond, Indiana, where Steve, Madge, and Gentry detrained, going to “the Indiana Hotel, *where reservations had been made*. . . [because] Steve did not want to run afoul of the Mann Act. . . the federal criminal statute which prohibits transporting a woman across a state line for immoral purposes.”<sup>120</sup> Once in their room, Steve fell asleep and Gentry came from his adjoining room and “applied hot towels and witch hazel to Madge’s wounds.”<sup>121</sup> Before leaving the train, Madge had asked Steve to shoot her in order to end her misery. Now, she devised another plan to escape her tormentor: she would kill herself. When Steve awoke, she asked him for money

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<sup>116</sup> Riccio, “The Downfall,” 3, italics mine. Evidence that professions of love in tandem with coercion do not bespeak love.

<sup>117</sup> Riccio, “The Downfall,” 3, italics mine. This crime was well-planned, thus indicating that this crime was the action of a man who was *determined* to *have* the object of his obsession and have her in the situation which he dictated.

<sup>118</sup> Riccio, “The Downfall,” 4.

<sup>119</sup> “D. C. Stephenson,” <http://e.wikipedia.org/wiki/D.-C.-Stephenson> (2/23/2009), 2. Sources: “Stephenson Sentenced.” *Indianapolis News*, p. 1 (11/16/25); Lutzholtz, M. William, *Grand Dragon: D. C. Stephenson and the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1991). (Page last modified 2/11/09)

<sup>120</sup> Riccio, “The Downfall,” 4, italics mine—in order to highlight once again the planning that went into the commission of this crime.

<sup>121</sup> Riccio, “The Downfall,” 4.

to buy a hat. He allowed her to leave with the chauffeur Shorty who had arrived from Indianapolis. “After she bought the hat, she asked Shorty to take her to a pharmacy to buy some rouge. In the drugstore she secretly bought. . . bichloride of mercury tablets,”<sup>122</sup> which she ingested upon returning to the hotel while the men were engaged in another drinking binge—after which Steve again fell asleep. When she became violently ill, Shorty awakened Steve, who forced Madge to drink a quart of milk and who then “announced that they would travel to Crown Point, Indiana, where he and Madge would be married. . . . Steve *was not thinking of romance*; . . . *he had remembered the rule of evidence which prevents a wife from testifying against her husband.*”<sup>123</sup> Madge refused. Recognizing that he could not force her consent in front of a third party, Steve headed back to Indianapolis in the company of his two retainers and Madge. “Throughout the trip, Steve continued to drink, issuing orders and babbling incoherently, “I am the law and the power. . . . I have been in worse scrapes than this before . . . . It takes guts to do this. . . . I have made a quarter of a million dollars.”<sup>124</sup> Upon arriving in Indianapolis, the men did not take Madge home, but deposited her in a loft above the garage. However, on the next day, Tuesday, March 17, Klinck returned Madge to her home, carrying her upstairs to her room and telling Mrs. Schultz, a roomer at the Oberholtzer house, that Madge had been injured in an automobile accident. “Mrs. Schultz called the family physician, Dr. Kingsbury, who ministered to Madge’s needs as she recounted the events

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<sup>122</sup> Riccio, “The Downfall,” 4. The fact that Madge was able to buy the mercury tablets *secretly* indicates that Shorty did not dog her footsteps when she was in his custody. However, perhaps he stayed close enough by her to be in earshot in case she tried to convey her situation to one of the clerks who waited on her. As the target of Steve’s cruelties, Madge no doubt had in mind that any break she might have made for freedom that failed would only subject her to worse horrors than she already had endured. Besides, she had already determined her means of escape: she would die.

<sup>123</sup> Riccio, “The Downfall,” 5, italics mine.

<sup>124</sup> Riccio, “The Downfall,” 5.

of the past two days.”<sup>125</sup> Before succumbing to acute nephritis on April 14, Madge testified to the family attorney. Her sworn statements, which were entered into evidence as dying declarations, led to Steve’s conviction for second-degree murder. He received a life sentence, but was paroled after serving twenty-five years. He broke parole and was returned to prison. He was paroled again in 1954 and “*was arrested in 1961 for assaulting a sixteen-year-old girl, but the charges were dropped for insufficient evidence.*”<sup>126</sup> He died that same year.

During the early part of her ordeal, Madge had resisted with everything she had: with tears, with pleas, with threats. Before leaving Steve’s house, she had “threatened him, saying, “The law will get their hands on you”.”<sup>127</sup> In response, Steve had laughed and said, “I am the law.”<sup>128</sup> The criminal justice system in the state of Indiana proved otherwise, as did the governor, who, even though he owed his high office to Steve’s influence, refused to pardon him.

### **Re-contextualizing Shechem**

Madge’s story is a stark reminder that erotic desire does not always mean moonlight and roses. Therefore, with this reality in mind, readers of Genesis 34 should not assume that a Yehudite author painted a picture of Shechem, the Canaanite rapist, as an easily-aroused young man bitten by the love bug after he had overstepped his bounds. In fact, given the portrayals of Canaanites in the MT—especially in matters related to their sexual behavior—readers should assume something else entirely.

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<sup>125</sup> Riccio, “The Downfall,” 5.

<sup>126</sup> Riccio, “The Downfall,” 7, italics mine.

<sup>127</sup> “Madge Oberholtzer.” <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>, 1. Sources: “D.C. Stephenson Collection, 1922-1978,” Indiana Historical Society; “Ku Klux Klan Resources,” Indiana State Library; Newton, Michael and Judy Ann, *The Ku Klux Klan: An Encyclopedia* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1991); Brumel, Bill, *Ku Klux Klan: A Secret History*, Tribune Media Series (The History Channel); Crais, Robert, *Cross of Fire* (1989 television miniseries).

<sup>128</sup> “Madge,” 1.

What readers assume—that is, how they contextualize the situations in the biblical texts they read—can be compared to what people assume about other people whom they encounter in everyday life. The comparison between our readings of biblical characters and our ‘readings’ of the people we meet on a daily basis is apt because of the way in which authors of biblical narratives *usually* convey who their characters are: by presenting their characters in terms of what they say and do. This is, of course, how we get to ‘know’ the majority of people we encounter daily: by what they say and do.

If Steve Stephenson is ‘looked at’ in terms of what he said and did around the majority of people who encountered him, it becomes apparent that his public behavior did not betray him as a man with a proclivity for private obsessions. As Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan for Indiana and twenty-two northern states, he was powerful and admired and not perceived of as having a criminal nature. Thus, the way in which others ‘read’ Stephenson is similar to the way in which recent readers have ‘read’ Shechem—as powerful (v. 2) and admired (v. 19) and not a person who would commit a heinous crime. These readers would admit that Shechem raped Dinah, but, for many of these readers, the traditional reading of Shechem as falling in love with Dinah and as assiduously seeking to marry her more than makes up for his having raped her.<sup>129</sup>

However, a reading of Shechem which does not rely on traditional interpretations of Genesis 34, but which instead returns to the MT in order to give the words there “their due” reveals that Shechem’s evil intentions toward Dinah actually *are* conveyed by the author of Genesis 34. Shechem’s interiority—his true feelings—are referenced three times in Genesis 34 (in vv. 3, 8, and 19), thus indicating a degree of emphasis on

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<sup>129</sup> For example, Fewell and Gunn (“Tipping,” 197, italics mine) state that “even our concern for Dinah is lessened as we *view* Shechem’s resolve to take care of her.”



Shechem's motives, as well as transparency in presenting them, which is unusual for biblical narrative. Such an emphasis indicates that it would behoove interpreters to try to understand as clearly as possible what Shechem's motivation was in regard to Dinah, in order to better understand what Shechem's treatment of Dinah was *about* to Dinah, as well as to better understand what is depicted in Genesis 34 as a whole. It is to that task that I now turn.

## **Chapter 7: Seeing Shechem: Developing Social Linguistic Consciousness/Transfer Competence**

### **Introduction**

Having posited a rationale for the composition of Genesis which enabled me to take the text of Genesis 34 into account in terms of the relationship to each other of its various parts, I turn now to a subsidiary ‘aboutness’ which is a part of this rationale, the subsidiary ‘aboutness’ which is of greatest interest to me: what being the object of Shechem’s attention was *about* to Dinah. As a result of my analysis thus far, I have concluded that being the object of Shechem’s attention meant that Dinah was raped by him. I reached this conclusion in the following way: in my linguistic analysis of עָנָה in Chapter 2, I concluded that עָנָה referred to her traumatization at his hands.<sup>1</sup> In Chapters 3 and 4, I demonstrated that interpretations which in some manner construct Shechem as not a rapist are not sufficiently grounded in Genesis 34. Also in Chapters 2 and 4, in my analysis of וְשָׁכַב אִתָּהּ, I concluded that וְשָׁכַב אִתָּהּ represents rape.<sup>2</sup> I subsequently reinforced these earlier conclusions in both Chapters 5 and 6: in 5, with a demonstration of the differences in the LXX and the Vulgate from the MT, differences which indicate that the traditional interpretation of Shechem as a rapist/lover comes from the Vulgate and not the MT and, in 6, with a proposal concerning the author’s purpose in composing Genesis 34, a purpose which required that Shechem be represented as a rapist. For the author of Genesis 34, the depiction of Shechem as a rapist was required not only by the ‘facts’ of the core story of the events at the ancient city of Shechem, but also in terms of the plot which the author developed. The plot of Genesis 34 depends heavily on the

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 71-87, especially pp. 82-87.

<sup>2</sup> For the places where I discuss וְשָׁכַב אִתָּהּ as representing rape, see Chapter 1, p. 22, n. 73.

characterizations of Shechem and Hamor and Jacob and his sons, because the author wished to show the gravity of the situation which Jacob and his sons were up against and how well they handled it, until Simeon and Levi went off-course. The presentation of Shechem as a self-absorbed rapist plays a part in conveying the difficulty with which Jacob and his sons had to deal. In addition, Shechem as rapist fulfilled the expectations of the original recipients of Genesis 34 concerning the behavior of oppressive men—with whom they also had to deal.<sup>3</sup> *Pace* Sternberg, I do not think that the author of Genesis 34 wished to complicate the response of his recipients concerning Shechem.<sup>4</sup> Rather, I think he wanted to depict Shechem quite clearly so that his recipients could identify with Jacob and his sons, since the original recipients, too, had to cope with this kind of self-serving, tyrannical overlord. The author intended, via his depiction of Jacob's handling of the affair—and that of his sons before they came under the influence of Simeon and Levi—to convey to his recipients how to respond effectively<sup>5</sup> to a tyrant. In addition, the depiction of Shechem as a rapist met the expectations of the original recipients of Genesis 34 concerning the sexual behavior of a Canaanite. As a result of all of this, Shechem represented the kind of person the original recipients would have loved to hate, the kind of person whose gruesome death at the hands of Simeon and Levi they would have enjoyed contemplating—just as the author of Genesis 34 wished for them to: before he dashed their daydreams with the cold hard facts of the reality of their situation.

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<sup>3</sup> In his discussion of the characterization of Solomon in 1 Kings 3-11, Stuart Lasine (“The King of Desire: Indeterminacy, Audience, and the Solomon Narrative.” *Semeia* 71 [1995], 95, italics mine) cites the perception in antiquity—as expressed in “Herodotus’s . . . constitutional debate [that] “the tyrannical man . . . meddles with . . . ancestral customs, . . . forces women, and kills men indiscriminately without trial.” Lasine goes on to assert that in 2 Samuel 11 “precisely when David is [his] wealthiest, most powerful and secure, he becomes *insatiable and criminal*,” 98, italics mine. Shechem, as son of the chief of the land, evidences several of the characteristics of a tyrant, which I have italicized.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> “Effectively” here refers not only to maintaining the physical survival of the people, but also to surviving with one’s self-esteem intact.

Having thus suggested in Chapter 6 a possible cultural environment in which Genesis 34 was composed—a cultural environment which required that Shechem be depicted as a rapist—in this chapter, via inner-biblical comparisons, I seek to demonstrate that the vocabulary used by the author of Genesis 34 presents Shechem as having an attachment to Dinah which is consonant with the attitude of a rapist, not just in v. 2, but in his entire presentation of Shechem in Genesis 34. In order to do this, I explicate the verses in which Shechem’s attitude or behavior is referred to: vv. 2-4, 8, 11-12, 19.<sup>6</sup>

In order to explicate Shechem’s character as presented in vv. 2-4 and 11-12, I engage in linguistic and cultural comparisons with other biblical texts.<sup>7</sup> Judges 14-15 is a text which helps to illuminate further Shechem’s behavior in a cultural setting in which males own female sexuality. In order to explicate what is depicted in v. 4, I engage in lexical analysis of the word יִלְדָּה. This requires referencing several different biblical texts. Texts which can aid in determining how Shechem is depicted in v. 3 are 2 Samuel 13 and Ezekiel 23. The grouping of these two texts with Genesis 34 for comparative purposes is based on Rashkow’s recognition that “readers can be guided or provoked toward certain perceptions on the basis of keywords recurring in one or several narratives.”<sup>8</sup> The keyword that these three texts have in common is שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ. In my analysis of these three texts, I begin with an explication of their structures not only in an attempt to take the intentions of the authors of 2 Samuel 13 and Ezekiel 23 into account before using these texts for comparative purposes but also in an effort to make the comparisons among the three texts on a sound basis, one that can be seen to reflect the texts in terms of

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<sup>6</sup> In addition, Shechem’s attitude is described in v. 18 (for this, see Chapter 6, p. 282) and his behavior is described in v. 20 (for this, see Chapter 6, p. 295).

<sup>7</sup> I have addressed these verses in previous chapters, but they require additional attention in order to explicate Shechem’s character more fully.

<sup>8</sup> Rashkow, *Upon*, 15.

themselves. After having ascertained the kind of information about Shechem which can be gained from structural analyses of these three texts, I engage in a lexical analysis of 2 Sam 13:2 in order to compare the depiction of Amnon there with the depiction of Shechem in Gen 34:3. My goal in doing this is to illuminate further the nature of Shechem's attachment to Dinah. Understanding the nature of Shechem's attachment to Dinah is crucial to making sense of the rest of Shechem's behavior, for v. 3 is the initial verse which describes Shechem's motives in regard to Dinah.<sup>9</sup> His motive here informs the rest of his behavior. Therefore, whatever analysts decide about what is depicted in v. 3 will influence their decisions concerning how Shechem is depicted in vv. 8 and 19, for Shechem's interiority is referenced again in these verses. These multiple references to Shechem's motivation indicate that his motivation is an integral part of the plot. Thus it is important to decipher 'where Shechem was coming from' in order to make sense of Genesis 34.

### **The structure of Genesis 34**

The following diagram helps to clarify that Genesis 34 is structured around the deceit deployed by Dinah's family. The structuring of the text thus serves as an indication of the centrality of deceit to the story the author wished to tell. The narrative descriptions and the intervening dialogue leading up to the deployment of the deceit combine to reveal not only what made the deceit necessary but also the means which made the deceit possible. Then, the detailed picture of the result of the deceit shows how thoroughly

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Fleishman ("Shechem," 29, italics mine), who notes that the "reflection of Shechem's internal view (*which is just after the reflection of Dinah's internal view*) is not common to biblical narratives. Its purpose is to explain Shechem's deeds." Fleishman is right, but then he reads v. 3 retroactively back into what Shechem did in v. 2, rather than honoring narrative as the "art of sequence" (Sternberg, "The Art," 445) and reading the text in the order in which it was composed and thereby acknowledging that v. 3 points ahead to what Shechem does *after* his *וַיִּשְׁכַּח* attaches to Dinah, not before.

Jacob's sons had turned the tables on the Shechemites, who had been sure that ultimately they were going to accumulate all of Jacob's wealth, not vice-versa. Jacob's extended reproach of Simeon and Levi at the end of this elaboration on the result of their alteration of the family's plan reveals the vulnerability of Jacob and his household vis-à-vis the more powerful local peoples and thus underscores their need to use deceit if they were to prevail. There is alternation between the narration of the characters' activities and their dialogues with each other that leads up to and then away from hemistich 15aβ in a zig-zag fashion which mirrors the verbal jockeying that takes place between the two parties, in which the Jacobites are seen to be the winners—until Simeon and Levi alter the game and change the outcome to one in which everybody loses.

### **Narration of characters' activities and dialogue**

#### **Introduction of characters and of the plot complication**

vv.1-3 lead up to Shechem's fatal demand of his father

v.4 "to get me this girl-child as wife"

vv. 5-7 set the stage for the crucial dialogue  
between the Shechemites and the  
Jacobites

#### **The major male characters negotiate with each other**

v. 13 states the reason for the Jacobite strategy

vv. 8-12 the Shechemite proposals

vv. 14-17 the Jacobite reply

**v. 15aβ: the trap is set: "be circumcised, every male"**

#### **The Shechemites duped**

vv.18-20 describe the activities of Shechem  
and Hamor in response to the  
Jacobite proposal

vv. 21-23 Hamor's and Shechem's

proposal to their fellow  
townsmen

### **The Shechemites destroyed**

vv. 24-29 describe the results of the Jacobites'  
deceit in elaborate detail

### **Authorial purpose revealed and textual summation**

- v. 30 Jacob's lengthy reproach  
of Simeon and Levi
- v. 31 Simeon and Levi's question

This diagram reveals that taking into account a text's structure can help to illuminate an author's goals by bringing into view the central concern of the text, as well as demonstrating how the author structured the text around this central concern.<sup>10</sup>

### **The structure of 2 Samuel 13 and comparison with the structure of Genesis 34**

As a chapter, 2 Sam 13 is divided into two parts.<sup>11</sup> The first part, vv.1-22, focuses on Amnon's rape of Tamar and its immediate after effects. The second part, vv. 23-39, focuses on the longer-term aftereffects of the rape: Absalom's use of it in order to assassinate Amnon, thus making himself the next in line to the throne. Since my concerns are only with the structure of the first part of the chapter, I focus on that.

Alice Keefe observes about 2 Sam 13:1-22 that "the structure of the plot ... sets the rape squarely at the fulcrum of this narrative. ... The events of the build-up and

<sup>10</sup> I discuss the purposes for the author's various emphases in Chapter 6, pp. 271-288.

<sup>11</sup> Jenny Smith ("The Discourse Structure of the Rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13:1-22)," *VE* 20 [1990], 22) lists several signs which indicate that v. 22 represents the closure of the first half of the chapter and that v. 23 represents the beginning of the second half of the chapter. First, "in v. 22 the three important characters Absalom, Amnon and Tamar are all mentioned again, forming an inclusio with v. 1. . . [and] the last clause of v. 22 closes the unit by briefly summarizing the events that have gone before." As for v. 23, "first it begins with *wayehi*, a device used in Hebrew to herald the fact that a shift, normally of time and/or participant, is about to take place; second, there is a time-lapse of two years;" third, the reference to where the crime took place is not within the palace grounds as with the previous part of the chapter, but at "Absalom's country estate," a partial shift in location; "fourth, there is a change in participant role: Absalom and David are now center stage."

aftermath are arranged around the rape in a chiasmic structure that draws attention to the narrative center.”<sup>12</sup> Amnon’s rape of Tamar at the center of this pericope marks the turning point in their lives, as well as in Absalom’s life. The result of being raped for Tamar is that she has effectively been disposed of, her life, for all intents and purposes, ended. She dwells, a desolate woman, in Absalom’s house. As for Amnon, it makes possible Absalom’s disposal of him, thus clearing Absalom’s way to the throne.

I read 2 Samuel 13 as part of a pejorative assessment of the office of kingship in 2 Samuel 11-13, in which the author says, in effect, ‘this is what happens when you have a king: instead of protecting his subjects as he is supposed to, he destroys them.’ Uriah in 2 Samuel 11 and Tamar in 2 Samuel 13 are examples of the kind of virtuous citizens<sup>13</sup> of Israel who are misused, because of the illicit desires of the royal family: for sex or for power. As such, both Uriah and Tamar are seen to be victims of behind-the-scenes machinations between David and his right-hand man, Joab, and Absalom and his right-hand man, Jonadab. The royals maneuver events in order to get their victims where they want them. David does so in order to cover the crime he already has committed. Absalom does so in order to create a cover for the crime he intends to commit. Just as Uriah is depicted as valiantly resisting the reigning monarch with all the wit and wisdom at his disposal,<sup>14</sup> so is Tamar depicted as resisting her physically stronger assailant with all that

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<sup>12</sup> Alice Keefe, “Rapes of Women/Wars of Men,” *Semeia* 61 [1993], 91. Keefe’s assertion about the chiasmic arrangement of the first part of 2 Samuel 13 is based on the analyses of Tribble (“Tamar,” 44) and G.P. Ridout (“The Rape of Tamar: A Rhetorical Analysis of 2 Samuel 13:1-22” in J. J. Jackson and Martin Kessler, eds., *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenberg* [Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1974], 83). Tribble’s and Ridout’s chiasmic structures are slightly different, but both of them place Amnon’s rape of Tamar at the center of the chiasm. While Ridout has only vv. 14b-15a at the center of his chiasm, Tribble has a central unit which includes vv. 13: 9de to v. 18. However, the center of Tribble’s central unit is Amnon’s rape of Tamar: for Tribble vv. 13:14b-15b.

<sup>13</sup> Uriah is ethnically a Hittite, but he is shown to be more virtuous than Israel’s king.

<sup>14</sup> I am indebted to Meir Sternberg for my reading of Uriah. (“Between the Truth and the Whole Truth,” ch. in his *Poetics*, 230-263).



she has. Both Uriah and Tamar embody a virtue which is essential to a well-functioning society: concern to carry out their role in that society to the best of their ability—the exact opposite of what the royals are depicted as doing. In terms of Uriah, this is seen in his concern for the situation of Israel and Judah and for his fellow soldiers in the field (2 Sam 11:11). Even if Uriah’s expressed concern is just a ploy on his part to not be put in a position where he could be perceived as having impregnated his wife, still his stated reasons for not going home are given in terms which reflect well on him and badly on David who, instead of going out to war “in the spring of the year when kings go out to war” (2 Sam 11:1), naps in the afternoon and then strolls around aimlessly on the roof of his house, only to be lifted out of the doldrums by the prospect of sex with a beautiful woman—a prospect which he acts upon even though she is someone else’s wife (2 Sam 11: 2-3).

As for Tamar, 2 Samuel 13 likewise highlights her virtue, as female virtue was constructed in the shame/honor society which 2 Sam 13 reflects. The values of this kind of society require that Tamar be shown to be in no way complicit in her own rape. That she was not is made clear in the text. She is sent to Amnon by her father the king (v. 7). Since Tamar is the king’s sexual property, only he could approve her entry into her half-brother Amnon’s chambers. Once she is in Amnon’s chamber, she is presented as focusing on doing what her father had commanded her to do: preparing the healing food for Amnon. However, once the food is prepared, Amnon refuses to eat it. In order to fulfill her father’s desire that Amnon’s health improve, she has to see to it that he eats what she has fixed for him. Therefore she follows her brother’s command to bring the food to him in order to feed him herself. Once she comes near him, Amnon makes his

intentions clear by taking hold of her and commanding her to “lie with” him. She resists him both verbally and physically. Then, after he has raped her, she protests still, both verbally (v. 16a) and symbolically (v. 19); in other words, there are details in this text which are there to demonstrate to a society which adhered to the values of a shame/honor culture that Tamar was not complicit in her own rape. This is why narrative ink was spilt on these details and not others, just as the author’s primary concerns are emphasized in Genesis 34.

These descriptions of the structures of Genesis 34 and 2 Samuel 13:1-22 reveal that Shechem’s rape of Dinah is not “the central action” in Genesis 34, as Amnon’s rape of Tamar in 2 Samuel 13 is.<sup>15</sup> Shechem’s rape of Dinah is the event which led to her traumatization, which, I will argue, led to Shechem’s obsessive sexual focus on her which led to his determination to gain the proprietary rights to her sexuality by making her a wife—but this is not the focus in Genesis 34.<sup>16</sup> The focus in Genesis 34 is on the use of deceit in order to defeat a more powerful opponent—peacefully.

In 2 Samuel 13, Amnon’s rape of Tamar serves the narrative purpose of providing the justification for Absalom’s assassination of the heir to the throne, but it also serves the purpose of delineating ways in which a monarchy is bad for Israel by showing that the king and his sons do not have the best interests of their subjects at heart—even the best interests of the most virtuous of subjects like Tamar. Because of the differences in the

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<sup>15</sup> Freedman (“Dinah,” 53) claims that the rape of Dinah and the rape of Tamar are “the central action in both stories.”

<sup>16</sup> By paying for the rights to Dinah’s sexuality, Shechem protects himself from any sort of retaliatory action that her family might take against him, because he would then own her sexuality and they would not be justified in taking any action against him. In this way he resembles Steve who sought to marry Madge so that, as his wife, she could not be called upon to testify against him for his crimes. (See Chapter 6, p. 300). Both men can be seen as attempting to use the institution of marriage as it was constructed in the cultural setting within which they committed their crimes as a means of protecting themselves from suffering any negative effects from having committed their crimes.

purposes of the rapes in the two narratives, they receive different emphases in each text. This difference illuminates the importance of making a proportionate interpretation of Shechem's treatment of Dinah, when comparing this text to 2 Samuel 13. Thus, when Genesis 34 is compared to 2 Samuel 13, interpreters need to keep in mind that Genesis 34 is primarily about deceit and its results and that 2 Samuel 13:1-22 is primarily about Amnon's rape of Tamar and its results. It follows, then, as Camp notes, that 2 Samuel 13 is "a story much more explicitly of rape."<sup>17</sup> This means that the lack of details in Gen 34 about Shechem's rape of Dinah should not lead interpreters to conclude, as Camp does, that the narrator did not "make a definitively negative judgment on Shechem *as rapist*."<sup>18</sup>

### **The influence of social constructions of reality on interpretive decisions**

Another aspect of interpretation which enters into the interpretation of Genesis 34—especially when it is compared to 2 Samuel 13—is contemporary conceptions of rape as perpetrated by madmen who leap out of the bushes and assault their victims or rapists who assault their victims out of a sense of anger and powerlessness in relation to women. When this sort of scenario is set beside the overall depiction of Shechem in Genesis 34—who seems anything but insane, angry or powerless<sup>19</sup>—the lack of details about Shechem's rape of Dinah in comparison to the depiction of Amnon's rape of Tamar can contribute to an interpreter's conclusion that maybe Shechem did not rape Dinah after all—especially since Amnon, his obsession assuaged, has Tamar thrown out like so much unwanted trash, but Shechem decides that he wants to keep Dinah and make her a

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<sup>17</sup> Camp, "The (E)strange(d)," 288, n. 10.

<sup>18</sup> Camp, "The (E)strange(d)," 286, italics hers.

<sup>19</sup> I make this claim based on my assertion that Shechem's attempt to secure his hold on Dinah by making her his wife is a very focused one—even if it is marred by his precipitous behavior; that is, once his obsessive appetite for Dinah takes hold (v. 3) (see *infra*), he remains very focused on getting what he wants (vv. 4, 11-12, 19). He is not incapacitated in the pursuit of his goal by madness or hostile feelings and certainly not by powerlessness.

wife. Several factors need to be brought to bear on the depiction of Shechem in Genesis 34 in order to test the validity of such a conclusion. First, there is the current profile of the date rapist, which lends itself to a comparison to Shechem's behavior in Gen 34: 2. This is a rapist who is not mad, hostile or powerless. Rather, he is just the opposite. It is his power which makes the rape possible. The source of his lack of restraint is not his passion for his victim, but his social position. He counts on his position in the community to protect him from any charges that his victim might bring against him and, when the opportunity to rape presents itself, he takes advantage of it. Gen 34:2 presents an image of Shechem as this kind of sexual opportunist: "He saw her—Shechem, *the son of the chief of the land*—and he took her and he raped her." In addition, the date rapist appears to be socially well-adjusted: he does not appear to be a rapist any more than Shechem may appear to some interpreters to be a rapist. Therefore it is possible to apply this construction of what a rapist 'looks like' to Shechem and realize that, even though he is not depicted as brutalizing Dinah (beyond the rape itself), it still is possible to recognize him as a rapist.

Second, interpreters need to keep in mind that the brevity of the presentation of Shechem's treatment of Dinah is part of the construction of Genesis 34: it is not the rape which is emphasized, but the deceit, so the author presents the rape briefly and then moves on to the other elements of plot and characterization which contribute to what he is emphasizing.<sup>20</sup> Third, interpreters need to keep in mind that in v. 2, right after אָרָבָה וַיִּשְׁכַּב comes וַיַּעֲזֹבָהּ, the declaration of Shechem's traumatization of Dinah. However Shechem went about raping Dinah—and we do not know whether or not he brutalized her

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Parry ("Feminist," 20), who observes that "every story is told for some reason. This leads to a selection and organization of the material so as to make the desired point."

*beyond the commission of the rape itself*—the presence of עָנָה indicates that she was traumatized by what he did. When the combination of these factors is brought to bear on the interpretation of שָׁכַב אֶת־תָּהָא, it is quite possible to see Shechem for the rapist that he is.

### **Ezekiel 23, its structure and the significance of שָׁכַב אֶת־תָּהָא in this text**

One way to address the issue of the structuring of Ezekiel 23 is to divide the pericope in terms of the objects of the prophetic diatribes. The result of such an approach is that the text divides into five sections: vv. 1-10, vv. 11-20, vv. 21-35, vv. 36-47, and vv. 48-49, which lead into Chapter 24. The first section is descriptive in form. The two sisters, Oholah (Samaria) and Oholibah (Jerusalem), are the object of attention. The first thing that is shared about them—even before their names are given or their marital relationship to the LORD is divulged (v. 4)—is that “they fornicated in Egypt” (v. 3a). In v. 8, we find that this ‘fornication’ actually was rape: “Her fornication from [her days in] Egypt, she did not forsake: when they raped her (שָׁכַב אֶת־תָּהָא) in her girlhood.” Thus the most fundamental thing about Oholah and Oholibah is that, as girls in Egypt, they were raped and, perversely, they *liked* it. We know this because they were not traumatized like Dinah (עָנָה) nor desolate like Tamar (שָׁמַם). Instead, they gave themselves over to sexual indulgence with foreign lovers.

There are only six verses in the chapter which are devoted specifically to Oholah: vv. 5-10, which describe her unfaithfulness to the LORD and her punishment for it. These verses serve as a prelude to the declaration of the central concern of the prophet: the wanton behavior of Oholibah, which she engaged in in spite of the lesson which she should have learned from what happened to Oholah.<sup>21</sup> Oholah’s behavior and its results should have served as a warning to Oholibah, but they did not. This is made evident in

<sup>21</sup> Twenty-seven verses out of the total of forty-nine are concerned with Oholibah alone.

vv. 11-20, which comprise the second section of the chapter. This section is descriptive in form and details how Oholibah outdid her sister Oholah in her lustfulness: unsatisfied with those who already had drawn near (the Assyrians) and inflamed by images of Chaldean warriors sculpted on a wall, she sought the attentions of the Babylonians, who responded to her summons with the sought-after lustfulness.

Made up of vv. 21-35, the third section consists of a direct address to Oholibah. The opening verse recalls the rapes in Egypt, which had ignited Oholibah's obsessive desire for sex. The prophet declares that since she "missed the wantonness of [her] girlhood" (v. 21a), the LORD would "rouse [her] lovers." Unfortunately for Oholibah, however, the LORD is going to rouse them "against her" because he "is directing [his] indignation against [her]" (v. 25a). Hemistich 25a is the central hemistich of the chapter, the only point in which the indignation which is felt in this text specifically is declared. It identifies the theme of the chapter as the LORD'S righteous indignation against his unfaithful wives and their deserved punishment, which is administered by enemies commissioned by the LORD. The rest of the verses in this central section are devoted to delineating the enemies to whom the LORD has given the judgment and punishment of Oholibah (v. 24b).

The fourth section consists of vv. 36-47 and is descriptive in form, with the exception of vv. 40b $\alpha$  and 41, which are in the form of direct address.<sup>22</sup> The topic is again the behavior of both sisters. Verses 37, 39, and 45 reveal that the unfaithfulness of which the 'sisters' have been guilty is the sacrifice of their own children to idols. Since this section includes the revelation of what behavior actually constituted the apostasy of the

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<sup>22</sup> The direct address in vv. 40b $\alpha$  and 41, though addressed to a singular "you," can be seen as inclusive of both sisters, as can the reference to "her" in vv. 42-44a $\alpha$ , because this section draws to a close with an encompassing reference to both Oholah and Oholibah.

citizens of both Samaria and Jerusalem, the inclusion once again of Oholah as an object of the diatribe is called for.

In Ezekiel 23, the piling up of charges against the apostate ‘sisters’ makes the reader’s realization of their guilt unavoidable. Equally damning is the vocabulary used and the amount of narrative space devoted to convicting the ‘sisters’—especially the Jerusalemites—of their apostasy via the metaphor of their unfaithfulness to the LORD. Some form of זָנָה is used nine times; עָגַב is used seven times; אָמַץ six times; אָמַץ eight times; נָאָף five times; תְּזַנְוּת eleven times and תּוֹעֵבָה once. Clearly the prophet wanted to convict the ‘sisters’ of the most perverse sexual behavior possible, because their perverse sexual behavior referred metaphorically to the most perverse behavior possible: the Samaritans’ and Jerusalemites’ slaughter of their own children as offerings to pagan deities.

שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ is used only once in Ezekiel 23, but it describes that crucial moment in the sisters’ girlhoods in Egypt when their appetites for perverted sex were whetted by being raped (v. 8). As a result of this, they—Oholibah, in particular—continually sought more of the same with a variety of sexual partners. Their particular form of sexual perversion can be seen, then, as an obsession with sex itself, not as an obsession with a particular person, as with Amnon and, I will claim, as with Shechem.

### **שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ in Genesis 34, 2 Samuel 13, and Ezekiel 23**

One insight which arises from the comparison of Genesis 34, 2 Samuel 13, and Ezekiel 23 on the basis of the use of שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ in all three texts is that there is an intertwining of rape with sexual obsession in these texts. Rape is either the event which triggers the obsession (Ezekiel 23) or leads to the obsession (Genesis 34) (see *infra*) or

results from the obsession (2 Samuel 13). The depiction of rape in these three texts is an integral part of the way in which the authors of these texts convey the perverse natures of the characters who are driven by sexual obsession in connection with the rapes committed. It was crucial, then, for these authors to convey the ugly particulars of rape. They chose to do this by employing the verbal construction *שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה*. The ugly particulars which *שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה* depicts can be clarified by examining once again its use in 2 Samuel 13, Genesis 34, and Ezekiel 23.

In 2 Samuel 13 *שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה* depicts Amnon's rape of Tamar. Verse 14 describes how he ignored her pleas (*לֹא אָבָה לְשָׁמַעַ עֲבָרָתָהּ*), overpowered her (*וַיִּתְחַזַּק מִמֶּנָּה*), pinned her down (*וַיַּעֲנֶנָּה*)<sup>23</sup> and raped her (*שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה*). In the series of verbs used to describe Amnon's assault on Tamar, *שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה* *encapsulates the specifics of the rape itself: his pulling away her clothing and his forced penetration of her.*

So it is with the use of *שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה* in Genesis 34: it encapsulates the specifics of Shechem's rape of Dinah. The author supplied no more details about the attack than the minimal information contained in the terminology *שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה*. As noted above, this allows the author to concentrate his recipients' attention on the message he wanted to convey to them. However, this abbreviated account of Shechem's rape of Dinah also serves to create an image of Shechem as callous and self-serving: he sees, he takes, he rapes—with no thought for Dinah. Thus, once he decides to keep her, it is obvious that he is a man she must be rescued from.

In Ezek 23, *שָׁכַב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה* depicts rape in passages in which the violence of sexual assault is delineated differently from the way in which it is depicted in 2 Sam 13.<sup>24</sup> With

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<sup>23</sup> See Chapter 2, p. 80 for the explanation of *עָנָה* as describing Amnon actually pushing Tamar down.



descriptions of the young girls' breasts being squeezed hard and their nipples being pressed hard and "lust being poured out upon them," different specifics of the brutality of rape are created in the mind's eye. Yet once again **שָׁכַב אֶתָּה** encapsulates the specifics of the actual rape itself: the rapists pulling away the clothing of their victims and forcefully penetrating them.

This analysis of the specific language with which the authors of these three texts depicted the rapes of the young victims suggests that for these authors **שָׁכַב אֶתָּה** was the "verbal expression [which] create[d] this particular telling of the story."<sup>25</sup> A review of terminology other than **שָׁכַב אֶתָּה** which is used in the MT to depict rape serves to reinforce this impression; that is, that the authors of these texts chose to use **שָׁכַב אֶתָּה** to describe the assault, rather than another verbal construction which they might have used.

### **Ways to describe rape other than with **שָׁכַב אֶתָּה****

#### **עָנָה**

In my discussion of **עָנָה** in Chapter 2,<sup>26</sup> it became apparent that **עָנָה** "is scarcely a technical term for rape, for it is used in many other contexts connoting "to inflict pain, to humiliate."<sup>27</sup> **עָנָה** refers to rape in Judges 19 and Lam 5:11, but elsewhere it does not. In 2 Sam 13, it is used in vv.12 and 14 to denote the force which Amnon used against Tamar and in vv. 22 and 32 to designate his 'ruination' of her. In Genesis 34, **עָנָה** denotes Shechem's traumatization of Dinah. Since the author of 2 Sam 13 made use of **עָנָה** to indicate force and ruination and the author of Genesis 34 used it to denote Dinah's traumatization, they required different terminology with which to designate the actual

<sup>24</sup> **שָׁכַב אֶתָּה** is used only in v. 8, but related descriptions of what happened in Egypt in vv. 3 and 21 make it clear that these verses also refer to the rapes of both girls in Egypt.

<sup>25</sup> Conroy, *Absalom*, 11.

<sup>26</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 71-87.

<sup>27</sup> Edward Ullendorff, *The Bawdy Bible* (Oxford: Oxford Center for Post-graduate Studies, 1978), 435.

assaults themselves. אֶתְּכַבְּ אֶתְּהָא encapsulated for both of these authors the specifics which each of them wished to convey about what Amnon did to Tamar and what Shechem did to Dinah.

As for Ezekiel 23, it may have been the lack of precision associated with the term עָנָה which led the author to choose to denote what happened to the sisters in Egypt with the precision of the terminology אֶתְּכַבְּ אֶתְּהָא, because it is the fact that the sisters were *forced* to have sex that is a key factor in Ezekiel's indictment of his Israelite contemporaries. Because the girls were forced, their oppression equals the oppression of the Israelites' ancestors: if the girls had willingly engaged in sex with the Egyptians, then their experiences would not have equaled that of the Israelites' ancestors who were forced into slavery by the Egyptians. The bite in Ezekiel's comparison comes from his assertion that what the girls should have despised—rape—they actually liked so much that they pursued similar sexual encounters in the midst of their marriages to God. Thus the use of אֶתְּכַבְּ אֶתְּהָא in Ezekiel 23 helps the prophet make the searing point that he wants to make: the people's sacrifice of their own children is as perverse as young girls who are raped liking their abuse so much that they obsessively seek more of the same treatment.

### שָׂגַל

In three of the four passages in which שָׂגַל is found in the MT it refers to rape. In these three passages the context is that of defeat in battle: Israelite women being raped by triumphant enemy soldiers. However, there is one use of שָׂגַל which indicates that it does not refer to forced sex per se. In Jer 3:2, the prophet's diatribe against “faithless Jerusalem” makes it clear that שָׂגַל is best translated by the English vulgarism “fuck.”<sup>28</sup> When the prophet intones on behalf of God, “where have you not been fucked; by the

<sup>28</sup>HALOT (1415) notes that “it is obviously an uncouth word, for which Q substitutes אֶתְּכַבְּ.”

waysides you have sat waiting for lovers, ” what is expressed is the anger felt by the humiliated husband—God—that his wife, Jerusalem, has been seeking lovers other than him, thus testifying publicly to his inability to satisfy her.

That it is male impotence which is at issue when the topic is that of a man’s wife being sexually involved with another man—whether or not the involvement is by choice—can be seen in the three other places in which *לְשׂוּבָה* appears in the MT. The context is that of defeat in battle:

Dt. 28:30: You shall pay the bride-price for a woman but another man will fuck her.

Is.13:16: Their infants will be dashed to pieces before their eyes, their houses plundered and their wives fucked.

Zech.14:2: The city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women fucked.<sup>29</sup>

Clearly, what is at stake here is the inability of the defeated men to stop any of these horrors from occurring. They must stand by and watch, as helpless witnesses. Rosemary Radford Ruether clarifies the mentality which informs the use of *לְשׂוּבָה* in the context of defeat in battle by explaining that “in war the gang-rape of conquered women . . . is a way in which males send messages to other males. The impotence of the conquered male is manifest in his inability to protect “his women” from rape by other males.”<sup>30</sup> So it appears that, even though *לְשׂוּבָה* can represent forced sex, depending on the context, force is not what the verb itself conveys. Rather, its emphasis is sex which is casual<sup>31</sup> and

<sup>29</sup> NRSV, except that I have substituted “fuck” where the NRSV uses “lain with” or “ravished.”

<sup>30</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 175. Ruether is referencing Brownmiller, *Against*, 23-118.

<sup>31</sup> It is not “casual” to the females who have to endure it in the context of warfare, but the appropriateness of referring to it in this way in that setting is captured in R. N. Whybray’s (*Isaiah 40-66* [NCB; London: Oliphants, 1975], 120) analysis of Isa 47:2-3. Whybray concludes that “the reference in the first half of the verse is to sexual intercourse. Probably the implication is that as a young female slave Babylon will be

“therefore repulsive.”<sup>32</sup> *שִׁגְלוֹ* does not express what the construction *אֲתָהּ שֹׁכֵב* expresses.

### גְּלוּת עֲרוֹתֶיהָ

A particularly graphic depiction of rape is found in Jer 13:22, in which the prophet declares on behalf of God that Jerusalem’s “skirts will be lifted up and her genitals savaged *נִקְמְסוּ עֲקֻבֶיהָ*. The context is war and those who will assault Jerusalem are the enemy. This imagery also is found in Ezekiel 16:37. Here God gathers Jerusalem’s enemies—who are her former lovers—against her. By uncovering Jerusalem’s nakedness, God incites them to rape Jerusalem. This imagery is found once again in Ezek 23:10: Oholah is in the hands of the Assyrians, whom God has called against her, and they uncover her nakedness. In Ezek 23:29 Oholibah suffers the same fate at the hands of her former lovers, now enemies, whom God has called against her. This same imagery is used in Nahum 3:5 about Nineveh and in Isa 47:2-3 about Babylon. In her review of references to rape in the MT, Gravett observes that all of these descriptions of the fates of the various cities are descriptions of “the fate of women in war”<sup>33</sup>—as noted above by Ruether. Except for Jer 13:22, in which the actual savaging of the woman’s genitals is described,<sup>34</sup> none of these references to uncovering the female city’s nakedness depict the actual rape itself. The uncovering of her genitals is an invitation to gang-rape her. Thus, while in these scenarios the victim’s clothing has been pulled away, the other aspect of rape which is conveyed by *אֲתָהּ שֹׁכֵב*—the forced penetration itself—is not part of the terminology *גְּלוּת עֲרוֹתֶיהָ*. As horrific as this terminology is, it in itself does not convey the totality of the act of rape as does *אֲתָהּ שֹׁכֵב*.

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subjected to the final humiliation of being forced to accept the casual sexual attention of any man who happens to want her.”

<sup>32</sup> Seebass, *TDOT* 9:506.

<sup>33</sup> Gravett, “Reading,” 292.

<sup>34</sup> This may refer to mutilation rather than to rape or to both.

**כָּבַשׁ**

כָּבַשׁ also can refer to rape. It is used in Esther 7:8 by King Ahasuerus when, upon returning to the banquet room from the garden, he sees Haman falling on the couch where Esther is seated. Haman is throwing himself down before Esther to beg for his life, but the king misinterprets the situation and asks rhetorically, הֲגַם לְכַבוֹשׁ אֶת־הַמְּלָכָה עַמִּי בְּבַיִת, *hagam lekבוֹsh et-ha-melכה emi bbayit*. Clearly, Ahasuerus is accusing Haman of assaulting the queen sexually, but the association of כָּבַשׁ with subjugation<sup>35</sup> indicates that Ahasuerus's concern is not with the “mechanics” of rape per se, but rather his perception that Haman is trying to ‘take possession’ of ‘his’ woman right under his very nose; that is, Haman is overreaching in the extreme and trying to usurp Ahasuerus's position as ruler.<sup>36</sup> כָּבַשׁ is more focused on the social significance of the subjugation of others—which is sometimes accomplished via rape—than on the specifics of removing the victim's clothing and forcefully penetrating her: the actual actions of rape which are specified in the terminology אֶתָּה אֲשַׁכֵּב *etah ashkib*.

This review of terminology which is used either to denote rape (עָנָה and שָׁגַל) or to denote an invitation to gang-rape (גָּלָה עֲרוֹנוֹתָה) or which refers to rape as a means of subjugation (כָּבַשׁ) reveals that each of these terms in some way lacks the specificity which אֶתָּה אֲשַׁכֵּב encapsulates: the removal of clothing and forced penetration. This indicates that the authors of Genesis 34, 2 Samuel 13, and Ezekiel 23 chose to use אֶתָּה אֲשַׁכֵּב in the telling of their stories because of the particular impact which this specific

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Gen 1:28, Amos 8:4, Jer 34:16.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. 2 Sam 3: 6-7 and 2 Sam 16:20-23.

terminology has on each of their narratives; that is, to convey the brutal ugliness of rape.<sup>37</sup>

### **Images of sexual obsession**

I asserted in my discussion of the structure of Ezekiel 23 that in that text *שָׂכַב אִתָּהּ* designated the event in the young sisters' lives which triggered their obsessive sexuality. From that moment on, in Ezekiel 23, this is what these sisters are known for: their obsessive sexuality. I propose that, in the same way, in both Genesis 34 and 2 Samuel 13, the terminology *שָׂכַב אִתָּהּ* is a part of characterizations of Shechem and Amnon which reveal them to be sexually obsessive. A comparison of Genesis 34, 2 Samuel 13, and Ezekiel 23 to each other along these lines lends support to my proposition.

The obsessions depicted in the three texts are different in that they follow different trajectories of development and serve different narrative purposes. In Ezekiel 23, the two sisters perversely are transformed from innocent to sexually obsessive as a result of being raped at an early age. As a consequence of their experiences, they constantly seek gratification of their obsessive desires with various sexual partners. In contrast to this, in 2 Samuel 13, Amnon is introduced as already sexually obsessed with Tamar, yet, in a fashion similar to the depiction of the two sexually obsessed sisters in Ezekiel 23, the narrative moves along the trajectory of his—with the help of Jonadab—creating the opportunity to gratify his obsession with Tamar and then doing so. In Genesis 34, Shechem is introduced in yet a different way—as sexually opportunistic. However, once his sexually obsessive nature<sup>38</sup> is activated by Dinah's traumatized

<sup>37</sup> Charles Conroy (*Absalom, Absalom! Narrative and Language in 2 Sam 13-20* [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978], 11) notes the importance of the linguistic features which “contribute to the impact of the story.”

<sup>38</sup> Lockwood (“Jacob’s,” 100) describes Shechem as “at heart, one who takes.”

reaction to his raping her, the narrative moves along the trajectory of his obsessive attachment to Dinah as he seeks to gain uncontested rights to her sexuality. Thus, even though the sexual obsessions of these characters are deployed differently in each text, in each of these texts these characters resemble each other in that at an early point in the narrative their defining characteristic is revealed to be sexual obsessiveness.

Because the narrative purposes of the authors of these texts differ from each other, the role that the obsessions of the sexually-obsessed characters plays in each narrative is different. In Ezekiel 23, it is God's desire that his people live lives which honor human life, rather than squandering it, which drives the plot. The behavior of the sex-silly sisters is not so much in opposition to God as oblivious to God, in this way mirroring the obliviousness of the Jerusalemites to the deepest realities of human life to which the prophet is calling them in the name of God. In Ezekiel 23 the obsessive sexuality of Oholah and Oholibah is the metaphorical explanation of the cause of the LORD's judgment of his apostate people and of the deserved disasters which befall them.

In 2 Samuel 13, Absalom's desire for the throne drives the plot. As I discussed in Chapter 6, this is indicated syntactically in v. 1 by his being introduced first, even though Absalom does not emerge from the shadows until v. 20, at which point his active involvement in what has transpired becomes evident.<sup>39</sup> The role which Amnon's obsession plays in 2 Sam 13 is that it serves as the means by which Absalom can create the conditions by which he can eliminate Amnon and place himself first in line for accession to the throne.

In Genesis 34, it is Dinah's desire to observe the local girls which creates the condition for Shechem to rape her. Her response to being raped by Shechem (וַתַּעֲזֹב) then

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<sup>39</sup> See Chapter 6, pp. 289-291.

leads to the plot complication of Shechem's wanting to keep her (v. 3). From this point on, Shechem's desire drives the plot, because the responses of the other male characters in the text are all tied in some manner to Shechem's desire to keep Dinah.

What emerges from the comparison of these three texts is the realization that, in each of these texts, the author develops an image of sexual obsession which is an integral part of the plot. In addition, it is the obsessions of those so aroused which also brings about their downfalls.

### **The nature of Amnon's attraction to Tamar**

The negative nature of Amnon's attraction to Tamar is signaled at the beginning of 2 Samuel 13 in vv. 1 and 2. **בָּחַב** is used in v. 1 to describe the nature of Amnon's attraction to Tamar. Traditionally this has been translated by the word "love," but Amnon's mistreatment of Tamar does not reflect such an attitude nor does it reflect any of the positive connotations of the word "love" when it is used to describe a man's attraction to a woman.<sup>40</sup> In the context of 2 Samuel 13, the translation "desire" for **בָּחַב** is preferable to the translation "love," because the word "desire" is more closely associated with erotic feelings than the word "love" and we are more willing to grant to the word "desire" the negative dimensions of eroticism required by the depiction of Amnon in 2 Sam 13:1-22.<sup>41</sup>

With the use of the grammatical construction **נִצְרָה לְאַמְנוֹן** in v. 2, the obsessive nature of Amnon's attraction to Tamar comes into view.<sup>42</sup> That this is the case can be seen if the use of **צָרַר** in 2 Sam 13:2 is compared with its use Hos 4:17-19 and Job 26:8.

<sup>40</sup> Such as Isaac's love for Rebekah (Gen 24:67); Jacob's love for Rachel (Gen 29:18); Elkanah's love for Hannah (1 Sam 1:5). For a discussion of the first two relationships, see Chapter 1, p. 19.

<sup>41</sup> Tribble ("Tamar," 58, n. 6) chooses to use "desire" here, rather than "love."

<sup>42</sup> Bruce C. Birch ("The First and Second Books of Samuel" [NIB 2; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998], 1303) views "Amnon as obsessed with Tamar to the point of illness."



In Hos 4:17-19, צָרַר is part of a depiction of an undesirable sexual fixation.<sup>43</sup> In Hos 4:19a the reference to the wind binding “her” in its wings is a reference to the unfaithful city-wife of God, Samaria, being bound by the spirit of fornication (v.12b). The translation of רוּחַ as “wind” in v.19a is appropriate, though, because an analogy to natural phenomena is being made by the prophet: in a similar manner, God “binds up (צָרַר) the waters in his thick clouds” (Job 26:8). As thoroughly as the waters are contained in the clouds by God, so is Samaria filled with the spirit of fornication. So sexually obsessed is she that she cannot be deterred: “Ephraim is joined to idols—let him be” (v.17). Amnon similarly is obsessed with Tamar. When the *qal* impf. 3 m.s. of צָרַר with לְ referring to the one who is bound up by his own emotions is used, the situation which creates the emotion which ‘binds’ the person all up in himself is described before the verb צָרַר is used.<sup>44</sup> In the case of 2 Samuel 13, it is Tamar’s beauty (v. 1) which has bound Amnon up with obsessive desire for her (v. 2). Amnon is as thoroughly filled with obsessive desire for Tamar as the clouds are with the rain which God has bound up in them. Therefore, a translation of צָרַר לְאִמְנוֹן as “obsessed” is appropriate in v. 2: “So obsessed was Amnon that he made himself sick because of his sister Tamar.”

Thus in the first two verses of 2 Samuel 13 Amnon is characterized as sexually obsessed. The verb אָהַב in v. 1, in addition to its function as the first indicator of this, also

<sup>43</sup> Verses 17-19 need clarification via a reference to Hos 4:11-12. In v.12, references to the people as male are combined with an assumption of the people as the wife of the LORD, personified as the LORD’s city-wife, Samaria. Because drink has taken away their clarity of thought and perception (v. 11) the LORD’s people (personified as “he” in the masculine singular), “consults his stick; his rod directs him.” Here the equation that the prophet is making is between that of wooden, man-made idols which the people consult and the human phallus. The implication of the equation is that, filled with a spirit of fornication (12b), the people (sg. “he”) has misled himself (הִתְעָה) (12bα) and is (mis)directed, because, instead of consulting the LORD, he is ‘consulting’ the wrong authority: his own lust. All of this adds up to the people as the wife of God “fornicating from under their God” (12bβ).

<sup>44</sup> In Gen. 32:8, Jacob is bound up by his fear when he hears the report of Esau approaching him with four hundred men: וַיִּבְרָא יַעֲקֹב בְּקָאָדַי וַיִּצְרָר לוֹ. Similar grammatical constructions are found elsewhere conveying a similar frame of mind: Judg 2:15, Judg 10:9, 1 Sam 28:15, 1 Sam 30:6, 2 Sam 22:7, 2 Sam 24:14, Ps 31:10, Ps 69:18.

functions as “an initiating action that determines or sets the stage for what is to follow.”<sup>45</sup> That **בָּהֶבֶב** functions this way “in the Bible’s interpersonal relationship accounts” is what Susan Ackermann found when she conducted a study of the usage of *'āhēb*, *'ahābā* in the MT.<sup>46</sup> In 2 Samuel 13, what follows immediately upon **בָּהֶבֶב** in v. 1 is the fuller explication in v. 2 of just what kind of **בָּהֶבֶב** Amnon felt toward Tamar. Immediately after that in v. 3, Jonadab arrives on the scene, full of plans for Amnon and how he could manage to “do” what he wanted to her. Amnon’s following of Jonadab’s plan reveals him as a man whose perverse sexual obsession provided the means for his undoing, because his rape of his half-sister Tamar and his failure to marry her in the aftermath of his sexual misuse of her gave her brother Absalom the reason he needed in order to assassinate Amnon.

### **Shechem as sexually obsessed (Gen 34:3)**

In order to understand the characterization of Shechem as sexually obsessed, it is crucial that interpreters not alter either the sequence of the events as presented in Gen 34: 2-3 or alter the voice of **בָּהֶבֶב**. When v. 3 is taken into account as it is presented in the MT, what becomes evident is that Shechem’s **שָׁנַן** attaches to Dinah in response to Dinah’s traumatized reaction to his having raped her.<sup>47</sup> Thus, it is not “the aftereffects of the rape” on Shechem which are significant,<sup>48</sup> but the aftereffects of the rape on Dinah. When Shechem raped Dinah, it was merely because she was available. Now, however, her traumatized reaction has made her desirable to him. His attraction to Dinah is not that of his **שָׁנַן** “being drawn to” Dinah’s **שָׁנַן**, as Jonathon’s **שָׁנַן** was knit to David’s **שָׁנַן** so thoroughly that Jonathon loved David “as his own **שָׁנַן**” (1 Sam 18:1). Unlike Jonathon’s

<sup>45</sup> Ackermann, “The Personal,” 443.

<sup>46</sup> Ackermann, “The Personal,” 443.

<sup>47</sup> See n. 9 *supra*, where I have quoted in full Fleishman’s observation that “the reflection of Shechem’s internal view” comes “*just after* the reflection of Dinah’s internal view.”

<sup>48</sup> Sternberg, “The Art,” 447.

שֶׁחֶמ׳s נִפְּשׁ being passively drawn to David׳s נִפְּשׁ, in Gen 34:3 Shechem׳s שֶׁחֶמ׳s נִפְּשׁ actively attaches to *Dinah*, who is just the unnamed “girl” to him.<sup>49</sup> Shechem׳s שֶׁחֶמ׳s נִפְּשׁ was not helplessly enraptured by Dinah׳s charms, but, rather, his sexual appetite was ignited by her traumatization. The perception of the active movement of Shechem׳s שֶׁחֶמ׳s נִפְּשׁ toward Dinah—rather than his “soul being *drawn to*” Dinah—is reinforced by the presence of the active form of the verb כָּדָבַק, which refers to the movement of Shechem׳s שֶׁחֶמ׳s נִפְּשׁ toward Dinah to whom ‘it’ clings:<sup>50</sup> Shechem׳s sexual appetite fixates on Dinah.<sup>51</sup>

A translation of שֶׁחֶמ׳s נִפְּשׁ here as Shechem׳s sexual “appetite” better conveys the nature of his attachment to Dinah than the English word “soul.”<sup>52</sup> An association of שֶׁחֶמ׳s נִפְּשׁ with hungry desire which latches on to its source of sustenance once it finds it can be seen in Psalm 63, in which the psalmist declares in v. 2 that “his שֶׁחֶמ׳s נִפְּשׁ thirsts for God,” the reference to thirst arising from the association of שֶׁחֶמ׳s נִפְּשׁ with “desire” or “appetite.”<sup>53</sup> The next reference to “desire” or “appetite” in Ps 63 is the reference in v. 6 to this שֶׁחֶמ׳s נִפְּשׁ “feast[ing] as though with marrow and fat” once it finds the LORD, to whom it clings (דָּבַקְהָ אֶחְרָי) (v. 9), because of the feast of salvation which the LORD provides. Just as the

<sup>49</sup> See Chapter 6, pp. 292-293.

<sup>50</sup> Waltke and O’Connor (198-199, ¶11.2.5f) note that “the preposition *b* marks the object of a variety of verbs . . . includ[ing] [the] verb of . . . fastening (*on*)” or “to,” such as Saul’s body, which was “fastened to the wall of Bethshan” (1 Samuel 31:10).

<sup>51</sup> It is important to keep the active form of the verb in order to indicate where the responsibility for the fixation lies: it is with Shechem, who *chooses* to act on the craving he now has for Dinah’s terrorized response to him by verbally abusing her (see Chapter 8, pp. 373-376) and by seeking to gain unfettered control over her by making her a wife. As Francisco (*Telling*, 14, italics mine) notes in regard to the use of the active and passive voices of verbs, “the active voice is preferred, *unless you are trying to hide responsibility.*”

<sup>52</sup> See Chapter 5, pp. 219-221.

<sup>53</sup> Seebass, *TDOT* 9:506.

psalmist's hungry  $\text{שָׁפֵן}$  latched onto the LORD upon finding him, so did Shechem's perverse  $\text{שָׁפֵן}$  affix itself to Dinah, once her traumatization made her desirable to him.<sup>54</sup>

The use of the construction  $\text{שָׁפֵן רָבָק בָּ}$  to describe the nature of Shechem's sexual attraction to Dinah, rather than the verb  $\text{עָגַב}$ , which is used in Ezekiel 23 to describe the nature of Oholibah's sexual attraction to the partners whom she sought out, delineates the obsessive nature of Shechem's sexual attachment to *this particular girl*. Oholibah's lust ( $\text{עָגַב}$ ) is characterized by its capricious, unfocused nature. She is looking all over the place for sex—any partner will do—Assyrians, Babylonians, drunkards from the desert. This is not the nature of Shechem's attraction to Dinah. Like Amnon, Shechem is focused ominously on one innocent girl. This is more than mere lust and  $\text{עָגַב}$  is not an adequate designation for it.<sup>55</sup>

The understanding of  $\text{שָׁפֵן}$  as “appetite” in a setting in which forced sexual intercourse has just taken place indicates that it is not love which Shechem feels for Dinah, but unnatural desire,<sup>56</sup> a craving set aflame by Dinah's traumatization—the understandable reaction to rape which Wolfthal claims is appealing to a certain sexual taste: one which preferred that the woman be unwilling.<sup>57</sup> From this point of view, “aggression against an unwilling partner enhances eroticism: the woman's fear [is]

<sup>54</sup> NRSV translates  $\text{רָעַב שָׁפֵן}$  in Isa 32:6 as “craving of the hungry,” thus providing another example of the association of  $\text{שָׁפֵן}$  with appetite and craving. Likewise, in Hab 2:5  $\text{שָׁפֵן}$  refers to the “appetite” of “a rapacious individual” who never has enough. (Seebass, *TDOT* 9:504).

<sup>55</sup> West (“The Rape,” 149) refers to Shechem's “sexual lust” for Dinah in order to make the point that Shechem did not love Dinah. Likewise, Fewell and Gunn (“Tipping,” 196, n. 3) note that “Amnon's protestations of love are shown to be merely lust.” It is important that these analysts are clarifying that it is not love which is depicted in either Genesis 34 or 2 Samuel 13. However, the means by which the authors of these narratives designate the nature of the attraction of Shechem for Dinah and Amnon for Tamar indicate that it is more than ‘mere’ lust which drives them; rather, it is obsession focused on a particular person.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Scholz (*Rape*, 140), who asserts that “אָהַב” . . . describes Shechem's intention after the rape to treat Dinah as he pleases; . . . [it] expresses [his] interest to exert his will for sex over Dinah.”

<sup>57</sup> Wolfthal, *Images*, 21, 22.

considered sexually stimulating.”<sup>58</sup> Wolfthal points to Ovid as a spokesperson for this perspective. In his *Metamorphoses*, Ovid claims that “sexual desirability is enhanced by disarray of clothing or hair, by discomfort and embarrassment, or by fear. For the rapist these are all aphrodisiacs.”<sup>59</sup> A picture of what this looks like is created by Angelo Poliziano in his interpretation of Jupiter’s rape of Europa: “Jupiter dashes away with his sweet terrified load, her beautiful golden hair flutters in the wind which blows back her gown . . . crouching down with pain and fear she cries for help in vain . . . and the bull looks round and kisses her feet.”<sup>60</sup> From this perspective, the fixation of Shechem’s sexual appetite on Dinah can be seen as a perverse craving for a victim whose fear he finds titillating and, thus אֶת־הַיְנָעֶר וַיֶּאֱהָב should be translated as “he craved the girl:” like Amnon, Shechem was a craver.<sup>61</sup>

In terms of the last element in v. 3—Shechem’s “speak[ing] to the girl, using persuasion,” examination of all nine uses of דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in the MT where it refers to speaking to another, whoever “speaks to the heart” of (an)other(s) seeks continuation of the relationship between himself and his addressee(s) on *his* terms. In some cases, this is a good thing. In the case of Shechem and Dinah it is not. I discuss the idiom דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in Chapter 8, where I argue that in Genesis 34 it is part of a depiction of Shechem as an abusive man. In terms of Shechem’s use of abusive speech, Dinah, as the object of his

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<sup>58</sup> Wolfthal, *Images*, 26, 21.

<sup>59</sup> Wolfthal, *Images*, 21.

<sup>60</sup> This is Wolfthal’s rendering of Angelo Poliziano’s *The Stanze*. (Trans. David Quaint [Amherst: University Massachusetts Press, 1979], 55).

<sup>61</sup> “Crave” is a fitting description of the nature of Amnon’s attraction to Tamar and the nature of Shechem’s attachment to Dinah, as the words which C. S. Lewis (*Till We Have Faces* [Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 1985], 305) put on the lips of his character Orual make clear. Once Orual realizes the destructive nature of her obsessive and self-centered attachment to the object of her desire, she admits, “I never wished you well, never had one selfless thought of you. I was a craver.”

speech ‘completes’ the situation for him which exists between the two of them—she is his to abuse. Therefore he does so.

Thus, it is within the first three verses of Genesis 34 that who and how Shechem is established. In v. 2, the reader sees that he is the son of the chief of the land, who takes what he wants when he wants it. Then, in v. 3, the reader sees Shechem’s activated sexual appetite attach itself to Dinah and, craving her, he begins to behave like the abuser he is by abusing her verbally. Significantly, it is in v. 3 that the verb **בָּהֶסְרָם** is used and it functions as Ackermann indicates that it would: as “an initiating action that determines or sets the stage for what is to follow.”<sup>62</sup> It is Shechem’s craving which determines his own behavior from then on, as well as that of those who must address the situation which his craving has created: his decision to keep Dinah. Consequently, Shechem’s speech and behavior in the ensuing verses continue to enlarge on the image of him as obsessed and regardless of others, as he seeks to secure his rights to Dinah’s sexuality.

### **Shechem’s character further revealed (Gen 34: 4, 11-12)**

Camp compares Shechem’s approach to his father about securing Dinah as a wife to Samson’s approach to his parents concerning the woman he wanted as a wife.<sup>63</sup> Camp’s comparison is based on the similarity of language used by the two young men when they address their elders, thus suggesting that they are two of a kind.<sup>64</sup> This indicates that a comparison of the two in terms of their character would not be out of line, for, as Alter notes, “what is significant about a character, at least for a particular narrative

<sup>62</sup> Ackermann, “The Personal,” 443.

<sup>63</sup> Camp, “The (E)strange(d),” 287-288.

<sup>64</sup> Shechem says to Hamor, **לִי לְאִשָּׁה** הִנֵּנִי אֶת־הַיְלִדָהּ (Gen 34:4b). Samson says to his parents, **לִי לְאִשָּׁה** קְחוּ־לִי קַח־אוֹתָהּ (Judg 14:2).

juncture, can be manifested almost entirely in the character's speech."<sup>65</sup> Narrative junctures which Alter finds to be of particular importance are "the point at which dialogue first emerges" in a narrative and "the initial words spoken by a personage [which] will be revelatory, perhaps *more in manner* than in matter, constituting an important moment in the exposition of character."<sup>66</sup> In terms of both Shechem and Samson, their demands of their fathers (and mother, in Samson's case) concerning the focus of their sexual desire are the first words that they speak in the text, a moment, then, revelatory of their character. The manner of their speech reveals Samson and Shechem to be insistent and demanding,<sup>67</sup> personality traits that are borne out in the stories about them. Samson's story, less abbreviated than the story in which Shechem is a participant, is more elaborate in its exposition of his character than Genesis 34 is of Shechem's. As Samson's story unfolds, he is revealed to be undisciplined, destructive, and a danger to the community,<sup>68</sup> something which is true of Shechem as well. Shechem's undisciplined nature is evident in his raping Dinah, in his interrupting the negotiations between his elders, and in his thoughtlessly making the offer of an excessive bride-price just in order to achieve his personal goal.<sup>69</sup> Shechem's self-indulgence and obsessive pursuit of his unworthy personal goal turned out to be a danger to his community indeed. These facets of his personality led to its complete destruction.

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<sup>65</sup> Alter, *The Art*, 70.

<sup>66</sup> Alter, *The Art*, 74, italics mine.

<sup>67</sup> Jeansonne ("The Fracturing," 92) describes Shechem's approach to his father as "blunt." Kam ("Dinah," 67) paraphrases Shechem's speech to his father as "You must get me this girl," thus picking up on the insistent tone in v. 4.

<sup>68</sup> So much so that his own people hand him over to the Philistines (Judg 15:9-17).

<sup>69</sup> See Chapter 6, pp. 279-282.

Shechem's words to his father are not only the first words that he speaks, but they also are "the point at which dialogue first emerges"<sup>70</sup> in Genesis 34. As such, they are of particular importance. Attention to them reveals that Shechem appears to be a young man used to getting his way. After demanding that Hamor secure his hold on Dinah by 'getting' her as a wife for him (that is, by paying a bride-price for her), then, when Hamor does not pursue his goal in a way in which Shechem thinks will cinch his control over Dinah, he interrupts the negotiations between his elders in order to make the offer of what he regards as the deal-sealing bride-price. Unlike his conciliatory father, who goes out to speak *with* Jacob (v. 6) and who then proceeds to speak *with* Dinah's father and brothers (v. 8),<sup>71</sup> Shechem speaks *to* Dinah's father and her brothers, saying, in effect, "be willing to deal with me and we can come to terms: *ask* what you want and *give* me the girl" (vv. 11-12). These are Shechem's last words in the text and they contain, not surprisingly, two imperatives. To gain uncontested control over Dinah remained his goal to the end.

#### **Shechem's motive for marrying Dinah (Gen 34:4)**

Unlike Amnon, Shechem knows just what to do in order to "make his dreams come true." He demands that his father arrange his marriage to this אִלְנָה because the payment of a bride-price would mean that *he* would own her sexuality: her family would have no grounds to engage in any sort of attempt to retrieve her or to retaliate against him in any way. In the Ancient Near East, there was one thing that guaranteed a man's ownership of the female he wanted as a wife: payment of a bride-price for her. This was a right that was taken very seriously, as can be seen in the fact that David based his right to retrieve Mikal from her second husband on the bride-price he had paid for her as her first

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<sup>70</sup> Alter, *The Art*, 74.

<sup>71</sup> This is in contrast to his social inferiors, his fellow tribesmen, *to* whom, as chief, he speaks (v. 20).



husband (2 Sam 3:12-16). Shechem wanted to make his misappropriation of Dinah appropriate according to what the culture required, not in order to do right by Dinah,<sup>72</sup> but in order to do wrong to her to his heart's content without fear of retaliation from her family, retaliation which would have been regarded as justified were he not to make his control over her legal by paying for her.

An example of the kind of 'justified' retaliation which Shechem feared can be seen in the story of Samson's burning of the Philistines' fields, vineyards, and olive groves when he found out that his properly arranged-for (Judg 14:10) and previously-claimed wife (Judg 14:10-18) had been given to another man (Judg 14:20-15:8). Samson's response to finding out that his wife was no longer his was "this time when I do the Philistines harm, I will be without blame" (Judg 15:3). Samson thus states clearly the belief that the misappropriation of a man's 'woman' was grounds for retaliation. In terms of Shechem's concern in a similar situation, what was most important to him was the fact that, as Dinah's rapist and abductor, he would be the particular focus of any sort of retaliation that Jacob and his sons might undertake and, understandably, he wanted to avoid such an outcome to his misappropriation of her.

**Shechem's speeches provide more information concerning his attitude toward Dinah (Gen 34: 4, 12)**

It is evident that the way in which Shechem speaks to people is revelatory of his character and that what he says provides information concerning his attitude toward Dinah. When he demands of his father that he get Dinah as a wife for him, Shechem refers to her only as this אִשָּׁה. Had he used her name, he would have brought her into the

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<sup>72</sup> Pace West ("The Rape," 148), who views Shechem as "man enough to do the "right" thing by offering to marry her." Shechem does not just *offer* to marry Dinah; his hungry אִשָּׁה pursues legalization of his control over Dinah.

circle of conversation. As it was, she stands there, talked about, but not included, a ‘snapshot’ of this moment which reinforces the impression that Dinah was just a thing to Shechem.<sup>73</sup> In addition, when Shechem speaks to his father, he does not use אָב, as his father later would use with Dinah’s father and brothers (8אβ). What emerges from these textual details is an image of Shechem as self-absorbed and demanding, an image which results from what Alter refers to as “the bias of stylization,” the means by which a certain effect is created by “the words assigned to the speakers.”<sup>74</sup>

Shechem’s use of the word יְלִדָּהּ to refer to Dinah in the situation where he speaks to his father alone in contrast to his use of נֶעֱרָה to refer to Dinah when he speaks to her family (v. 12)—as well as in contrast to the narrator’s use of נֶעֱרָה (twice in v. 3) to refer to Dinah—appears to be a difference in vocabulary which is designed to convey something about Shechem’s attitude toward Dinah, something he does not mind his father knowing, but something he does not want Dinah’s family to know. In his assessment of יְלִדָּהּ, Victor P. Hamilton sees a contrast between יְלִדָּהּ and נֶעֱרָה in the references in Genesis 21 to Ishmael with both of these terms. He sees יְלִדָּהּ as reflective of Ishmael’s “biological relationship” to his mother<sup>75</sup> and נֶעֱרָה as reflective of God’s “care and concern” for the boy.<sup>76</sup> A similar distinction between two relationships may be intended in Genesis 34, with the references to Dinah as a נֶעֱרָה meant to point to her relationship to her family and יְלִדָּהּ meant to point to her relationship to the man who has raped her. There are several indications in the text which suggest that this is the distinction which is being made. There is, as noted above, Shechem’s care to use נֶעֱרָה when speaking to Dinah’s family, as well as the narrator’s use

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter 6, pp. 292-293.

<sup>74</sup> Alter, *The Art*, 70.

<sup>75</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, “ילד,” *TLOT* 2:455-560. “The narrator calls him a יְלִדָּהּ and so does Hagar.”

<sup>76</sup> Hamilton, *TLOT* : 457. “Always God refers to Ishmael as a נֶעֱרָה.”

of נַעֲרָה, which indicates that this is a way to refer to Dinah that expresses proper regard for her. Jeansonne sees נַעֲרָה as a “more respectful” way to refer to Dinah than יְלֵדָה.<sup>77</sup> There is, in addition, the emphasis on family relationships in Genesis 34, which suggests that references to Dinah as a נַעֲרָה point in that direction, just as the reference to Shechem as a נַעֲרָה (v. 19) points in that direction in terms of him. In fact, that is just the way in which he is depicted in this text: as a member of his father’s household, for whom the *paterfamilias* seeks to secure his rights to Dinah’s sexuality. Thus, Shechem is seen in Genesis 34 as a young person still dependent on his family of origin for his rights and status. This suggests that the reference to Dinah as a נַעֲרָה indicates the same thing about her: it refers to her status within her family due to her age. According to H. F. Fuhs, “*na’ar* clearly refers to youth.”<sup>78</sup> Thus, נַעֲרָה indicates that Dinah is young.

יְלֵדָה, on the other hand, refers to Dinah’s status outside the circle of the family; that is, her status as the object of Shechem’s desire, since he is the one who refers to her in this way. Because of his wish to make use of her sexuality in a perverse manner Shechem demonstrates a lack of regard for Dinah’s status as a young girl deserving of care and protection. The two other uses of יְלֵדָה in the MT suggest the possibility that this is what is indicated by Shechem’s use of יְלֵדָה in reference to Dinah. Zechariah 8: 4-5 refers to boys and girls playing in the streets, who are contrasted with old men and old women who sit, leaning on their staffs for support. Joel 4: 3 refers to the war-time bartering of Israelite children by victorious nations for the basest of reasons: “they have cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes and sold girls for wine and drunk it down.” Thus, in both of these references the innocence and vulnerability of the יְלֵדָה and

<sup>77</sup> Jeansonne, “The Fracturing,” 92.

<sup>78</sup> H. F. Fuhs (“נַעֲרָה,” *TDOT* 9: 474-485) notes that in terms of נַעֲרָה, “the semantics are, *mutatis mutandis*, similar to those of *na’ar*.”

יְלָדוֹת are emphasized,<sup>79</sup> the exploitation of the young being the emphasis in the reference in Joel. With נַעַר pointing to Dinah's youth, then it is possible that Shechem's reference to her as a יְלָהָה points to his exploitation of her helplessness, an exploitation similar to that of the יְלָהָה and יְלָדוֹת referenced in Joel 4:3, who, defenseless in the hands of enemy soldiers, are traded for prostitutes and wine.

### **Five aspects of the presentation of Shechem**

There are five aspects of the presentation of Shechem in Genesis 34 which traditionally have been interpreted in a way which is favorable to him and which have contributed to the perception that he loved Dinah. First, there is the use in v. 3 of אָהַב, combined with a mistranslation of תִּדְבַּק נַפְשׁוֹ בְּדִינָה as “his soul was drawn to Dinah” and with what, I will argue in Chapter 8, is a mistranslation of יְדַבֵּר עַל־לֵב הַנַּעַר as “he spoke tenderly to the girl.” Second, there is Shechem's stated wish to marry Dinah (v. 4) and then his efforts to facilitate the marriage, as depicted in vv. 11-12. Third, there are statements about his attitude toward her in vv. 8 and 19, which translators have interpreted as his enchantment with her. Fourth, there is his willingness to undergo circumcision. Fifth, there is the statement in hemistich 19b that וְהָיָה נִקְבָּד מִכָּל בֵּית אָבִיו. This statement has been interpreted in a positive manner, thus contributing to a positive interpretation of the other aspects of the presentation of Shechem. It is to an analysis of these last three aspects of the presentation of Shechem and what these aspects convey about his attitude toward Dinah that I now turn.

### **Gen 34: 8-12: Hamor and Shechem treaty with Jacob and his sons**

<sup>79</sup> The reference in Zechariah is part of the imagery of the restoration of Zion. The promise is that God himself will dwell in Jerusalem, thereby ensuring the safety of the most vulnerable (the young and the old alike)—and everyone inbetween.

Hamor's opening statement to Dinah's father and brothers on Shechem's behalf is בְּבַחְכֶּם נִפְשׁוֹ הַשְּׂקֵהוּ בְּנִי שָׁכֶם: "Shechem, my son: [he] himself (שָׁכֶם) has determined [to have] your daughter." Hamor's use of שָׁכֶם here "signals the intentional nature of the act" which Hamor is attributing to Shechem.<sup>80</sup> What he is telling Dinah's family is that, when it comes to whether or not he keeps Dinah, Shechem's mind is made up: he will not relinquish her. When a young man in Shechem's position made such a choice, the expectation was that those affected by his choice would acquiesce to his decision. Since Shechem has made his decision in an untoward situation, Hamor's offer of a marriage alliance, permanent settlement, and the right to travel about freely is meant to induce the Jacobites to do just that.<sup>81</sup>

Contemporary translations of Genesis 34 do not convey the determination attributed to Shechem in v. 8. The NRSV renders Hamor's speech in v. 8a as "the heart of my son Shechem longs for your daughter." The JPS translates this in a similar fashion: "My son Shechem longs for your daughter." The image that emerges of Shechem in these translations is that of a lovesick puppy mooning around in a daze over the object of his desire while his father works on his behalf to get her for him as a bride.<sup>82</sup> But this interpretation is not reflective of Shechem's behavior as described in the text. Unlike Amnon, whose obsession with Tamar immobilized him, Shechem is in no way

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<sup>80</sup> Seebass, *TDOT* 9:513. Seebass (*TDOT* 9:498) notes that the meaning of שָׁכֶם "must be determined entirely on usage (even more than is generally the case)." As was evident with the use of נָפַח in 2 Samuel 13, a word in Biblical Hebrew can have different meanings within the same pericope. The same is true of שָׁכֶם in Genesis 34. In v. 3, it refers to Shechem's sexual appetite. Its use in combination with קָשָׁה in v. 8 indicates the determination of Shechem "himself" to keep Dinah. Seebass (*TDOT* 9:510) notes the reflexive use of שָׁכֶם. See Chapter 2, p. 40, n. 13, for another example of the need for nuanced translation in connection with קָנָה in Num 5:14 and 30, and Ceresko's claims about the necessity of translating the same word differently within the same pericope, in order to express the nuances intended by the author.

<sup>81</sup> For a fuller explanation of the psychology of Hamor's approach to Jacob and his sons, see Chapter 6, pp. 277-279.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Speiser (*Genesis*, 268), who refers to "lovesick Shechem."

incapacitated by his fixation on Dinah; rather, he is right beside his father making sure he gets what he wants—and *he is willing to pay any price for it*. In this he resembles King Solomon who built “all the desire [קִשְׁרָה] of Solomon which he determined [קִשְׁרָה] to build.” (1 Kgs 9:19). The list of Solomon’s projects is long: the House of the Lord, his own palace, the Millo, the wall of Jerusalem, fortifications for Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, lower Beth-horon, Baalith, Tamar, and all of his garrison towns, chariot towns, and cavalry towns (1 Kgs 9:15-20). And *Solomon instituted forced labor in order to build all this* (1 Kgs 9:15).<sup>83</sup> The indication is that once Solomon made up his mind, he would do what it took to attain his goal.

That קִשְׁרָה denotes determination/choosing and not love can be seen by looking at all of its other uses in the MT.<sup>84</sup> Deut 10:15a refers to God having “determined (קִשְׁרָה) in love (לֵאֱהָבָה)” [to have] the people’s “ancestors.” It may be the reference in Deut 10:15a, which gave rise to the idea that קִשְׁרָה is associated with love. However, קִשְׁרָה reflects instead the idea of “fastening”—as with the fillets for the bases of the tabernacle as described in Exod 27:17, Exod 38:17 (both *pu’al* of קִשְׁרָה), and Exod 38:28 (*pi’el*).<sup>85</sup> The idea of “fastening” is reflected in the NRSV and the JPS translations of Deut 7:7, הוֹרָה בְּכֶם, קִשְׁרָה, as the LORD “*set his heart*” on you, the English idiom “to set one’s heart on” being indicative of being determined to have whatever the heart is set on; that is, of “fastening”

<sup>83</sup> The NRSV translates this verse (and following) as “this is the account of the forced labor that King Solomon conscripted to build the house of the LORD and his own house, the Mill and the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, Lower Beth-horon, Baalath, Tamar . . . as well as all of Solomon’s storage cities, the cities for his chariots, the cities for his cavalry, and all the desire of Solomon which he determined to build”

<sup>84</sup> HALOT 1(362-363) records very few uses of קִשְׁרָה in the MT. Other than the ones I discuss in the body of the text, קִשְׁרָה also is used in 2 Chron 8:6 the same way as in 1Kgs 9—in reference to Solomon’s building program—and in Ps 91:14, where it is translated in the NRSV as “those who *love* me, I will deliver,” but the translation “because they *chose* me, I will deliver them” works equally well and is more reflective of the grammar in the MT. Even-Shoshan (407) records these same occurrences.

<sup>85</sup> HALOT 1:362-363. Rashkow (*Upon*, 115) notes that in the Rheims-Douay Version Gen 34:8 is translated as “his heart is fastened to your daughter.”

on to it.<sup>86</sup> This understanding also reflects the use of קָשַׁח in Deut 21:11, which refers to the Israelite warrior choosing to take the captive in order to make her his wife. He does not “long for her:” he determines to have her and takes her home with him, just as Solomon does not “long for” the temple or his palace or his fortifications or his other building projects. He sees to it that they are built—by forced labor. This has nothing to do with love for his fellow human beings, nor does the Israelite warrior taking the captive have anything to do with love for her, because he releases her on her own when she does not please him sexually.<sup>87</sup> These uses of קָשַׁח indicate, then, that love is not a part of the picture, but determination which is seen in purposeful action is.<sup>88</sup> As noted above, this reflects the way Shechem behaves. He does not “long for” Dinah from afar, while his father takes care of things for him. He is right on the scene himself, looking out for his own interests.

In addition to the association of קָשַׁח with God’s love in Deut 10:15, there are two other possible reasons as to why the verb קָשַׁח came to be associated with love and longing in Genesis 34, rather than with Shechem’s determination to keep Dinah. First, interpreters may have associated the verb קָשַׁח with the noun קָשַׁח, which is translated as “desire” in *HALOT*, based on the Arb. *‘išq* (ardour of) love.<sup>89</sup> “Desire” can reflect a “longing for” that is not acted upon—as with Amnon until Jonadab tells him what to do—whereas, “determination” indicates the will which finds a way to accomplish one’s goal. Second, the translation of v. 8a in terms of Shechem’s “longing for” Dinah may

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<sup>86</sup> This English idiom may come from the Hebrew “to set the heart upon,” as in Ezra “setting his heart to study the Torah.” The English idiom, however, conveys more of a sense of determination, while the Hebrew idiom “to set the heart” conveys more of an idea of “devotion to”—Ezra was devoted to Torah study.

<sup>87</sup> See Chapter 2, p. 83.

<sup>88</sup> Rashkow (*Upon*, 115) notes that קָשַׁח “is not used in the context of romantic love.”

<sup>89</sup> *HALOT*, 363.

reflect the influence of the incorrect rendering of *הַנְּפִשׁוֹ קָדְיָהּ* in v. 3 as “his soul was drawn to Dinah,” since this interpretation of v. 3 reflects the same sort of helpless passivity that “longing for” does. In neither v. 3 nor in v. 8 is Shechem’s *נָפְץ* passive or lolling about in helpless longing for what it wants.<sup>90</sup> In v. 3 it actively attaches to Dinah and in v. 8 it is “intensely purposive” in determining to have complete control over that which feeds it.<sup>91</sup>

**Gen 34:19a: נָפְץ: Not “delight,” but determination once again**

*נָפְץ* in v.19a is translated in the KJV, RSV and NRSV with some form of the word “delight.”<sup>92</sup> When used to describe an interpersonal relationship, the English word “delight” suggests an involuntary response on the part of the ‘delighter in’ to the one in whom he or she delights; that is, the implication is that the ‘delighter in’ is not quite in control of her/himself because he/she is so charmed by the one who has captured her/his attention. *נָפְץ* does not suggest this sort of enchantment with another person.<sup>93</sup> Both King Saul (1 Sam 18:22) and his son Jonathon (1 Sam 19:1) are described as “pleased” (*נָפְץ*) with or by David, but the implication is not that Saul or Jonathon are silly with abandon over David. Rather, the sense is more that they find being in relationship with him gratifying (or at least this is what Saul wants David to think is the case).

This sense of gratification is what is indicated in the Latter Prophets and in some of the Psalms when *נָפְץ* is used to describe what it is that God “delights in.” A good example of this is Jer 9:23, which reads “For I the LORD act with kindness, justice and

<sup>90</sup> Seebass (*TDOT* 9:507) notes that *נָפְץ* “is not fundamentally a passive state of being.”

<sup>91</sup> Seebass, *TDOT* 9:516.

<sup>92</sup> The KJV and the RSV translate this as “he had delight in Jacob’s daughter;” the NRSV as “he was delighted with Jacob’s daughter.”

<sup>93</sup> The JPS assessments as to nuances of meaning in the sixty-eight occurrences of *נָפְץ* in the MT which I reviewed were my starting point for assessing what was conveyed in each of these occurrences.



equity in the world; For in these I delight” (JPS). Here the translation of “to delight in” is appropriate, for the indication is that this is what is deeply gratifying to God. In my assessment of the uses of רָצוּן, there are sixteen which reflect this meaning, though not all of these refer to God. Some refer to what human beings delight in, but it is not other human beings that they delight in, but rather God’s way (Ps 37:23) or even wars (Ps 68:31).

In my reckoning, there are seven uses of רָצוּן which refer to human beings “pleasing” God. However, the bulk of the uses refer to God or human beings “desiring/wanting.”<sup>94</sup> There are only a few references in regard to human beings “wanting” in relation to another human being. Deut 21:14 refers to the Israelite no longer “wanting” the war captive. Deut 25:7, 8 and Ruth 3:3 refer to the Levirate not “wanting” to fulfill his duty. Esth 2:14 refers to which girl from the harem the king “wants.” Thus, רָצוּן can be seen in these settings as reflective not just of the desire of the man who is the subject of the verb רָצוּן, but also as reflective of the exercise of his will: because of what he does or does not want to do, he makes a certain choice. So, too, does Shechem make the choice to be circumcised, because he רָצוּן Jacob’s daughter (v. 19a). However, translating רָצוּן here merely as ‘want’ is not reflective of “the tone” of the “entire narrative” in terms of the description of Shechem’s behavior and of his attitude toward Dinah.<sup>95</sup> There are a few occurrences of רָצוּן in the MT which are more reflective of the way in which it is used in Gen 34:19. In these occurrences of רָצוּן the “wanting” of the subject of the verb

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<sup>94</sup> Thirty-one.

<sup>95</sup> Gravett (“Reading,” 284) notes the importance of the translator paying “strict attention . . . to the entire narrative in order to capture the actions portrayed and the tone of the narrative.” Verse 19 is the verse which summarizes the description of who and how Shechem is (see pp. 346-348 *infra*). Since this is the case, it is particularly important that the translation of this verse reflect “the actions portrayed and the tone of the narrative” in terms of the depiction of Shechem.

evidences a firmer exercise of the will of the one who “wants” than what is suggested by the uses cited above in connection with a person “wanting” or “not wanting.”<sup>96</sup> These instances of the use of רָצָה include Isa 55:11, Judg 13:33, 1 Sam 2:25, 1 Kgs 9:1, and, according to my reading of the text, Gen 34:19. Isa 55:11 refers to the word which issues from the LORD’S mouth: it will “perform what [the LORD] *purposes* (רָצָה).” In Judg 13:33, Manoah’s wife reassures him that they will not die because they have seen a divine being by telling him that, if the LORD had *meant* (רָצָה) to take their lives, he would not have done all of the things that he had just done with them. In 1 Sam 2:25, Eli’s sons ignore his pleas that they turn from their sinful ways, because the LORD had *resolved* (רָצָה) that they would die. 1 Kgs 9:1 reads “When Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD and the king’s house and all the desire (רָצָה) of Solomon which he *had set his heart on* (רָצָה) building.” “Set his heart on” is the way in which רָצָה is translated in this verse in the JPS. This is also the way in which the JPS translators rendered the use of the verb רָצָה with the noun רָצָה in 1 Kgs 9:19. Thus, the combination of the noun רָצָה with the verbs רָצָה and רָצָה in these two references to Solomon’s determination to build what he desired indicates that just as רָצָה refers to Shechem’s determination in v. 8, רָצָה also refers to Shechem’s resolve in v. 19. רָצָה does not refer to some winsome power which Dinah had over Shechem which made her delightfully irresistible to him, but rather to his determination to gain unfettered control over her.

**Gen 34:19a: Not for ‘love’ or money—unless one is a Shechemite**

<sup>96</sup> In Ps 34:3 and Job 33:32, the translators of the JPS translate רָצָה with the verb “to be eager.” In Job 9:3 and Job 13:3, they translate רָצָה in terms of Job “insisting” on arguing with God. All of these translations reflect a greater intensity and urgency than the bulk of the uses of רָצָה in the MT and correspond to the greater intensity of the meaning of רָצָה in these occurrences which I cite *infra*.

The thing which Shechem did not hesitate to do was to be circumcised. For those who think that Shechem loved Dinah, undergoing circumcision is the *coup de grace* in terms of deciding that he truly loved her. Noble represents this point of view. He asserts that “the text makes it clear” that Shechem offers “to give any amount that is asked of him . . . because of the strength of his love for Dinah.”<sup>97</sup> . . . The same motive is explicitly given for Shechem’s hastening to circumcise himself.”<sup>98</sup> As for the offer of a marriage settlement and an unlimited bride-price, Noble is correct that however one interprets vv. 3-4 influences one’s interpretation of vv.11-12, because no motive is given for Shechem’s behavior in vv.11-12. Interpreters rightly assume that the motivations attributed to Shechem in vv. 3-4 explain the nature of his approach to Dinah’s family. However, I do not agree with Noble that the text makes it clear that his motivation is love. In verse 19, a verse which G. J. Botterweck rightly views as a summary statement concerning Shechem’s attitude toward Dinah,<sup>99</sup> יָרָץ is used to describe Shechem’s motive. But his motive is not love. Rather, it is his determination to obtain unfettered rights to Dinah’s sexuality.<sup>100</sup> Thus, Scholz is correct in asserting that in v. 18 “Shechem accepted the conditions because he wants his chosen object:”<sup>101</sup> He did not hesitate to be circumcised, because he will not have the protection from Dinah’s family afforded him

<sup>97</sup> Noble, “A “Balanced”,” 181.

<sup>98</sup> Noble, “A “Balanced”,” 181, n. 21.

<sup>99</sup> Like Noble, G. J. Botterweck (“יָרָץ,” *TDOT* 5:92-107) sees the connections between the motive attributed to Shechem in v. 3 and the motives attributed to him in vv. 8 and 19. Botterweck refers to יָרָץ in v. 19 as “a summary” of דָּבַק בָּ אָהֶב, דָּבַק בָּ אָהֶב, דָּבַק בָּ אָהֶב (v. 3) and הִשָּׂקָה (v. 8). Like Noble, Botterweck interprets these verbs in the traditional way as “be drawn to,” “love,” “speak tenderly to,” “long for,” and “delight in.” Both Noble’s and Botterweck’s interpretations are indicative of the fact that an analyst’s interpretation of all of these verbs must be consistent; that is, they must reflect the fact that all of these verbs are indicative of Shechem’s attitude toward Dinah. Thus the interpreter’s assessment of these verbs must reflect a cohesive presentation of Shechem’s attitude toward Dinah and the actions which he takes as a result of that attitude. The verbs must reflect either love or obsessive desire.

<sup>100</sup> This is the same kind of resolve exhibited by Steve in the execution of his plan of abduction and rape: Steve had reserved a rail car and hotel rooms in northern Indiana in order to carry out his plan. (See Chapter 6, p. 299 ).

<sup>101</sup> Scholz, *Rape*, 157.

by a fully-paid bride-price until all the Shechemite males are circumcised. Therefore he hurries in order to get that process under way. As for the idea that Shechem's agreeing to be circumcised is representative of his great love for Dinah, the fact that all of the Shechemites agreed to be circumcised takes the pizzazz out of Shechem's performance. For all of them it is a means to an end.

**Gen 34:19b: כבוד: The narrator describes Shechem's position in his community**

The declaration in v.19b about Shechem that הוּא הַיּוֹדֵם מִכָּל לְבֵית אָבִיו is a direct reference to his status in his community, a reference which has influenced interpreters to see him in a positive light. This description has been translated as “Now he was the most honored of all his family” (NRSV) or “Now he was the most respected in his father's house”(JPS). Julian Pitt-Rivers's explication of the concept of honor will help to clarify why translations like these are not the best way to translate this declaration concerning what constituted the basis of the influence which Shechem wielded in his community.

Pitt-Rivers describes “honour at the general level as the principle of personal moral supremacy.”<sup>102</sup> In Biblical Hebrew the term כְּבוֹד encapsulates the same idea. According to Moshe Weinfeld, “the term *kābôd* can . . . denote personal honor and dignity, which can be attained through proper conduct, restraint, generosity, and humility.”<sup>103</sup> There is, however, another valence to the concept of honor (כבוד). As Pitt-Rivers observes, “where status is ascribed by birth, honour derives not only from individual reputation but [also] from antecedence.”<sup>104</sup> There are two senses, then, to the concept of honor: “honour which derives from virtuous conduct and that honour which

<sup>102</sup> Pitt-Rivers, *The Fate*, xi.

<sup>103</sup> M. Weinfeld, “כְּבוֹד,” *TDOT* 7: 22-38.

<sup>104</sup> Pitt-Rivers, *The Fate*, 2.

situates an individual socially and determines his right to precedence.”<sup>105</sup> The latter kind of honor derives from “social position” and “is a matter of birth and wealth.”<sup>106</sup> Stenmans notes that, likewise, כָּבֵד refers to “recognition accorded people with a certain social or political status.”<sup>107</sup> Both Stenmans and Weinfeld equate the relation of כָּבֵד to the idea of a person’s “being important” to the meaning of “be heavy,” since כָּבֵד “denotes “heaviness”.”<sup>108</sup> A similar idea is found in English in the colloquialism in which a person who is influential is described as someone whose opinion “carries a lot of weight.” The implication of the use of כָּבֵד in v. 19b is that this is what is meant by כָּבֵד here. Hemistich 19b serves as the transitional hemistich from the description of Shechem’s undergoing circumcision in v. 19a to v. 20 which describes Shechem and his father going out to the city gate in order to convince their fellow Shechemites to submit to circumcision. Clearly, the author of Genesis 34 wanted his recipients to realize that the degree of כָּבֵד which Shechem enjoyed among his fellow townsmen was part of the reason that his desire carried the day with them. What kind of כָּבֵד, then, was it that Shechem had that so influenced his fellow Shechemites: that of personal moral supremacy or that which is accorded people on account of their social position? The translations in the NRSV and the JPS cited above imply that Shechem’s כָּבֵד was that of the former type—personal moral supremacy. This is because the implication of saying that someone is the most honored or most respected person in his father’s household is that this is because he is honorable or respectable in terms of his behavior.

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<sup>105</sup> Pitt-Rivers, *The Fate*, 14.

<sup>106</sup> Pitt-Rivers, *The Fate*, 38.

<sup>107</sup> Stenmans, “כָּבֵד,” *TDOT* 7:17-21. Stenmans’ reference here is to “the piel of *kbd*.” The form in Gen 34: 19b is *nip’al*, which Stenmans (16-17) notes is “especially common with a human subject as the passive equivalent of the piel.”

<sup>108</sup> Weinfeld, *TDOT* 7:23, 24. Stenmans, *TDOT* 7:14, 13.

A review of Genesis 34 indicates that Shechem had the kind of honor that is afforded a person because of his social position: he was the son of the chief of the land. As for the other kind of honor, he was a rapist and thus by definition he lacked restraint, a lack which also was evident in his interruption of the marriage negotiations between his elders and in his offer of an unlimited bride-price to Dinah's family. His lack of humility can be seen in the way in which he addressed both his father and Dinah's family about his desire to marry her. He commanded his father, "get me" and Dinah's family, "ask me and give me." He might be credited with generosity if his over-the-top offer of a bride-price were not connected to his sexual gluttony. And, finally, if he were an honorable man, he would have allowed Dinah to return to her family while his father negotiated with her father to arrange their marriage.<sup>109</sup>

Just because someone receives adulation from people does not mean that the one admired is worthy of such adulation. Absalom is an example of a man who was popular and yet unworthy of the adulation he received.<sup>110</sup> There is nothing in Genesis 34 to suggest that Shechem was honorable or that he was deserving of the popularity which he enjoyed.<sup>111</sup> For this reason, a translation which includes the term "honorable" or the term

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<sup>109</sup> West ("The Rape," 149) asserts that it is "hard to believe that Shechem really loved the girl, for had that been the case, he would surely have allowed her to return home and would not have had the audacity to have asked for her hand in marriage, whilst keeping her prisoner in his house." I agree with West that not only does Shechem's keeping Dinah with him reveal that he is not an honorable man, it also reveals that he did not love Dinah, nor she him. *Pace* Fewell and Gunn, who "assume that [Dinah] is in Shechem's house of her own accord" (200) and that, when her brothers take her from Shechem's house, they "suppose she is taken against her will," 211. *Pace* also Fretheim ("Genesis," 578), who states that "all indications are that Dinah had been drawn into the house of Shechem and the two had fallen in love." Fretheim (577) does not say what these indications are, but he cites Fewell and Gunn's conclusion that Shechem's speaking to Dinah's heart elicited a positive response from her. The only other scholars whose readings of Genesis 34 he mentions are Sternberg's and Brueggemann's. Fretheim's analysis of Genesis 34 appears to have been heavily influenced by Fewell and Gunn's reading of this text and he appears to adopt their assessment of the nature of Shechem's and Dinah's relationship.

<sup>110</sup> H-J Fabry ("בִּזְיוֹן," *TDOT* 7:399-437) notes that Absalom gained the affection of his followers "through fraud."

<sup>111</sup> See Chapter 5, p. 210, for descriptions of date rapists as "well-liked" members of the community.

“respectable” is not reflective of the way in which Shechem is depicted in the text.

### **The plot function of Shechem’s obsession**

I have asserted that Shechem wanted to have unfettered control over Dinah because he was obsessed with her. As such, his sexual obsession functions in the plot as the driving force behind his push to get this control. It therefore determines his own behavior, as well as the responses of those around him—in that they must either acquiesce to the force of his desire, as his father and his fellow Shechemites did, or resist the force of his desire, as Dinah’s family did. Like Amnon, Shechem’s sexual obsession leaves him open to the manipulation of his opponents, but unlike Amnon, this is not because he is sluggish and uninventive, but rather because he is overeager and precipitous in his behavior—aspects of his obsessive personality which cause him to make the fatal offer to the Jacobites to name any bride-price they wanted. In terms of the larger message arising from Shechem’s sexual obsession, for the group whom I have posited as the original recipients of Genesis 34, Shechem is the model of the dangerous and violent overlord who must never be confronted directly, but who must be handled carefully and cunningly.

### **Giving words “their due”**

My analysis of the sequencing of events in Gen 34:2-3 and of the vocabulary used to describe Shechem indicates the importance of translators translating with the greatest degree of accuracy they can muster, because it is clear that, when translators translate Genesis 34, in a very real sense they hold the reality of their fellow human beings in their hands—the reality of those lives behind the lines in this text whose struggles are reflected in some manner in the story told in Genesis 34, the story which the author chose to tell in

a particular way. Therefore, in order to honor the lived reality which informs the text, interpreters and translators need to honor the author's choices to the greatest degree possible.

This interface between a character in a text and the lived reality which informs that character and which gives that character her/his meaning can be seen in the concerns expressed by translation theorists Hatim and Mason in regard to translations of the speech of the flower-seller Eliza Doolittle in George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*. According to them, when Eliza says, "I'm a good girl, I am," her reiteration of her original statement is known as a "tag." They relate that Eliza's use of tags is a discursual feature<sup>112</sup> which is meant to convey the tension which Eliza is feeling between "her past, her "here and now" and her future aspirations."<sup>113</sup> As such, the tag is meant to convey hesitancy. However, in several translations which they cite, Eliza's tagging was conveyed as emphatic or defiant, creating "a more self-assured tone [and] *sparkling off the wrong intertextuality*."<sup>114</sup> The intertextuality which Hatim and Mason feel some translators have misrepresented refers to the 'text' of Eliza's life within the larger texture of late nineteenth-century British society: the society which Shaw wished to call to account via his portrayal of the various characters in *Pygmalion*.<sup>115</sup> A translation which depicts Eliza's speech inaccurately does not communicate what it was that Shaw wanted to convey and therefore misleads recipients of the play as to what it is that her speech represents.

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<sup>112</sup> Hatim and Mason (*Translator*, 4) define 'discursual' as "having to do with the expression of an attitude."

<sup>113</sup> Hatim and Mason, *Translator*, 109.

<sup>114</sup> Hatim and Mason, *Translator*, 108, italics mine. The text of Shaw's play indicates that Hatim and Mason are correct that Shaw did not want to convey defiance in this line of dialogue. This is revealed in the note to the actress as to how she is to depict Eliza at this point. Eliza is to "subsid[e] into a brooding melancholy over her basket and talk[] very low-spiritedly to herself." Sandie Byrne, ed. *George Bernard Shaw's Plays* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002), 294.

<sup>115</sup> David Blumenthal (*Facing the Abusing God: A Theology of Protest* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993], 6) defines intertextuality as "an interplay between a text of life" and a written text.



In writing *Pygmalion*, Shaw narrated the self of a woman like Eliza Doolittle by conveying to his audience through Eliza a certain reality within a certain cultural environment.<sup>116</sup> In a similar manner, the author of Genesis 34 narrated the selves and the situation with which he was concerned—his co-religionists and their condition as subjects in an empire—through the characters whom he created in his narrative. Because of their subjugated position, his recipients *knew* what Shechem ‘meant;’ because of their experiential knowledge of men like him, they knew what he was *about* in Genesis 34. For this reason, Shechem needs to be depicted as accurately as possible in translations, so that some awareness of what he meant to those who had to deal with ‘him’ becomes available in this story which continues to live on in The Holy Bible.

This story continues to live on because there are those who still read it. These readers come to the Bible with their own experiential knowledge and they expect to find their experiences reflected accurately there. Because of this, translators also hold in their hands the lived realities of these contemporary readers of Genesis 34. They have the same responsibility to these contemporary readers as they have to those lives which are reflected in the text: to render their experiences accurately. But for women who have been raped, this has not been their experience when reading the traditional interpretation of Shechem as a rapist/lover, for they *know* what Shechem is *about* and he is not about love.<sup>117</sup>

One reason that these women have not seen what they know about rapists depicted accurately in Genesis 34 is due to the power of accumulated knowledge to

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<sup>116</sup> Archibald Henderson (“Shaw, George Bernard” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*: 20 [Chicago: William Benton, 1966], 479) describes Shaw’s characters as “less individualized human beings than types, intellectual abstractions bearing the *vraisemblance* of reality.”

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Madge being frightened and *confounded* by Steve’s declaration of love when he was holding her hostage and forcing her to drink whiskey which she did not want. (See Chapter 6, pp. 298-299)

overcome common sense.<sup>118</sup> The traditional interpretation of Shechem as a rapist/lover goes against what we know about people who are violent: that they do not have concern for those whom they assault—*before* or *after* the assault. This can be seen in the story of the archetypal criminal Cain. He expresses no concern for Abel or for his parents whom he has deprived of their son. His only concern is for himself and the punishment meted out to him by the LORD (Gen 4:13-14). However, even though we know that violent people are not concerned about their victims or about the consequences of their crimes except for how they are negatively affected by what they have done, when we read Genesis 34, we still struggle to make sense of the traditional interpretation of Shechem as a rapist/lover,<sup>119</sup> rather than returning to the text, as Rosen recommends, and giving the words there “their due.” I have tried to do that in this chapter, by following Barr’s recommendations on how to develop social linguistic consciousness; that is, by looking at the vocabulary used to describe Shechem in terms of its usage in the MT. In the last chapter, I look at how the power of accumulated knowledge complicates the ability of interpreters—both professional and lay—to bring to our readings of Genesis 34 our common sense knowledge of what we know about pain and suffering and the victimization of others and on the basis of that knowledge making sense of this story of suffering and slaughter and sorrow.

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<sup>118</sup> Part of the reason this happens is because, as Washington (“Lest,” 190) notes, “discursive formations complement their productive power by suppressing possible alternatives.” The result is that “most of what we ‘know’ we have taken on authority of others; and it is only as others continue to confirm this ‘knowledge’ that it continues to be plausible to us.” Peter Berger, *A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (Garden City: N. Y.: Anchor Books, 1970), 6. See, as well “Analyzing the translator’s sensibility,” Chapter 5, pp. 211-214.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Levenson’s (“Liberation,” 230) assertion that “George Pixley’s commentary on the Book of Exodus” forces the message of the book “into a mold in which it cannot fit.” Likewise, readers of Genesis 34 who try to fit Shechem into the mold of a rapist/lover are forcing him into a mold in which he cannot fit.

## **Chapter 8: The power and persistence of institutionalized knowledge**

### **Introduction**

My motive for the approach to Genesis 34 which I have taken in this dissertation has been to undo Dinah's silence. I contend that undoing Dinah's silence is a necessary approach to this narrative because her silenced position in the text has been used against her—and against all victims of rape—by interpreting Shechem's raping her as an experience which she sought or which she liked when it occurred, or by deciding that she fell in love with her rapist because he supposedly fell in love with her.<sup>1</sup>

I have attempted to do undo Dinah's silence in two ways. One way was via the presentation of not only the words of victims of rape but also of stories about them and about other forms of oppression which women endure when they are the objects of a perverted form of male desire. The other way in which I tried to overcome Dinah's silence was to present as fully as possible the man whom she experienced and in that way bring into view what it was that she experienced at Shechem's hands. Because I sought to interpret Shechem in terms understandable to women who have been raped, in order to be considered a valid interpretation of Genesis 34, this presentation of Shechem had to fit not only the depiction of him in Genesis 34 in terms of what the text itself allows but it also had to fit the experiences of victims of rape; in other words, my presentation of Shechem had to be coherent in terms of both of these 'texts:' the texts of women's lives and the text written long ago and now a part of holy writ. According to women who have been raped this meant that Shechem must have been depicted in Genesis 34 as either a

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<sup>1</sup> Dinah's silence reflects accurately her situation of being in the hands of the man who raped her, as well as in the hands of those who are assisting him in keeping her; that is, she is in a situation in which no one is listening to what it is that *she* wants. Cf. the situation of Madge in Steve's hands and in the hands of those who assisted him in keeping her against her will. Her pleas and tears were ignored by all those around her. See Chapter 6, pp. 298-299.

lover or a rapist, because he could not be both. And this means that, for the depiction of him to be coherent to them, he must have been depicted as either a lover from start to finish in Genesis 34 or either a rapist from start to finish. Both Bechtel and Camp recognize the necessity of this kind of coherent depiction of Shechem because they interpret Genesis 34 in a way which attempts to undo the rape, thereby making Shechem a lover from start to finish. My approach has been to take the opposite approach and undo the love, in which case Shechem is seen to be a rapist from start to finish. My claim is that this is the way in which he is depicted in the MT and that the interpretation of him as a rapist/lover came from interpretations of Genesis 34 which found expression in the LXX and the Vulgate and, because of the influence of these versions of the Bible—particularly of the Vulgate—the view of him as a rapist/lover became the dominant one.

How very dominant this view is can be seen in the way in which it is thoroughly interwoven into the fabric of institutionalized knowledge. When analysts consult a lexicon or a theological word book or a commentary for assistance in interpreting Genesis 34, it is highly likely that they will find there definitions, explanations, or commentary which support the traditional interpretation of Shechem as a rapist/lover. This creates problems if one wants to interpret Genesis 34 in terms of the experiences of women who have been raped, because Dinah's experience as a victim of rape whose rapist instantaneously underwent a miraculous transformation from rapist to solicitous lover already has been determined and authoritatively established. In this way, the role of institutionalized knowledge in the determination of meaning can be seen as one which reinforces traditional interpretations of biblical texts—and this reality hinders the

possibility of reinterpretations of Genesis 34 which give more credence to Dinah's experience as presented in the MT.

In order to demonstrate how positive interpretations of Shechem are perpetuated in authoritative guides to biblical interpretation, I look at H-J Fabry's discussion of the idiom דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in TDOT and also at glosses of this idiom in BDB and HALOT. In order to demonstrate how Fabry's explanation of the meaning of דָּבַר עַל־לֵב contributes to a positive interpretation of Shechem, I first review Fabry's explanation of דָּבַר עַל־לֵב. Fabry interprets the idiom from the perspective of the speaker. This results in an interpretation of דָּבַר עַל־לֵב as representative of a well-intentioned speaker speaking with well-intentioned words to his addressee(s). In order to demonstrate that all uses of the idiom דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in the MT do not represent such a situation, I first explicate the relational dynamics which the idiom represents and then, with these relational dynamics in mind, I analyze all of the uses of דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in the MT in order to illuminate the way in which translating from the perspective of the speaker contributes to a positive interpretation of the speech—and of the speaker. Because of this, Shechem, like the others who “speak to another/others, using persuasion,” profits from an approach to the text in which the interpreter identifies with the speaker in the text at the expense of the recipient(s) of the speech. The result of this interpretive approach is that Shechem, after having raped Dinah, is perceived as in love with her and seeking her best interests. This perception then is recorded in an authoritative guide, thus contributing to the difficulty of seeing Shechem differently from the way in which he traditionally has been perceived.

**Support for an interpretation of Shechem as a rapist/lover in a theological wordbook**

Fabry discusses the idiom דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in his treatment of “לֵב, לָבַב” in TDOT.

According to Fabry, “the OT scarcely ever uses *lēb* for the “heart” as a physical organ.”<sup>2</sup> What it refers to in terms of human physiology generally is the chest.<sup>3</sup> In the broader sense of human anthropology, it refers to “the human center of decision.”<sup>4</sup> As such, it includes the “affective, noetic, and volunative . . . aspects of a person.”<sup>5</sup> Fabry discusses each of these aspects in turn, treating *דָּבַר עַל־לֵב* under the “Affective” section.

Fabry begins his discussion of *דָּבַר עַל־לֵב* by referring to it as “a common idiom for wooing affection.”<sup>6</sup> He supports this conclusion with the example of Shechem, whose “*nepeš* . . . “is drawn to” to Dinah.”<sup>7</sup> According to Fabry, Shechem “loves her and therefore speaks to her.”<sup>8</sup> Fabry recommends comparing Shechem’s speech to Dinah to “the descriptions of how the Levite goes after his concubine (Jgs.19:3) and Boaz woos Ruth (Ruth 2:13).”<sup>9</sup> Then Fabry asserts that “David speaks to his troops (2 S. 19:8 [7]),” Hezekiah to the Levites (2 Chron 30:22) and to the commanders of Jerusalem (2 Chron 32:6) “in this same seductive way.”<sup>10</sup>

Fabry’s emphasis on the idea that *דָּבַר עַל־לֵב* represents seductive speech most likely arises from the fact that he regards Hos 2:16 as the locus classicus of the idiom.<sup>11</sup> Fabry describes this verse as the LORD’S using “enticement . . . and seductive persuasion (*dibber* ‘*al-lēb* as the mode of speech used by lovers). . . to bring [Israel] back to the wilderness, and there “speak to her heart,” restor[ing] the unbroken bond between Israel

<sup>2</sup> Fabry, “לֵב,” *TDOT* 7:411.

<sup>3</sup> Fabry, *TDOT* 7:411.

<sup>4</sup> Fabry, *TDOT* 7:431, 434.

<sup>5</sup> Fabry, *TDOT* 7:412.

<sup>6</sup> Fabry, *TDOT* 7:417.

<sup>7</sup> Fabry is following the traditional rendering of this active verb in the passive, as initiated in the LXX.

<sup>8</sup> Fabry, *TDOT* 7:417.

<sup>9</sup> Fabry, *TDOT* 7:417.

<sup>10</sup> Fabry, *TDOT* 7:417.

<sup>11</sup> Fabry, *TDOT* 7:417.

and Yahweh,<sup>12</sup> who are envisioned metaphorically as unfaithful wife and faithful husband. Fabry's reference to the restoration of an *unbroken* bond between husband and wife is confusing, however, because in the verses prior to v. 16, the LORD had responded abusively to his wife Israel's consorting with other lovers. According to the LORD, her behavior had *broken* their marital bond (vv. 9-15). As for the point of view of the wife/Israel, the one who has been stripped naked and exposed as in the day she was born, made like a wilderness and turned into a parched land, killed with thirst (v. 3), whose way has been hedged up by thorns and a wall built against her (v. 6), whose husband has invited her lovers to gang-rape her (v.12)<sup>13</sup> and to whose children there has been shown no pity (v. 4), she, too, would feel that any bond she had had with her husband now would be broken. Understandably, she is reluctant to enter into a relationship with her husband again.<sup>14</sup> From the perspective of both husband and wife, then, the bond has been broken and the husband/LORD is seeking to reunite with his wife/Israel via the use of persuasive speech.

In such a setting, Fabry's reference to this persuasive speech as "the mode of speech used by lovers" indicates that he is viewing the situation from the perspective of the abusive husband, for, as Fabry notes, the LORD is cast in the role of lover, enticing his estranged wife back into the setting of the early days of their relationship, there to convince her (דַּבֵּר עֲלֵי-לֵב) to reunite with him. However, as I noted in Chapter 4, when persuasive speech is used in a setting in which abuse has occurred, it is questionable

<sup>12</sup> Fabry, *TDOT* 7 :418, italics mine.

<sup>13</sup> The verbal construction in Hos 2:12 is not גִּלְהָ עֲרוּתָהּ, which I discussed in Chapter 7. In Hos 2:11, the LORD announces that he will snatch away [his] wool and [his] flax which [had] covered the nakedness (עֲרוּתָהּ) of his wife Israel. Then he announces in v. 12 that he will uncover (גִּלְהָ) her נִבְלָתָהּ (her "unruliness," which, in this context, is the equivalent of her "availability") to the eyes of her lovers. Even though עֲרוּתָהּ גִּלְהָ is not used here, the intent is the same—the invitation of the lovers to gang-rape the LORD'S wife Israel.

<sup>14</sup> Fabry (*TDOT* 7: 418) sees Hos 2:16 as a description of "the return to the wilderness as Yahweh's final effort, which Israel refuses to enter into freely."

whether or not this is speech from a man who truly loves the woman he is trying to persuade or just the self-interested means he uses to get his way.<sup>15</sup> When דָּבַר עַל־לֵב is examined in all of its uses, it becomes clear that, when it is used in settings where there has been sexual involvement between a male and a female, it is the mode of speech used by an abuser. Whether or not he ‘loves’ is open to question, not only for the recipients of his speech within the biblical text but also for the recipients of his speech ‘without’ the biblical text: the recipients of the biblical text itself. For the recipients within the world of the text, time provides the answer to the question of whether or not he truly loves. For the recipients of the biblical text itself, a comparative review of the uses in the MT of עַל־לֵב דָּבַר brings to the fore what characterizes the relationship between the speaker and the recipient(s) of his speech when the idiom דָּבַר עַל־לֵב is used. However, before undertaking this review, it is necessary first to look at the importance of conveying דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in English in terms of the relational dynamics reflected in the idiom.

### **The relational dynamics reflected in the idiom דָּבַר עַל־לֵב**

When translating דָּבַר עַל־לֵב, the translators of the NRSV chose to use an adverb to render עַל־לֵב at every place in which the idiom is used. In Gen 34:3, Judg 19:3, Hos 2:16, and Isa 40:2, דָּבַר עַל־לֵב is translated as “to speak tenderly;” in Gen 50:21, Ruth 2:13, and 2 Sam 19:8, it is translated as “to speak kindly;” in 2 Chr 30:22 and 32:6, it is translated as “to speak encouragingly;” and in 1 Sam 1:13, it refers to Hannah praying silently.<sup>16</sup> An example of the way in which the structuring of speech can favor one person over the other in the statement which is made is provided by George Steiner in his monograph on

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 4, pp. 185-187.

<sup>16</sup> In 1 Sam 1:13, Hannah is described as “speaking to her [own] heart.” Since I am concerned with the meaning of דָּבַר עַל־לֵב only as it refers to the speech of one person to another (or others), I do not address its presence in 1 Sam 1:13 further.



translation, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. Steiner offers two different renderings—one in German and one in French—for the English statement “the child has been run over.” Steiner notes that

in the German phrasing, *das Kind is unter die Räder gekommen*, . . . the syntactic neutrality of *das Rad* together with the near-passivity of the verb form edges the onus of guilt towards the child. The wheels have not culpably ‘gone over it’; it is the child which has ‘come to be under them’. ‘Undergo’ would be inadmissible as a translation, but it in fact conveys the accusatory hint. *L’enfant s’est fait écraser* is even stronger in implicit blame. Any attempt at giving a naïve equivalence in English would generate a sense of volition: ‘the child has had itself run over’. The French idiom intends nothing so crass. But the nuance of indictment is there. . . . *Both the German and the French expression suggest the stance of the coachman or driver.*<sup>17</sup>

In a manner similar to way in which the phrasing of the German and French statements reflect the perspective of the driver in relation to the child, rendering עַל-לֵב in English with a positive adverb results in a translation which reflects the perspective of the speaker. This slants the interpretation of the text in his direction in a positive manner—if the speech is interpreted as having been given in a positive manner, which, in all of the translations cited from the NRSV, it is. The resultant slanting of the interpretation of the text in favor of the speaker may be due to the fact that the positive nature of the adverb which describes the speaker’s rhetorical approach redounds to his credit by associating his positive rhetorical approach with actual favorable qualities or feelings which he, as a result of the way in which he speaks, is perceived to have. Because of *how* he says what he says, he is perceived as a person whose actions can be counted on to be as positive as his words. The implication of this is that the recipient of his speech can, in fact, *be* receptive to what he has to say and can rely on him to be as good as his word. However, the speaker’s reliability is precisely what the victim of abuse cannot be sure of when her

<sup>17</sup> George Steiner, *After*, 321-322, the italics in English are mine.

abuser approaches her using tender speech as a means of persuading her to resume her relationship with him. In addition, by translating עַל־לֵב with an adverb, the speaker and his perspective are further emphasized by the elimination of the לֵב of the recipient in the translation in favor of characterizing the speaker’s oratorical efforts in a positive way. As was evident in Fewell and Gunn’s treatment of Gen 34, this can result in interpreters’ reaching the conclusion that the speech was *received* in the same spirit in which it ostensibly was delivered—when this is not indicated in the source text.<sup>18</sup> In sum, translating עַל־לֵב with a positive adverb implies a sanctioning of the speech depicted in this way—and of the speaker. This is an appropriate way to translate עַל־לֵב if the text makes it clear that the speaker and his recipients are of one mind. Then an adverb or some other verbal construction which reflects their accord adequately represents *the situation*. But, when this is not the case, then another translation is called for.

The solution to the problem, however, is not a so-called ‘literal’ translation. Translating דַּבֵּר עַל־לֵב as “speak to the heart” when it describes the speech of male to a female whom he has abused is not adequate because of the romantic associations in English with the word “heart” when used in connection with male-female relationships. As Patrick Graham notes, that, while research indicates “an emotive or affective element in some instances of the usage of לֵב/לִבָּב in the Hebrew Bible, it is the rational or volitional aspects that dominate.”<sup>19</sup> However, Graham further notes that, in spite of this, the emphasis on the rational and volitional aspects of לֵב/לִבָּב which is found in the usage in the MT “has been turned on its head in contemporary American . . . usage in which

<sup>18</sup> Noble (“A Balanced,” 179) notes that this is the case with Dinah. He states, “*pace* Fewell and Gunn, then, it appears that nothing can be inferred about how Dinah responded to Shechem’s expression of love.”

<sup>19</sup> Patrick Graham, “Setting the Heart to Seek God: Worship in 2 Chronicles 30.1-31,” in ed., M. Patrick, R. R. Marris, Steven L. McKenzie, *Worship and the Hebrew Bible: Essays n Honour of John T. Willis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 22, n. 40.

‘head’ (i.e. mind) is set in opposition to ‘heart’ (i.e. emotions/feeling).”<sup>20</sup> Since this is the nature of the interpretive environment in which the translation would be read, then a translation which underwrites the potentially untrustworthy approach of a male to a female whom he has abused should be avoided; that is, a translation which could be construed as in support of a possibly duplicitous romantic approach on his part should not be made. What is called-for, instead, is a translation which clarifies *what* he is doing, not one which emphasizes *how* he is doing it. *What* he is doing is “speaking to her, using persuasion.” *How* he does it should not be cast in a positive light, for this, as noted above, tends to cast *him* in a positive light, when *his actions* in the source text *portray him otherwise*.

Another possible solution to the problems associated with translating דָּבַר עַל־לֵב ‘literally’ or with an adverb in settings where there is male to female abuse is found in the way in which it is translated in 2 Sam 19:8 in the Douai and Confraternity versions of the Bible. Here, Joab’s instructions to David to “speak to the לֵב of [his] servants” is rendered, “speak to the satisfaction of your servants.” The advantages to this translation include the fact that English word “satisfaction” is readily associated with the concept of the לֵב in Biblical Hebrew. The satisfaction which is sought in connection with the לֵב is associated generally with the nourishment provided to the לֵב by food and drink, but, nonetheless, satisfying the לֵב in such a manner refers to addressing the interior of another human being—and that is the essence of what is occurring when someone speaks to the לֵב of another.<sup>21</sup> Thus, to render דָּבַר עַל־לֵב as “speak to the satisfaction of” is *to take into account that there is an interior world of perception and decision-making which belongs*

<sup>20</sup> Graham, “Setting,” 22, n. 40.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, the references in Judg 19 to the לֵב of the Levite have to do with his “strengthening his לֵב” with food (vv. 5, 8) and “being in good spirits” from imbibing spirits (vv. 6, 9, 22).

to another person, which the speaker addresses with the intention of bringing the interior world of the other into alignment with his own. As a result, this rendering keeps in view the actual social dynamics in play when one is “speaking to the heart” of another—rather than reducing the לֵב of the other person to a mere adverb which denotes the oratorical style of the speaker. However, once again, if translating דִּבֶּר עַל־לֵב in this way would contribute to the perception that the speaker actually *had* spoken to the satisfaction of his recipient(s) when this is not apparent within the scene of the speech act itself, then this is not an accurate rendering of the tentative nature of the relational dynamics reflected in the use of דִּבֶּר עַל־לֵב in this particular setting. *Pace* Fewell and Gunn, דִּבֶּר עַל־לֵב does not refer to a successful perlocutionary act—only an *attempted* one—and this relational reality needs to be preserved in the translation, *in order to keep both parties to the speech act in view*.

When one “speaks to” another person or persons, “using persuasion,” rhetorical pressure is applied by the speaker on the recipient(s) of the speech. While most speech acts may, in some sense, be regarded as an attempt to persuade others—of one’s presence, if nothing else—some speech acts are couched in a language and style which are definitely intended to be more persuasive than others.<sup>22</sup> Seductive speech is that kind of speech act. As representative of a particular mode of persuasion, however, seductive speech does not represent all uses of דִּבֶּר עַל־לֵב, as Fabry’s analysis seems to suggest. A review of the occurrences of דִּבֶּר עַל־לֵב in the MT reveals that there are different ways to “seek to persuade” another person or other persons. The goal of each individual speaker can be discerned only by examining each of the texts in which דִּבֶּר עַל־לֵב is found.

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<sup>22</sup> Possible examples of non-forcible speech are polite speech or speech that is merely an exchange of pleasantries.

### Genesis 50:21

דָּבַר עַל־לֵב appears in Gen 50:21 as a representation of Joseph's attempt to persuade his brothers that now that their father was dead, they had nothing to fear from him: he would still continue to provide for them and their little ones. Because of their anxiety, Joseph's brothers had sent him message, appealing to him "to forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Their concerns were fueled by a complex mixture of guilt due to their remembrance of their betrayal of their brother and fear due to their awareness of the ways in which Joseph made use of his extensive power.<sup>23</sup> Not only had he used his power to trick and terrorize them when they first had come to Egypt for aid, but since then he had made use of the famine to establish a one-fifth tax on all the populace of Egypt. Now this viceroy of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh in command—their brother, whom they had sold into slavery—had complete control over them, with no one to intervene on their behalf. They were so frightened by this situation that, after sending Joseph this message, they then approached him themselves, weeping and falling down before him and declaring themselves to be his slaves: actions and words which indicate the extent of their fright.

As the most powerful man in Egypt next to Pharaoh, what interest would Joseph have in "reassuring" (נִחַם) his brothers and seeking to change their perception (דָּבַר עַל־לֵב) of the situation they are in? For Joseph, the continuation of his extended family in

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<sup>23</sup> That these prior actions have an influence on the present moment is made evident by the specific reference to them in vv. 15-17. It is their betrayal of him that Joseph and his brothers talk about. Much earlier when he first had revealed himself to them, he had absolved them of their crime ("Do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here [Gen 45:5, NRSV]. . . . It was not you who sent me here, but God" [Gen 45:8, NRSV], but this time he does not: "*you* intended harm; God intended good." There is no ׀ joining these two statements by Joseph.

Goshen makes sense of his suffering—of the fact that his brothers had hated him so intensely that they nearly had murdered him. Now that they were there with him and they needed his care and protection, Joseph could see that it all had happened for a reason. They had harmed him, (yet)<sup>24</sup> “God intended good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today” (v. 20). Another, more concrete reason, for Joseph’s interest in maintaining his relationship with his brothers can be seen in his deathbed request of them: that they see to the return of his remains to Canaan for burial. The fact that his brothers are present at his side as he is dying indicates that, in the years between his speech to his brothers as ‘recorded’ in vv.15-17 and the end of his life, Joseph had lived up to his word to continue to look after them and their families as he had said he would.<sup>25</sup> However, there is nothing within the scene of the speech-making itself that indicates that Joseph’s terrified brothers were convinced instantaneously by what Joseph said to them that he actually would do as he said. After his speech to them, no response on the part of the brothers is recorded. The sense of the scene is that Joseph’s words have been met with a sort of stunned silence which only the ‘realia’ of their shared future would fill with the content of belief and acceptance.<sup>26</sup> To translate עֲלֵי־לֵב דָּבַר in a way which could contribute to the assumption that Joseph’s brothers were convinced immediately by his reassurances and persuasive speech to them is to *translate the situation* in favor Joseph’s rhetorical efforts at the expense of his brothers; that is, it does not take them and their

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<sup>24</sup> There is no copula at this point in this verse; in other words, there is no direct connection made in the text itself between Joseph’s brothers’ crime against him and God’s good intentions.

<sup>25</sup> After the scene of Joseph’s speech to his brothers closes, the text next states that “Joseph stayed in Egypt, he and his father’s household; and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. Joseph saw Ephraim’s children of the third generation; the children of Machir son of Manasseh were also born on Joseph’s’ knees” (vv. 22-23). There is a sense of the passage of time in these verses.

<sup>26</sup> That Gabriel Josipovici (*The Book of God* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988], 79) views this scene in the same way can be seen in his question in relation to Joseph’s brothers: “Is it not possible to read in their silence something other than total acquiescence in Joseph’s mood?”

misgivings into account. Thus, to translate דִּבֶּר עַל־לֵב as “he spoke kindly” to them could contribute to the assumption that his kind approach convinced them then and there of his good will toward them, when this is not indicated in the text. It is to identify with the speaker in the text instead of translating in a way which *takes into account the reality of both parties to the speech act*: one is attempting to persuade; the other is to be persuaded. If it is not clear within the setting of the speech act itself that the persuasion desired by the speaker has taken place, then a translation which focuses on the desires of the speaker by translating in line with his rhetorical approach does not take into account the reality of the recipients of the speech.

### **Ruth 2:13**

When דִּבֶּר עַל־לֵב is used in the Book of Ruth, it is also at a point in the narrative when *the impress of past actions is brought to bear on the present moment*. When Ruth asks Boaz why he has been so kind to her in encouraging her to continue to glean in his field for the rest of the harvest, in assuring her protection from the young men who work there, and in inviting her to quench her thirst with the water which he provides for his workers, he replies that he is aware of all that she had done for her mother-in-law since both of the women had been bereaved of their husbands. Ruth’s prior courage and commitment in leaving her “father and mother and her native land to come to a people [she] did not know before” (2:11) will find recompense today in Boaz’s field, a field in which, as Boaz fully knows, she has been working “from early this morning . . . without resting for a moment” (v. 7b). That Boaz is impressed with Ruth is evident not only in what he says to her but also in what he does for her.<sup>27</sup> Boaz’s interest in speaking to

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<sup>27</sup> After Ruth assures Boaz that he has “spoken to her satisfaction,” at mealtime he invites her to partake of the food and drink provided: he heaps up parched grain in front of her and Ruth eats until she *is satisfied*

Ruth's satisfaction is *Ruth*. Ruth is aware of this and she wants him to know that she is aware of his interest in her, so she conveys to him that he has made an good impression on her too. She lets him know this by telling him that his kind words and deeds have encouraged (נִנְחָם) her and "reassured her": "spoken to her heart;" that is, she tells him that he has succeeded in doing what men want to do when they attempt to speak to a woman's satisfaction.<sup>28</sup> Since Boaz's having spoken successfully to Ruth's satisfaction is verified in the text by the recipient of his speech herself, then a translation which reflects that the speech has had its desired effect is appropriate—in contrast to the representation of Joseph's approach to his brothers, in which the translation needs to take into account the apparent lack of an immediate response on the part of Joseph's brothers.

### **2 Chronicles 30:22**

In 2 Chr 30:22, Hezekiah "speaks to the heart" of all the Levites in order to encourage them to carry on with their work in connection with the Great Passover, which included having to slaughter a passover lamb for everyone who was not ritually prepared to participate in the festival (of whom there were many) (v.17). The Levites act as well as leaders in the daily worship (v. 21). Hezekiah's interest in the success of the Great Passover, as presented by the Chronicler, is clear. He wishes to unite the subjected remnant of the north in terms of their religious practice with the still independent Judahites around the temple in Jerusalem. The work of the Levites is central to the

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and even has some left over. When she returned to her gleaning, Boaz instructed the young men in charge to allow her to glean from the grain that already had been bound and to even pull out a few sheaves for her to 'find.' Boaz is looking out for Ruth.

<sup>28</sup> I translate this as "you have encouraged me and reassured your servant," because to have Ruth say in English, "you have spoken to the satisfaction of your servant" would sound uppity of her.



success of the means by which he has chosen to do this—the Great Passover—so they must be encouraged to keep at it.<sup>29</sup> The content of Hezekiah’s speech to the Levites is not given, but that he was successful in encouraging them to continue at their tasks is indicated by the fact that the festival went on for a full fourteen days—seven days longer than originally planned (v. 23). Thus, the NRSV translation for 2 Chr 30:22 *fits the situation* portrayed in the text: “Hezekiah spoke *encouragingly* to all the Levites who showed good skill in the service of the LORD. So they ate the food of the festival for seven days, sacrificing offerings of well-being and giving thanks to the LORD the God of their ancestors” (v. 22). The positive adverb is appropriate here because the text makes it clear that Hezekiah’s desire to persuade the Levites about the importance of what they were doing was, in fact, fulfilled. Therefore, the implication in the positive adverb “encouragingly” that the speaker’s speech was positive in content and tone and was successful in its effect is not off the mark in terms of this context in which דָּבַר עֲלֵי־לֵב is used.

### **2 Chronicles 32:6**

In 2 Chr 32:6, the NRSV also describes Hezekiah as “speaking encouragingly” to his commanders in Jerusalem. Once again, this translation fits the situation depicted in the text. When Hezekiah speaks encouragingly to his commanders, his speech is made in the context of his preparation of the city for the Assyrian assault. He has cut off water sources that the enemy could make use of; he has rebuilt the city’s fortifications; and he has “made weapons and shields in abundance and appointed combat commanders over the people” (vv. 5-6). It is after he has exhibited his commitment to the well-being of his people *in concrete acts* that he speaks to his commanders and they “take confidence in

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<sup>29</sup> One emphasis of the Chronicler is the importance of the Levites.

his words” (v. 8b). They rightly conclude—not on the basis of his words alone, but on the basis of what he has *done*—that he has their best interests at heart and that he knows what to do in order to secure their safety. The implication is that his speech persuades because *his acts* have shown him to be a king who desires to protect them and he knows how to go about doing it. Once again *the impress of prior actions* has a bearing on the impress of the words spoken, bringing Hezekiah and the recipients of his speech into alignment with each other. The positive adverb “encouragingly” appropriately reflects that situation.

### **Hosea 2:16**

In 2 Chr 32, the fact that the interests of the speaker and the recipients of his speech are shared is obvious to all concerned. They want to avoid the suffering that the destruction of their city at the hands of the Assyrians would bring on all of them and their families. In Hos 2:16 and following, in contrast to this, the LORD must convince Israel that their destiny once again should be a shared one. That Israel might be hesitant to return to one who had abused her so extensively is evidenced by the fact that the LORD feels that he must coax (פְּתַהּ) her to return to the wilderness, the site of their ‘honeymoon’ (v. 17b), and there “speak to her, using persuasion.” As in the case of Joseph’s brothers, Israel’s uncertainty about the reliability of this powerful One who had abused her so excessively should not be covered over in the translation. As I noted above, to translate כָּבַד עַל־לֵב as “tenderly” is to translate from the perspective of the abusive husband. This *is* a mode of persuasion used by abusers—they want to get their way, after all. But whether or not there truly are tender feelings behind their rhetorical approach is what the recipient of the speech cannot be sure of. Therefore, *a translation which reflects what he is doing—and not merely the mode by which he is doing it—is a translation which better reflects*

*the position of both participants in the speech act.* He is “speaking to her, using persuasion;” she may or may not *be* persuaded.

This is especially important in a text like Hosea 2, in which it is difficult to discern that in the renewed relationship the wife/Israel has any mind of her own. This is the case, because after she is “punish[ed] for the festival days of the Baals” (v. 15a), it is extremely hard to *see* her. While the wife is described throughout Hosea 2 by the angry husband—so that the description of her reflects his anger—after the independence of her following her own desires is taken from her, she is even harder to see. She is covered over by his intentions and his speech. His intentions are that, once they have returned to their honeymoon site, “she shall respond as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt” (v.17b) and she will call him, “My husband,” not “My Baal,” for he intends to “remove the names of the Baals from her mouth” (v. 19). He promises her that this renewed relationship will include land and vineyards(v.17a), harmony with the animal world and an end to war (v. 18) and that she will be his wife forever—in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in compassion and in faithfulness (vv. 19-20). It is going to be so great, how could she resist? Because, as Fabry notes, at the heart of the heart is memory<sup>30</sup> and the *prior abusive actions* of the husband/LORD which she remembers all too well do not bode well for his actually living up to his promise that their future together will be characterized by compassion.

In fact, the way in which the husband/LORD is depicted in Hosea 2 is a classic depiction of the behavior of an abuser. In the relationship between an abuser and his victim, the victim is not taken into account in her personhood. What Gravett says about

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<sup>30</sup> Fabry (*TDOT* 7: 421) refers to the heart “as the seat of memory” and cites passages which “suggest an alert and fervent act of recollection,” which takes place in the heart.

Shechem's post-rape relationship to Dinah can be said about the post-abuse situation of the wife/Israel: she remains merely an object upon whom the husband/LORD acts out his desires.<sup>31</sup> The husband's campaign to win her back arises out of his bruised ego ("Me—she forgot!" [v. 15b]) and out of his need for her. This is evident in the text, for there is an abrupt switch from these words which bring his angry diatribe against her to an end—"Me—she forgot"—and the launching of his reunification campaign; that is, there is no sign in the text that he does not continue to speak out of his bruised ego and angry, hurt feelings.

The campaign undertaken by the LORD/husband mirrors with alarming exactness the approach of the abuser who attempts to control his victim's interpretation of the abuse.<sup>32</sup> There is no acknowledgement on his part of wrong done—just as with Cain, who never acknowledges his crime or the damage he has done, but instead stays focused on himself.<sup>33</sup> The husband/God promises her the moon (a completely harmonious relationship to the animal world and the end of war) if only she will reunite with him, but *he* sets all the terms: she *shall* respond, you *will* call me, you *will no longer* call me. This, too, corresponds to the behavior of abusive husbands, whose "wishes must invariably prevail against the claims of others. . . . Women [are] required to agree with their husbands. . . ."

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<sup>31</sup> See Chapter 1, pp. 21-22.

<sup>32</sup> That abusers attempt to control their victim's interpretation of the abuse is the conclusion of sociologists R. P. Dobash, R. E. Dobash, Kate Cavanagh, and Ruth Lewis ("Separate and Intersecting Realities: A Comparison of Men's and Women's Accounts of Violence Against Women" [*Violence Against Women*, vol. 4, no. 4, Aug 1998], 382). This interpretation of the behavior of abusive husbands who wish to reunite with an estranged wife is based on Erving Goffman's concept of "remedial work." "Remedial work" refers to strategies of damage control employed by someone who has lost ground in a relationship. According to these sociologists, in the case of abusers, too often their tender speech is the means by which they attempt "not only to neutralize and eradicate women's experience of abuse but also to control the ways in which women might themselves interpret and respond to the violence."

<sup>33</sup> Researchers of wife abuse R. P. and R. E. Dobash (*Violence Against Wives: A case Against the Patriarchy* [New York: Free Press, 1979], 117) note that the abusive husbands in their studies "rarely expressed any remorse or regret."

If they [do] not, they might be summarily silenced through the use of force.”<sup>34</sup>

No wonder it is hard to *see* the wife in Hos 2:16-25 as an individual with a wit and a will of her own. But she *is* there—somewhere beneath all of his intentions, all of his rhetoric, all of his instructions, and her wondering, worried, war-wracked presence needs to be taken into account in a translation that is not stacked in his favor by translating this event in terms of his admittedly duplicitous approach to her (Hos 2:16). What is sparked in such a translation is only one intertextuality: that of the abusive husband.<sup>35</sup> What is lost in this translation is the experience of the abused wife Israel.

### **Isaiah 40:2**

It is in the Book of Lamentations that the experience of the abused wife comes into view. The husband/wife metaphor is not part of the poem’s rhetoric, but the ruined city Jerusalem is depicted as female and her plight as a victim of war is graphically rehearsed as the poem unfolds. As such, the abuse suffered by Lady Jerusalem mirrors the abuse laid out in Hosea 2, which reflects the results of warfare: the ruination of crops, the return to the wild of uncultivated fields, the loss of property, and women being subjected to the horrors of gang-rape—all of these realities of real war were ways in which, according to Hosea, the LORD/husband punished his wayward wife, Israel. Now in Lamentations, Lady Jerusalem, having suffered similar abuse, cries out to the LORD, “Look, O LORD, and consider to whom you have done this!” (2:20).<sup>36</sup> Michael

Thompson’s observation that the Book of Lamentations “reflects the situation and feeling

<sup>34</sup> Dobash and Dobash. *Violence*, 102-105.

<sup>35</sup> For the concept of “Sparking intertextuality,” see Chapter 7, pp. 350-351.

<sup>36</sup> It is important to note that in the Book of Lamentations, the poet accepts the prophetic condemnation of the people for their sins; that is, that they have suffered destruction at the hand of the enemy because of their sins. In Lamentations, they are sorry for these sins. If Lady Jerusalem is seen as the abused wife, then she also would need to be seen as accepting of the part she played in the brokenness of the relationship—which, nonetheless, would not justify the kind of abusive response on the part of the husband/LORD imagined in the parts of the prophetic corpus which make use of the marriage metaphor.

of devastation on the part of the people of Jerusalem at the time of the fall of their city to the Babylonians . . . and their complaint was that ‘she [had] no one to bring her comfort’ (Lam. 1:2; cf. vv. 9, 16f., 21)<sup>37</sup> indicates that in the Book of Lamentations there is a continuation of the identification made in the prophetic corpus of the people with the city-wives of the LORD. When Thompson’s observation is combined with Christopher North’s observation that “the figure of Jerusalem as Yahweh’s bride is clear in [Isa] liv. 1-8,”<sup>38</sup> then it is possible to see a conflation between the figure of Lady Jerusalem in Lamentations and the Jerusalem addressed in Isa 40-55;<sup>39</sup> that is, the words of comfort which God commands be conveyed to Jerusalem are to be declared to this selfsame Lady Jerusalem who, forty years before, “had cried forlornly, ‘None comforts me’.”<sup>40</sup>

As North notes, in Isa 54:5, the LORD specifically identifies himself as Jerusalem’s husband. This verse is part of what John Sawyer interprets as the LORD/husband’s apology to Jerusalem for overreacting to her unfaithfulness (in v. 8, the LORD/husband declares “in *overflowing*<sup>41</sup> wrath for a moment I hid my face from you” [Isa 54: 8]). Sawyer reads vv. 5-8 in the following way:

the Holy One of Israel . . . God of all the earth is represented as behaving like a remorseful husband, pleading with his wife to trust him. . . . [These verses] . . . are apologetic in tone: ‘it was just for a moment—I lost my temper . . . I won’t do it again . . . I love you. She is physically weaker than he is and socially dependent on him. He has

<sup>37</sup> Michael Thompson, *Isaiah 40-66*. London: Epworth Press (2001), 4.

<sup>38</sup> Christopher North, *The Second Isaiah: Introduction, translation and commentary to Chapters XL-LV.*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press (1964), 73.

<sup>39</sup> North, (*The Second*, 74) notes the conflation in II Isaiah of ‘Jerusalem’ not only with ‘my people,’ but also with ‘Israel.’

<sup>40</sup> North, *The Second*, 72 (*’ên m’nahhēm lî*, Lam. i. 2,9, 16f, 21)

<sup>41</sup> This adjective (construct state in Biblical Hebrew) aptly replicates the overflowing of the flood waters in the days of Noah, which the prophet invokes in the next verse. It also reflects the idea of the excessiveness of Jerusalem’s suffering as invoked in the second verse of II Isa, v. 40: 2, in which Jerusalem’s comforters are commanded to acknowledge that “she has received from the LORD’s hand *double* for all of her sins.” The LORD actually is identified as the abuser in Isa 40:2, since it is his hand that is described as having delivered the punishing blows to Jerusalem.

. . . the power to punish, humiliate and abuse her. So he *has to convince her* that he really loves her and that she can trust him;<sup>42</sup>

that is, he has to convince her that he will not abuse her again. In order to do this, the prophet invokes “the days of Noah” (v. 9) and says to “the grandchildren of those whom his predecessors had castigated so severely.”<sup>43</sup>

Just as I swore that the waters of Noah would never again go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you and will not rebuke you. For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you (vv. 9-10);

that is, as firm as my promise was after the flood to never respond in this way again to human sinfulness (Gen 8: 21-22), that is how firm my promise is to *you* now: never again will I respond to any waywardness on *your* part in the way in which I responded to the waywardness of your ancestors.

Thompson notes this difference in the tone and message of II Isaiah from the messages of prior prophets. He remarks “that unlike so much else in the books of the prophets . . . it is striking that [II Isaiah] begin[s] on the note of comfort.”<sup>44</sup> He also notes that not only is “comfort” the initial word in II Isaiah, it also “occurs with some regularity in the second part of the book of Isaiah,”<sup>45</sup> the last reference being found in 66:13, where a threefold use of the word “comfort” represents the last effort in the book to note the

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<sup>42</sup> John F. A. Sawyer, “Daughter of Zion and Servant of the Lord in Isaiah: A Comparison,” *JSOT* 44 (1989), 95-95, italics mine.

<sup>43</sup> North, *The Second*, 73.

<sup>44</sup> Thompson, *Isaiah*, 3.

<sup>45</sup> Thompson, *Isaiah*, 4. He notes that declarations of comfort are repeated in 49.13; 51.3, 12, 19; 52.9; 61.2; 66.13.

abundance of comfort<sup>46</sup> which to the LORD had extended to Jerusalem in response to the excessive punishment which she had “received from the LORD’s hand” (Isa 40:2).<sup>47</sup>

Thompson sees the initial word of comfort in II Isaiah as the declaration by the comforters that Jerusalem’s “*term of bondage is served.*”<sup>48</sup> What follows on this, according to him, is a declaration of the “joyous consequences of this . . . [which] will be made clear in the chapters that follow.”<sup>49</sup> Thus, according to Thompson’s construction of Isa 40-55, these chapters can be construed as the LORD “speaking to” Jerusalem and “using persuasion” in order to convince her to resume their relationship. Unlike in Hosea 2, there is recognition in II Isaiah of the excessiveness of the punishment which Jerusalem had endured, an apology made for that, and a promise of restoration based not on a rose-colored remembrance of their past relationship,<sup>50</sup> but on the reliable promise of a different future. On the basis of that firm promise, God and Israel resumed their shared destiny.

### **2 Samuel 19:8**

As surely as the prophet II Isaiah needed to speak convincingly to the exiles in Babylon about the reliability of their God, so, too, did David need to speak to his troops convincingly in order to convey to them his gratitude for their saving his kingdom for him. The urgency of David’s need to do this is conveyed to him by Joab, who tells the king in no uncertain terms that he “must go at once and speak to the satisfaction of [his]

<sup>46</sup> It is noted in *HALOT* that נחם does not represent sympathizing with someone, but, rather, it represents encouraging another.

<sup>47</sup> Thompson (*Isaiah*, 174) sees the threefold use of the word “comfort” in this verse as the author of III Isaiah taking up “a major theme of chs 40-55.”

<sup>48</sup> Thompson, *Isaiah*, 5, italics his.

<sup>49</sup> Thompson, *Isaiah*, 5.

<sup>50</sup> In Hos 2: 17, the prophet declares that, when the LORD lures Israel into the wilderness, she will “respond as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt.” The prophet either did not know the traditions about the people’s rebelliousness or he chose to ignore them for the sake of his argument.



servants,” for, if he did not—Joab swears by the LORD—“not a man will stay with you this night; and this will be worse for you than any disaster that has come upon you from your youth until now.” David needed to do this, because his troops had been put off by his excessive public mourning for Absalom—which he engaged in instead of praising them for having brought that death about and thereby saving his kingdom for him. In response to Joab’s admonition, David took his seat in the gate, in this way symbolically reclaiming his kingship. The word went out among his troops that the king was seated at the gate and they gathered before him, but his actually speaking to them is not recorded in the text. Instead, v. 9 ends with the information that “Israel fled each man to his own home.” Since those who had fled are depicted in vv. 10-11 discussing among themselves the facts of their situation (that David *had* “delivered [them] from the hand of their enemy and saved [them] from the hand of the Philistines and Absalom, whom [they] had anointed over them was dead”) and coming to the conclusion that David should be their king, then those who had fled were those who had rebelled. As for those who had remained loyal to David, he apparently had spoken to their satisfaction, for once the rebels are seen to be again in David’s camp, the narrative in 2 Sam 19 turns to the details of actually returning the king to Jerusalem.

### **Judges 19:3**

As the narrative in Judg 19 opens, the Levite is described as going to the home of his *pilegish’s* father, the place to which she had gone upon leaving him, in order to “speak to her satisfaction” and, by doing so, to “cause her to come back” to him (v. 3). However, once the Levite reaches his destination, it is *his* בֶּן־לֵוִי which gets the attention (in

vv. 5, 6, 8, 9)<sup>51</sup> and whether or not he actually attempts to speak to the satisfaction of his *pilegesh* is unknown. However, it is, as the narrative makes clear, not necessary for him to speak to her satisfaction in order “to cause her to come back” (v. 3). The fact that she is his and not her father’s is reason enough for the Levite to depart with her when he finally decides to do so. Thus דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in Judges 19 can be seen as a description of a proforma kind of speech. It describes what a man did with a woman he had abused in order to smooth things over and restore the relationship to its prior status. As such, עַל־לֵב דָּבַר functions merely as a description of the Levite as an abusive man. That he was an abuser is indicated by the callous disregard he shows for his *pilegesh* after she has left her father’s home and she is in his hands alone. When the mob gathers around the door of house of his host in Gibeah, where he and his party have settled in for the night, in order to save himself, the Levite pushes her out of the door and into the hands of the vicious mob who rape and abuse her all night. After abandoning her to this fate, the Levite apparently believed that he would not see her again. That this is the case is indicated by his surprise upon finding her lying at the threshold of his host’s house the next morning as he prepares to go on his way.<sup>52</sup> When he sees her lying there, he does not rush to her aid, but merely says, “Get up. Let’s go.” When she does not respond, he loads her on his ass, takes her home and cuts up her body. He then sends her body parts out to the tribes of Israel as a call to arms. Thus the way in which the Levite actually *does* speak to his *pilegesh* and the way in which he treats her indicates that דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in this text does not represent a genuine desire on the part of the Levite to speak to the satisfaction of his

<sup>51</sup> And at the home of his host in Gibeah (v. 22).

<sup>52</sup> His surprise is indicated by הֵנִיחָהּ in the text just at the moment he sees her.

*pilegesh*. Comparison to the way in which Boaz treats Ruth and speaks to her helps to clarify that this is the case.

That, in Judges 19, דָּבַר עַל־לֵב functions as a description of how an abusive man ‘handles’ a woman he has abused can be seen by comparing Judges 19 to Hosea 2, because the supposed desire of the Levite “to speak to his *pilegesh*’s satisfaction in order to cause her to come back to him” is the same goal that the abusive LORD/husband has: he plans to entice his estranged wife Israel into the wilderness, the site of the early halcyon days of their relationship (according to Hosea), and, once there, to use persuasive speech in order “to cause her to come back” to him.<sup>53</sup> However, since in Judges 19, it is clear that the Levite’s speech is not necessary in order for him to get his *pilegesh* back, then in דָּבַר עַל־לֵב this text can be seen just as part of the description of the Levite as an abuser.

### **Genesis 34:3**

In Gen 34, דָּבַר עַל־לֵב functions the same way in which it functions in Judges 19—as part of the description of the abusive man in the picture. This is the case in both texts, because, whether or not the abuser speaks to the female he has abused—or what he says to her, if he does speak to her—has nothing to do with the *ability* of either man to pursue and/or obtain his goal. That this is the case can be seen in the fact that, just as the Levite’ speaking to the satisfaction of his *pilegesh* (or not) has no bearing on his ability to “cause her to come back” with him, any response Dinah might have to Shechem’s “speaking to her, using persuasion” has no bearing on whether or not he can marry her. Since Shechem’s effort to secure his hold on Dinah via arranging his marriage to her is

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<sup>53</sup> However, his speech alternates between persuasive pictures of the wonderful world he is going to create for her and his commands as to how she *will* respond to his efforts to reunite with her (Hos 2: 17-25). Thus the speech of the LORD/husband in Hosea 2:17-25 alternates between persuasion and dictation.

the next action he takes after he “speaks to” her, “using persuasion,” and since his speech to her has no bearing on whether or not he can proceed to do that, then דָּבַר עַל־לֵב functions as part of the description of Shechem similarly to the way in which it functions as part of the description of the Levite. This is what abusive men do.

However, there is a difference between the depiction of the Levite and the depiction of Shechem. A *motive* is given for the Levite’s intention to “speak to” his *pilegesh*, “using persuasion.” As noted above, it is the same motive as that of the LORD/husband in Hosea 2: “to cause her to come back.” Thus, if the Levite did speak to his *pilegesh*, then it is safe to assume that he would have used the same kind of persuasive speech that the LORD/husband is depicted as using. Thus the use of דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in Judges 19 represents the speech of an abusive man who is trying to ‘handle’ the woman he has abused by persuading her via the use of glorious promises to return to him. In contrast to this, no motive is given for Shechem’s reason for “speaking to” the girl, “using persuasion.” Neither is the content of Shechem’s speech ‘quoted,’ as it is in some places where דָּבַר עַל־לֵב is used. In this way, the use of דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in Genesis 34 is the same as its use in 2 Chronicles 30. In 2 Chr 30, there is no motive given for Hezekiah’s “speaking to” the Levites, “using persuasion” either. Nor is the content of his speech given. In both Genesis 34 and in 2 Chronicles 30, then, the motive for the speaker’s speaking to his chosen recipient(s) and the ‘content’ of what he says must be discerned from the text itself. Here, again it is important to keep in mind Barr’s insistence that the context of a word’s usage have some basis in the text for the claims that an interpreter makes for its meaning in that setting.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 19, n. 61.

I argued above that translating the use of דָּבַר עֲלֵי־לֵב as Hezekiah speaking “encouragingly” to the Levites adequately reflects the *situation* in 2 Chr 30:22, because the use of this adverb does not obliterate the interests of the Levites. That they were uplifted by what the king had to say to them is evident in the text<sup>55</sup>—in that they were enabled to carry on with their heavy work load. This in itself indicates that what Hezekiah had to say to them was positive—encouraging—but that he would speak to them in a positive way also is indicated by the overall depiction of Hezekiah in 2 Chronicles. He is a good king, with laudatory goals, who is dedicated to the well-being of his people. So, even if he speaks out of a desire to achieve his own goals (as all “speakers to the heart” of another or others do), what satisfies him is the well-being of those whom he addresses. The same cannot be said for Shechem’s speech to Dinah. In a text which depicts rape and sexual obsession, then Shechem’s motive for speaking to “the girl” cannot be any more positive than the motives for Amnon’s speech and behavior in a text which depicts the same thing. In both of these texts, the speech and actions of the prince and the son of the chief of the land are undertaken in order to achieve their own satisfaction at the expense of others. In 2 Samuel 13, Amnon’s motive is clear: he wishes to have sex with Tamar and will even rape her if that is what it takes in order to accomplish his goal. In Genesis 34, Shechem’s motive for “speaking to” Dinah, “using persuasion,” arises out of the perverse desire which her traumatized response to him has aroused. She is his to abuse, so he does so. As such, she ‘completes’ the situation *for him*.

A review of Gen 34:2-3 helps to underscore this reality about the depiction of Shechem “speaking to the girl, using persuasion.” Verses 2 and 3 function together as a

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<sup>55</sup> In this way, this text resembles Ruth 2:13, but instead of the Levites *telling* Hezekiah that his speech has encouraged them, it is evident in their behavior.

description of Shechem. First, in v. 2, Shechem's actions against Dinah are reported: his seeing her, his taking her, and his raping her. Then, in v. 3, his response to her response to him is described: his appetite clings to her, he craves her, and he sets about to let her know just what her situation is now in order further to mold that situation to his liking.<sup>56</sup> In this way, v. 3 corresponds with v. 2, in that there are three verbs in v. 2 which describe what Shechem did to Dinah and then three verbs in v. 3 which describe the result of his actions *in terms of Shechem*. The third of these six verbs is the pivotal one—וייענה—which describes Dinah's response to being raped by Shechem. וייענה describes the condition—her traumatization—which ignited Shechem's obsession with her. It thus sets the stage for the second half of the description of Shechem in v. 3: the description of his obsession with her. Dinah's satisfaction has nothing to do with anything that Shechem is doing. Instead, his speech is undertaken for *his* satisfaction. However, this does not mean that it had no effect on Dinah. A speech made to the לֵב of another is undertaken to have an effect on that person. Therefore, eliciting the desired response from Dinah is what creates *Shechem's satisfaction* with the situation. That he is satisfied is evidenced by the fact that the next move he makes is to seek to maintain his control over Dinah by marrying her. Thus the use of דָּבַר עַל־לֵב in Genesis 34 furthers the plot: it not only is part of the depiction of the kind of man who has Dinah in his possession, thus contributing to Jacob's motivation to get her away from him, but it also is part of the representation of the conditions which created Shechem's desire to maintain his control over Dinah.

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. Josef Fritzl's reminding Elisabeth that she was completely in his control: that she had no means of escape; that her life was completely in his hands: something which she undoubtedly was well aware of. After she began bearing his children, then he would remind her that this was true about them as well. He perceived himself as "kind" to them, "because he could have killed them and he did not," *The Longest Night*. See Appendix 1, p.

### **The perpetuation of the perception of Shechem as a rapist/lover in lexicons**

A review of the uses of דבר על-לב in the MT reveals that unilaterally translating this idiom with a positive adverb does not reflect accurately what is represented in the biblical text at each place in which דבר על-לב appears. Nonetheless, this is the sort of gloss which is recommended in both *BDB* and *HALOT*, two widely used lexicons. *BDB* cites all occurrences and gives the translation of “speak upon the heart,” followed by these glosses: “speak kindly, comfort.”<sup>57</sup> *HALOT* provides two glosses: “to speak kindly to,” followed by citations of Gen 34:3, Is 40:2 and Ruth 2:13 as examples of this meaning, and “to speak appreciatively,” followed by the citation of 2 Chr 30:22 as an example of this meaning.<sup>58</sup> Both of these lexicons promote an image of Shechem’s post-rape ‘kindness’ to Dinah. Even if an interpreter does not adopt one of the glosses given in the lexicon, the glosses provided most likely will influence the direction of that interpreter’s thinking.

### **Rending the veil—and reweaving it**

My review of the image of Shechem perpetuated in authoritative guides to the Bible reveals that the concerted opinion of authorized knowledge is so tightly interwoven into the fabric of the interpretation of Genesis 34 that the chance of creating a rent in the veil of this authorized knowledge is hindered by the means by which this knowledge has been and is formulated. I refer to the veil in the temple which concealed the holiness of God from human eyes in order to indicate that the means used to establish authorized knowledge of the biblical text conceals the holiness at the heart of human suffering by

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<sup>57</sup> *BDB*, “דבר,” 181.

<sup>58</sup> *Halot*, “דבר,” 1:210.

barring access to it.<sup>59</sup> If interpreters are to see and touch and transfer to its recipients the holiness which grants this sacred text its title in English, then something additional is needed in the way of analyzing the texts which constitute The Holy Bible.

In Chapter 1, I suggested that the additional element which is needed is narrative—the form in which the biblical text itself is cast.<sup>60</sup> The intent of including narrative as part of the method of analyzing biblical texts is to interrupt the dialogue between prescribed authorities as they search primarily in conversation with each other for the spirit of truth and reality which wafts elusively through the pages of this ancient text bearing on its breath ever-new vitality. These authorities would have to stop talking to each other long enough to listen to and for voices other than their own, voices telling stories which they have not heard before. Incorporating narrative as part of the interpretation of this sacred text which tells the story of being human under the impress of a holy God is ‘of the essence’ of being human. It also is ‘of the essence’ of the interpretation of the biblical text—because both understanding and being human are characterized by more than just a dialogic approach to life and learning. Rather, “the self suggests . . . a “novelistic” entity—defined by some necessary narrative orientation to others.”<sup>61</sup> Not only does the self require narrative in order to live,<sup>62</sup> but those who are other to the self require the self’s narration in order to understand.

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<sup>59</sup> Aaron (“A Handful,” 174), quoting her mother in the midst of their suffering in Maidenek, describes this holiness. According to Aaron, her mother said, “[I]f we survive, and our truth is revealed and believed, others will want to touch us, for our suffering has sanctified us, rendered us inviolable.” That such suffering does not go unacknowledged by the Holy One is affirmed by the psalmist, who declares “You have kept count of my tossings, put my tears in your flask. Are they not in your record?” (Ps 56:8, NRSV).

<sup>60</sup> Tamara Cohn Eshkenazi (“Torah as Narrative and Narrative as Torah” in *Old Testament Interpretation : Past, Present, and Future*, ed. J. L. Mays, D. L. Petersen, K. H. Richards [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995], 18) observes that “Torah casts reality as narrative and presents knowledge as a process that unfolds in time.”

<sup>61</sup> Adam Zachary Newton, *Narrative Ethics*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, (1995), 48.



In terms of interpretive method, what the incorporation of narrative as part of the analysis of biblical texts is meant to accomplish is a calling to account of the Said by the Saying.<sup>63</sup> The terminology of “Said” and “Saying” is Emmanuel Levinas’s, as deployed by Newton in his discussion of narrative ethics. According to Newton, the “Said” is “a proposition” and a “Saying” is “a proposing and exposing of the self.”<sup>64</sup> I use “Said” here differently from Newton, in order to refer to the accumulated knowledge of the past: what has been said, determined, and, as a result, is established as known. This tightly woven veil of the Said of the past can only be unraveled and then rewoven by the “Saying” of the present—specifically by the Saying of the abused, telling their stories of the other side of history, stories heretofore largely unheeded and seldom listened to in the very words of those whose stories they are.

The articulation of this telling is formulated and forged within the wounded holy of holies of the tellers<sup>65</sup> and, because of this, such telling requires a certain kind of “addressivity” on the parts of its recipients: a “turning toward” which forges “a link in the chain of speech communion” and which, as a result, forges an “intersubjective alliance.”<sup>66</sup> This “turning toward” can be envisioned as those who traditionally have done the speaking leaning forward in silent attentiveness in order to listen to those who previously have never spoken with authority as they learn to speak the truth of their own

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. Raymond E. Brown (“Hermeneutics” in eds., R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer, R. E. Murphy, *The New Jerome Bible Commentary* [Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1990], 1147, no. 3) who asserts that “language brings to expression and interprets what is in one’s mind (conscious and unconscious), of even what constitutes one’s identity, being, and person. . . . In the very act of linguistic communication one’s identity and intention can grow and come into being.” Brown asserts this reality without acknowledging that this very essence of the constitution of the self routinely has and is denied females in patriarchal societies by denying their speech authoritative status; that is, females “come into being” without authority and their non-authoritative status is validated in some of the sacred texts which underwrite the patriarchy. (See I Cor 14:33-34; I Tim 2:11-12).

<sup>63</sup> Newton, *Narrative*, 7.

<sup>64</sup> Newton, *Narrative*, 3.

<sup>65</sup> Newton (*Narrative*, 95) cites Bakhtin’s reference to “the man within the man” as his “holy of holies.”

<sup>66</sup> Newton, *Narrative*, 290, citing Bakhtin.

lives—with authority.<sup>67</sup> Silence is required on the parts of the recipients of such speech because “the intersubjective relation accomplished through story”<sup>68</sup> belongs “to the realm of performance, not of speculation”<sup>69</sup> and because, as noted above, the Saying, the telling,<sup>70</sup> is “a proposing and exposing of the self.” Therefore the testimonies of the abused are not shared in order that their stories be analyzed, dissected, taken apart. Auschwitz has taught us that there are aspects of life and learning which are not discussable—the narratives of these aspects of life only can be listened to and the lessons learned from ‘the telling’ applied. While biblical texts can be analyzed exhaustively in order that they render up their secrets, the approach to the testimonies of those who have survived deep suffering and sorrow by those with the authority to determine the truth and reality of biblical texts must be one of “bearing witness” to these, their fellow human beings, from “an irreducible distance.”<sup>71</sup> Across this distance the addressees listen attentively in order to take into account as fully and as empathetically as possible what is

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<sup>67</sup> Raine (*After, passim*) tells of the difficulty of repairing the self which has been shattered by sexual assault. The difficulties are panoramic in nature, all-encompassing, but one of the most difficult after-effects to deal with is the inability or unwillingness of those who do not know what she knows to *listen* to what she needs to tell them in order to survive, in order to repair her shattered soul. Raine (*After*, 118-119) tells of being seated at a luncheon next to a “woman in [an] amber necklace . . . [who] recalls the guest of honor mentioning me and tells me she has read my essay.” [Raine’s essay, telling the story of having been raped and the struggle of survival in the aftermath of this experience, had recently been published in the *New York Times*]. “We toast our friend, who is taking an important post in Washington. . . . The woman with the amber necklace turns to me again and says, as if she’s been thinking about it while the toasts were made: “I thought that your article was well-written.” I am smiling, “But, let’s face it, no one wants to hear about such terrible things.” No one does, but The Holy Bible talks of such things, reports on such things. The least that interpreters of that holy text can do is turn toward and learn from what others turn away from.

<sup>68</sup> Newton, *Narrative*, 7.

<sup>69</sup> Newton, *Narrative*, 45.

<sup>70</sup> *Telling* is the title of Francisco’s “memoir of rape and recovery.”

<sup>71</sup> Newton, *Narrative*, 292. Here I part company with Newton who claims that texts should not be plumbed to their depths and required to offer up all of their secrets. Even though such a thing is not possible, I do not think that interpreters should refrain from seeking to deconstruct and problem-solve as fully as possible when it comes to biblical texts, for biblical texts can harbor some of society’s ugliest secrets, secrets whose ugliness needs to be countered and before it can be countered, it must be exposed.

being said.<sup>72</sup> What is required of those who wish to know in order to tell is a holy awe before the declamation of the agonies of others.

This intersection of acknowledging and knowing Newton defines as narrative ethics.<sup>73</sup> In order to know, one must first *acknowledge* the presence and the being of those who have inhabited the under side of history and, as a result of their position historically, likewise have inhabited the gaps and blanks of biblical narrative, their unacknowledged presence the glue which holds the text, the narrative, together.<sup>74</sup> To *see* them, to *listen* to is necessitated by the caesura created by the Holocaust. Into *this* blank, *this* gap walk the previously disregarded in order that they might share their stories within the proscenium arch of the biblical text.<sup>75</sup> As such, their testimonies would not be regarded as some sort of midrash or extension of the biblical text, outside the confines of what is considered authoritative knowledge. Instead, their testimonies of suffering and survival would be considered part of the warp and woof of the interpretive fabric of the text under analysis. Their stories would consist of authorizing, authoritative knowledge, the acceptance of which would, in turn, authorize and validate the owners of such knowledge, knowledge

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<sup>72</sup> Like the woman in the amber necklace (see n. 67 *supra*), we do not want to hear about such things; we do not want to look at them, nor, least of all, do we want to identify with them—especially if what we are listening to and looking at is a victim of rape and we are male. In her memoir, Raine (*After*, 219, italics mine) shares the reflections of the actor Ned Beatty, who played a rape victim in the movie *Deliverance*, who was forced to squeal like a pig. Beatty relates that as a result of this role he has been subjected to innumerable instances of men shouting at him, “Squeal like a pig.” His response is anger because he is proud of his work in the film. He concludes that “somewhere between their shouts and my threats lies a kernel of truth about how men feel about rape. My guess is we want to be distanced from it. *Our last choice would be to identify with the victim.*”

<sup>73</sup> Newton, *Narrative*, 285. I am not using acknowledging and knowing in the same way as Newton. As I noted in n. 71, Newton wants texts—and more specifically the characters in them—acknowledged, but not fully known, just as persons are not fully known. I am not proposing that any interpreter can fully know any text—especially any biblical text. What I am proposing is that by acknowledging those who have not been acknowledged before in authoritative discourse—in terms of their own testimonies, their own words—then specialist interpreters will know in a way more fully than they have previously, thus creating the possibility that this fuller knowledge will become part of their interpretation of biblical texts.

<sup>74</sup> This same group often is referred to as “marginalized.” As such, they can be imagined as containing the words on the page and thereby keeping them from scattering willy-nilly off the page and into oblivion.

<sup>75</sup> Newton (*Narrative*, 129) refers to the proscenium arch of art which frames reality in a particular way.

lodged in their very bodies and spirits—deeply subjective knowledge, but deeply subjective knowledge which, when authorized knowers, specialist interpreters, learn it, they cannot help but apply it to their interpretations of the biblical text.<sup>76</sup> Such a change in interpretive method is called for because the Holocaust has revealed that the strictly dialogic nature of discussion among prescribed authorities as a means by which to establish truth and reality to be unspeakably inadequate in its ability to address and proclaim the reality of human being, of being human. As Rosen asserts, “it is time to rethink the question of whom and what we honor, and why [and] if consciousness is all, let us have all we can of it.”<sup>77</sup>

I am the one who knows and bears witness, says the LORD.

Jeremiah 29: 23

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<sup>76</sup> Newton (*Narrative*, 292) recognizes that such tellings come “too late . . . to effect a remedy or cure.” He goes on to claim, however, that such tellings can be made “meaningfully enough to make broken lives whole again through story.” That would, in fact, constitute a remedy or a cure. The most which can be expected from such tellings is an acknowledgement of the validity of what those who have suffered have gone through. If such an acknowledgement results in a ‘cure’ of the sort which Newton imagines, then validated testimony will have done its miraculous work, which is possible, but not guaranteed. Testimonies are not given and heeded in order to accomplish miracles, but in order to do justice *to* the past and *in* the present.

<sup>77</sup> Rosen, *Accidents*, 53.

**Exegesis of Genesis 34: translation with notes**

- 1a Dinah, Leah's daughter whom she had borne to Jacob, went out  
 1b to look at (רָאָה אֶת) <sup>1</sup> the local girls<sup>2</sup> (בְּבָנוֹת הָאֶרֶץ).
- 2a Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite the local chieftain, saw her.  
 2b He took her (לָקַח אֶתָּהּ) <sup>3</sup> and raped her (שָׁכַב אֶתָּהּ) <sup>4</sup> and traumatized her (וַיַּעֲבֹדָהּ).<sup>5</sup>
- 3a His appetite fixated on Jacob's daughter Dinah (וַתִּדְבַק נַפְשׁוֹ בְּדִינָה) <sup>6</sup>  
 3b and he craved<sup>7</sup> (וַיִּאָּהֵב) the girl  
 3ba and he spoke to the girl, using persuasion (וַיְדַבֵּר עִלְ-לֵב הַנְּעֹרָה).<sup>8</sup>
- 4a Shechem said to his father Hamor,  
 4b "Get me this girl-child<sup>9</sup> (יְלִדָּהּ) as a wife."
- 5a When Jacob heard that he had forced (שָׁמַע) <sup>10</sup> his daughter Dinah,  
 5aa his sons were with his herds in the field.  
 5b Jacob would hold his peace (וַיִּהְיֶה שָׁמֵט) <sup>11</sup> until they came.
- 6a Hamor, Shechem's father, went out to Jacob  
 6b to speak with him.
- 7a Jacob's sons came in from the field when they heard.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of this verbal construction, see Chapter 4, pp. 188-190.

<sup>2</sup> I use the word "girls" here because of the references in the text to Dinah as a girl (see Chapter 7, pp. 336-338); that is, I have made the decision that she was going out to look at girls about her own age.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of לָקַח here and throughout Genesis 34, see Chapter 3, pp. 131-133 and Chapter 4, pp. 164-168.

<sup>4</sup> BHS recommends emendation of אֶתָּהּ to אֶתָּהּ and references μετ' αὐτῆς in the LXX as support. See Chapter 5, pp. 247-250, for a discussion of reliance on the Ancient Versions as a basis for emending the MT. See Chapter 1, p. 22, n. 73 for references to my other discussions of אֶתָּהּ אֶתָּהּ as rape. See Chapter 7, pp. 319-324 for other verbal constructions which can convey rape, but which the author of Genesis 34 chose not to use. There is another possibility, as well: had the author wanted to indicate that Shechem had seduced Dinah, the word פָּתָהּ was available. See Chapter 3, p. 94, n. 3 for פָּתָהּ in Exod 22: 15-16 as indicating seduction.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of עָבָד in the *pi'el* with a female as an object, see Chapter 2, pp. 71-87 and Chapter 4, pp. 149-164.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of this verbal construction, see Chapter 7, pp. 328-332.

<sup>7</sup> For this translation, see Chapter 7, pp. 326-331, especially 331.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of this idiom, see Chapter 8, pp. 355-381.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of this translation, see Chapter 7, pp. 335-338.

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of this translation, see Chapter 6, pp. 267-271.

<sup>11</sup> The *waw* with the *hip'il* perfect of שָׁמַע indicates that this is the condition that Jacob will keep himself in until his sons arrive. Lambdin's (276, §196) discussion of conditional sentences indicates that such a translation is possible. Waltke and O'Connor (525, § 32.2a) concur.

<sup>12</sup> Sternberg ("The Art," 452) questions whether or not the reading should be, "Jacob's sons came in from the field. When they heard, the men were grieved and very angry." Support for this reading comes from the LXX, which reads the verse in this way. However, כָּשָׁמַעֻם has a *zāqēf parvum* over it and is followed by

- 7aα The men were deeply upset (וַיִּתְעַצְבוּ)<sup>13</sup> and very angry (וַיִּהָרֻּם מְאֹד),  
 7b for he had committed an outrage against Israel (כִּי־נִבְלָה עָשָׂה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל) by lying  
 with Jacob's daughter (לְשׂוֹכֵב אֶת־בַּת־יַעֲקֹב).<sup>14</sup>  
 7ba This is not the way things are done.<sup>15</sup>
- 8a Hamor spoke with them, saying  
 8b "My son Shechem has decided to keep your daughter  
 (הֲזָקָה נִפְשׁוֹ בְּבִתְכֶם).<sup>16</sup>

וַיִּתְעַצְבוּ. The *zāqēf parvum* over עָשָׂה and the ו indicate that the break in the text comes after עָשָׂה, not before.

<sup>13</sup> עָצַב appears in the *hitpa'el* only one other place in the MT (*HALOT*, 2:864-865): in Gen 6:6 in reference to God's being extremely upset by human sinfulness. The expression there is וַיִּתְעַצַּב אֱלֹהִים. Other uses of עָצַב in *qal* and *nif'al* in reference to human beings also reflect this idea of the sense of offense felt by someone who has been mistreated by another human being. The image of Jacob's sons that emerges in 7aα is, first, a description of their inner sense of offense (עָצַב) and then, second, of the absolute anger (הָרָה)—which is outwardly evident—that their being offended has engendered in them.

<sup>14</sup> In *TDOT* ("nbl II" 151-171), in his review of "the word group *nbl* II," Marböck (160) finds that "*nbl* II is not specific to Wisdom Literature" but, rather, has "a rather broad and uniform distribution throughout the OT." He (164) further asserts that "the only instance of *nābāl* in parallel with the primary term for folly [*ḥesil*—in Prov. 17:21] . . . does not justify translating *nābāl* uniformly as "fool"—or נְבִלָה as "foolishness." Marböck (163, 161) finds that such translations are "too weak" to reflect the destructiveness in the community of the נְבִלָה committed by a נְבִל or by נְבִלָה. Therefore, I have translated נְבִלָה in v. 7 as "outrage." Of the thirteen occurrences of נְבִלָה in the MT, only two, the one found in 1 Sam 25:25 and the one found in Job 42:8 (both Wisdom texts), reflect the idea of "foolishness." Eight uses—in Gen 34: 7, Deut 22:21, Josh 7:15, Judg 19: 23, 24 and 20:6, 10, 2 Sam 13—reflect the view that נְבִלָה represents a serious breach of "customary law" (Marböck, 168): a violation that was perpetrated against the community itself. This is expressed by the use of some form of the verbal construction עָשָׂה נְבִלָה in conjunction with בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. (This is not the case with the two occurrences in Judg 19, but then in Judg 20, it is affirmed that what took place in Gibeah was a perpetration of נְבִלָה "against Israel"). For this reason, I have translated בְּ in בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל as "against," where the emphasis is on the offense against the community. The only usage where a translation of "in Israel" sounds better is in 2 Sam 13:12, where Tamar is desperately trying to prevent Amnon from raping her. As I noted above, the use of נְבִלָה in Gen 34:7 reflects Shechem's breach of the expectation that a man will contract with the owner of a girl's sexuality to purchase the girl's sexual function before having sex with her. That, in the ANE, female sexuality was owned by males is reflected in the law codes in the MT (Exod 22:15-16, Deut 22:13-29) and in the law codes adduced by Fleishman (see Chapter 3, pp. 134-136). But male ownership of female sexuality is also a part of the reputation/retaliation system, so male ownership of female sexual function does not necessarily reflect a shame/honor system of social control; that is, Jacob's sons can evidence concern about Shechem's breach of customary law without this being an indication that the narrative in Genesis 34 reflects the workings of a shame/honor culture. Unlike their father, who at this point in the narrative is depicted as focused on the harm done to Dinah, Jacob's sons are focused on the harm done to the family—to the entity "Israel"—by Shechem's disregard for the proper order of things. In v. 7 the sexual contact is not even construed as rape. Shechem's unauthorized coitus with Dinah makes her male guardians appear to be men who do not have to be taken into account, thus inviting incursions from other tribes. That the brothers' initial reaction to what Shechem has done is presented in terms of a reputation/retaliation system of social control can be seen in the extremity of Simeon and Levi's response to the problem Shechem had created for the family. Simeon and Levi decided that, if the other tribes in the area were to view the Jacob and his household as a force to be reckoned with, then they would have to show them that this was the case.

<sup>15</sup> I concur with Sternberg's ("The Art," 454-55) conclusion that this final comment can be seen as an exteriorization of the brothers' thought. Cf. Kugel ("The Story," 27), who regards this final comment as "implied direct speech." That is, the text, in reporting the brothers' reaction, presents what they said to one another . . . without actually saying "here is what they said."

<sup>16</sup> For this translation, see Chapter 7, pp. 338-342.

- 8ba Now<sup>17</sup> give her to him as a wife.
- 9a Intermarry with us.  
 9aα Your daughters you give to us  
 9 b and our daughters you take for yourselves.
- 10a You shall live with us.  
 10b The land is open before you.  
 10ba Settle in, move about freely<sup>18</sup> and acquire holdings in it.<sup>19</sup>
- 11a Shechem said to her father and her brothers, “Look on me favorably<sup>20</sup>  
 11b (אֶקְצָא־הוֹן בְּעֵינֵיכֶם) and whatever you say to me I will give.
- 12a Make the amount of the bride-price and marriage settlement for me whatever you want  
 12aα and I will give you whatever you tell me to  
 12b and you give me the girl as a wife.”
- 13a Jacob’s sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor with deceit.  
 13b They spoke to those who had forced their sister Dinah<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Hamor is not *requesting* that the Jacobites acquiesce to Shechem’s decision. Therefore the translation “please” does not fit here. Hamor is indicating that it is in the best interests of all for them to comply with Shechem’s wishes, so אָּ in the sense of “now,” “under these circumstances” is better.

<sup>18</sup> Westermann (*Genesis*, 539): “the verb [קָחַר] means “to move freely throughout the land.” E.A. Speiser (*Genesis*, 264-265) is in accord with Westermann. Speiser states that “the connotation “to trade” is a late secondary development in Heb. and Jewish Aramaic based on the noun *sōhēr* “merchant” . . . i.e., “one who makes the rounds.”

<sup>19</sup> West (“The Rape, 148) sees Hamor promising Jacob “status equivalent to what we would today call citizenship.” Genesis 34 can be considered to be well-placed canonically with the exception of Hamor’s offer to “acquire holdings” in the land. Gen 33:19 depicts Jacob as already having purchased land, thus indicating that this is a right which he does not need to be granted. Fishbane (“Composition,” 25) regards Genesis 34 as an “inserted interlude” which “enhances the generative power of the [overall] narrative” about Jacob. Ramras-Rauch (“Fathers,” 164) sees “the Dinah story end[ing] with the first eight verses of Gen 35.” However, the structure of Genesis 34 indicates that it is a self-contained narrative which has been inserted in its present location. The story does continue into Genesis 35 in that Jacob and his family must flee, due to what Simeon and Levi and his other sons have done. Gen 35:5 makes it clear that they traveled in safety, not due to their reputation for violence, but, rather, due to God’s special protection of them. Thus Gen 35:1-5 continues the mood and message of Genesis 34: that is, that a direct, bloody assault against one who has power over you gains you nothing.

<sup>20</sup> Shechem’s suggestion to Jacob and his sons that he “find favor in [their] eyes” can be compared to the use of this expression in Gen 32:6, where Jacob sends a large gift ahead to Esau in order that he might “find favor in [Esau’s] eyes;” that is, in order that Esau not treat him as he deserves for having stolen his birth-right. Shechem can be seen as operating in a similar mode here, though he is not in the same weakened position as Jacob was in relation to Esau and Esau’s four hundred men. Rather, he seems to be saying, ‘be willing to work with me here and I will make it worth your while.’ The irony is that it is the Jacobites whose offer is pleasing in the eyes of Hamor and Shechem (v. 18) and not the other way around.

<sup>21</sup> Sternberg (“The Art,” 459-460) makes a good case for translating אָּשֶׁר as introducing a relative clause rather than as a shortened version of עַל-אֲשֶׁר. He notes that “Biblical . . . Hebrew allows [for the] . . . grammatical discordance” between the number of people to whom אָּשֶׁר refers to here (two) and the singular form of the verb. The fact that translating עַל-אֲשֶׁר as “because” leaves וַיְדַבְּרוּ dangling lends support to Sternberg’s argument. Translating אָּשֶׁר as the introduction to a relative clause creates a grammatical con-

- 14a and they said to them, “We can’t do this:  
 14aα give our sister to an uncircumcised man  
 14b for we would be disgraced by that (תִּרְפָּה הוּא לָנוּ).<sup>22</sup>
- 15a Only on one condition will we be satisfied with you:  
 15b if you become as we are  
 15bα and become circumcised, every one of you.
- 16a Then we will give our daughters to you  
 16aα and your daughters we will take for ourselves  
 16b and we will live with you and become one people.
- 17a But if you do not listen to us and become circumcised  
 17b then we will take our daughter and leave.”
- 18a What they said pleased Hamor  
 18b and Hamor’s son, Shechem.
- 19a And the young man did not delay to do the thing  
 19aα for he had resolved<sup>23</sup> to have Jacob’s daughter.<sup>24</sup>

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struction similar to the one often used in which the speaker(s) is introduced and then what he has to say is introduced by לְאָמַר. The use of this construction in vv. 4 and 8 and also in vv. 20-21 lends further support to the proposition that the author created an arrangement between vv. 13 and 14 similar to that in vv. 20-21. Translating אָשָׁר as a relative clause convicts Hamor of raping Dinah because he did not oppose Shechem’s designs on her subsequent to Shechem’s having raped her. If אָשָׁר also is read in v. 27 as the introduction to a relative clause, then the men of Shechem similarly are convicted of facilitating Shechem’s continued criminality. Reading אָשָׁר as referring to הַהֲלָלִים in v. 27 is supported by the 3 m. pl. active form of טָמֵא following אָשָׁר.

<sup>22</sup> Rendering תִּרְפָּה הוּא לָנוּ as “we would be disgraced by that” is meant to indicate that Jacob’s sons are telling the Shechemites that for their father to cede his rights to Dinah’s sexuality to an uncircumcised man would be for them to allow the Shechemites to “put” disgrace” on them; that is, that they would feel “themselves scorned” (Kutsch, “חרף,” TDOT, 213). It is important to convey this idea in the translation because this statement of the Jacobites is reflective of the conventions of the reputation/retaliation system; that is, the Jacobites, as the smaller, but offended, group are putting before Hamor and Shechem the means by which the Shechemites can enable them to save face in this situation. They are saying, in effect, ‘you already have humiliated us and made our weakness relative to your strength evident by taking Dinah without permission. We both know that, practically speaking, there is not much that we can do about that, but if you expect us to cede her to you gracefully, then you must acquiesce to our requirement—in order that we not be completely humiliated in this situation in your eyes.’ Bailey’s example of the negotiations between the Bili tribe and the larger and more powerful Suwarka tribe helps to make evident the relational dynamics at work here (see Chapter 5, pp. 197-198). The smaller, yet offended, Bili tribe made claims on the Suwarka tribe and were acquiesced to in order to allow them to save face. This is key to the plan developed by Jacob and is indicative of the fact that he assessed the situation before him quickly and accurately. Jacob observed that Hamor, unlike his son, had evidenced an interest in the Jacobites’ needs in the offers he had made to them. Jacob’s plan to convince the Shechemites to be circumcised rests to a large extent on his gamble that Hamor would see the wisdom in acquiescing to this face-saving device.

<sup>23</sup> For this translation, see Chapter 7, pp. 342-344.

<sup>24</sup> 19a brings the episode of the inter-tribal negotiations to a close; 19b opens the episode of Hamor’s and Shechem’s persuasion of their fellow tribesmen.



- 19b He was the most admired of all of his father's house.<sup>25</sup>
- 20a Hamor and his son Shechem went to the gate of their city  
20b and they spoke to the men of their city, saying,
- 21a "These men are friendly with us. Let them live in the land  
and move around freely in it.  
21aα Look—the land is large enough for them.  
21b Let us take their daughters as wives for ourselves  
21bα and let us give our daughters to them.
- 22a Only on one condition will the men be satisfied with us—to live with us,  
22aα to be one people:  
22b if we become circumcised—every one of us—  
22bα as they are circumcised.
- 23a Their herds and their property and all their animals—won't they all be ours?  
23b Only let us agree with them  
23bα and they will live with us."
- 24a They listened to Hamor and his son Shechem  
24aα —all (כל) who go out to war from the gate of his city—  
24b and every (כל) male was circumcised  
24bα —all (כל) who go out to war from the gate of his city.<sup>26</sup>
- 25a Then on the third day, when they were sore, two of Jacob's sons, Dinah's brothers  
Simeon and Levi, each took his sword  
25aα and entered the city unafraid<sup>27</sup>  
25b and killed every male.
- 26a They drove their swords through Hamor and his son Shechem<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> For my choice of "admired" rather than "honored" or "respected," see Chapter 7, pp. 346-348.

<sup>26</sup> "All who go out to war from the gate of his city" is Everett Fox's (*In the Beginning: A New English Rendition of the Book of Genesis* [New York, Schochen Books, 1983], 140) translation. Fox sees the reference to "going out of the gate" as a reference to going out to war. Fox's interpretation makes sense in that what the author is emphasizing here is that the city has been rendered defenseless. Thus, the repetition of this reference is not "a scribal error" (*pace* Westermann, *Genesis*, 542). The first reference to "all those who go out to war" is to their listening to Hamor and Shechem. The second reference is to the result of their listening: being circumcised. This creates an emphasis on the fact that the entire fighting force has been disabled. The disablement of the entire fighting force accounts for Simeon and Levi's lack of fear when entering the city.

<sup>27</sup> אָטוֹחַ (*Halot*, 120-121), a 3 m. sg. adjective does not modify the f. sg. noun עִיר, but modifies each man with his sword in hand and describes the confidence with which Simeon and Levi approach the city because its protectors have been disabled.

<sup>28</sup> This verse depicts Simeon and Levi overcoming the two most powerful men in Shechem (their power is indicated by the double reference to "their" city in v. 20). Also, the singling out of the murders of Shechem and Hamor for special attention indicates the desire to kill the perpetrator and his primary facilitator. The Greek poet Theodotus (Fragment 8, cited in Eusebius Praep. ev. 9.22.11) evidences this same desire. He

- 26b and they took Dinah from Shechem's house and left.
- 27a Jacob's sons came in upon the slain  
 27aα and plundered the city<sup>29</sup>—  
 27b those who had forced (אטמא) their sister.<sup>30</sup>
- 28a Their flocks, their herds, and their donkeys,  
 28b and what was in the city and what was in the field they took.
- 29a All their possessions, everyone young and old (אטפּט),<sup>31</sup> and their wives they  
 captured and claimed as spoil  
 29b—all that was of the house of Hamor.<sup>32</sup>
- 30a Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have brought trouble on me  
 30aα by making me odious to the local people,  
 30aβ the Canaanites and the Perizzites.  
 30b My numbers are few.  
 30bα They will gather together against me and attack me  
 30bβ and I will be annihilated—I and my house.”
- 31a And they said,  
 31b “Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute?”

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describes in even more gruesome detail the murders of both Shechem and Hamor: “De même alors Syméon se jeta sur Emmor en personne, il le frappe à la tête et saisit de la main gauche sa gorge, qu’il laissa encore palpitante, car un autre travail avait surgi. Entre-temps la force irrésistible de Lévi avait pris par les cheveux Sicheim, qui touchait ses genoux, lui qui avait immensément cédé à sa luxure. Il l’atteignit au milieu de la clavicule, et le glaive aigu lui pénétra le cœur à le sternum, et aussitôt l’âme quitta le corps.”

<sup>29</sup> The influence on the author of Genesis 34 of the ancient poem now found in Genesis 49 militates against translating this as “the other sons of Jacob.” Verses 5-7 of the poem depict Simeon and Levi in a way which indicates that they should be included as part of the plunderers. In v. 30 they are singled out for denunciation by Jacob because they were the instigators of the violence which has endangered the family.

<sup>30</sup> See n. 21 *supra*.

<sup>31</sup> HALOT (378) notes that אטפּט refers to “those of a nomadic tribe who are not able to march:” children and old people. Even though the reference here is not to a nomadic tribe, it refers to the children and the old people in order to indicate that the Jacobites took everything and *everyone* who belonged to the Shechemites: the young, the old, and the Shechemite wives.

<sup>32</sup> The construction of v. 27, which lists the possessions and people who will be captured as spoil first, followed by the two verbs—אטקח and אטפּט—indicates that the possessions and people are the objects of both verbs. This also is indicated by the *’atnāh* under the second verb—this is where the break in the verse comes, not before. אטפּט אטקח after the break serves as a summary statement of what was taken: everything. I have added “of Hamor” to the text because vv. 28-29a report the totality of the plundering: they took everything, totally depleting the house of Hamor, rather than the house of Hamor totally depleting the house of Jacob, as Hamor had predicted in v. 23a. This is preferable to “houses” plural because the previous delineation of the extent of the plundering included what was in the field and what was in the city. To say that they took all that was in the houses does not include what was in the field and thus does not serve as a summary statement. Based on my analysis of the text that the moment of peripety comes after this summary, then the summary must include everything and in that way be very satisfying to the original recipients, who contemplate with pleasure their ancestors turning the tables on the greedy, oppressive overlord—until the author turns the tables on them and says through Jacob “in the real world, such a thing can never be done.”

## APPENDIX 1 – ELISABETH FRITZL’S STORY

### **Elisabeth Fritzl**

In 1977, when Elisabeth Fritzl was eleven, her father Josef began “fondling her and leaving pornographic magazines under her pillow.”<sup>1</sup> Of this situation Elisabeth said, “Somehow, I don’t know why, my father seemed *to choose me for himself*.”<sup>2</sup> In order to escape this unbidden chosenness, Elisabeth ran away to Vienna in October, 1983. However, she was found by the police and returned to her father in the spring of 1984, at which time he first began having sex with her. This led to his *decision* to incarcerate her in the cellar he had started constructing for this purpose the year after he first started abusing her. On August 29, 1984, he “asked her to go down to the cellar to help him install a door. He overpowered her, knocked her out with medical ether and left her in the cellar. A day later he returned with a chain.”<sup>3</sup> Elisabeth spent the next five to nine months—she does not know how long—“chained to four poles with an iron girdle around her waist.”<sup>4</sup> Her father attacked her constantly, covering her mouth and preventing her from breathing, reminding her that she had no means of escape (the prison chamber could only be reached by going through eight locked doors),<sup>5</sup> and threatening her that, if she did not do as he said, her treatment would get worse. Elisabeth stopped resisting in order not to incur worse abuse. Josef finally removed the restraints because they impeded his assaults.

Elisabeth told how the lights would go off, he would come in, rape her, and leave. . . . The rapes averaged out to one every three days,

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Hall, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/worldnews/article-1162591>, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Hall, 5, italics mine.

<sup>3</sup> Hall, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Hall, 6.

<sup>5</sup> *The Longest Night: Secrets of the Austrian Cellar* (7/27/08) MSNBC.

but there were occasions—such as when he was on holiday. . . when there were none, and some when he raped her more than once a day. She told of ‘constant beatings and kickings all over [her] body.’<sup>6</sup>

After she had been incarcerated five years, Josef began bringing pornographic videos and ordering Elisabeth to mimic the actors. “She also spoke of sex toys being used on her in violent sessions that lasted many hours,”<sup>7</sup> leaving her with grave internal injuries.

In 1986, she first became pregnant, but “miscarried in the darkness in the tenth week of pregnancy. Approximately four months later she conceived again,”<sup>8</sup> and again miscarried. In 1987, she conceived again and, in August, 1988, Kerstin was born on a dirty mattress given to Elisabeth for this purpose, along with a filthy pair of scissors with which to cut the umbilical cord. Josef did not return to check on the mother and child for ten days. “Stefan was born in February, 1990 . . . Lisa in August, 1992, Monika in February, 1994, twins Alexander and Michael in April 1996 and Felix in December 2002.”<sup>9</sup>

The ‘home’ Josef created for his cellar family was a windowless room with a dimension of eighteen square meters and a ceiling height of six feet. There were

rat infestations, raw sewage, a primitive air-induction system that left them gasping for breath and unable to move around for long. . . . The cellar walls ran with so much condensation they had to place towels along the bottom to stop a lake of water from spreading across the cellar. [Elisabeth] said, that in the summer “It was like living in a sauna.” . . . The electricity often went out, sometimes for ten days at a time. Food ran perilously low and Elisabeth would have to ration supplies because she never knew when their gaoler would return.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Hall, 6.

<sup>7</sup> Hall, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Hall, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Hall, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Hall, 6, 7.

Even though Josef expanded the cellar to forty square meters before Monika was born, it still was too crowded and Josef took some of the children upstairs, telling his wife Rosemarie—whom he had told that Elisabeth had run away and joined a cult—that Elisabeth had left the child on the doorstep. He had forced Elisabeth to write letters supporting his story about her joining a cult. Now he made her write letters saying that the cult would not allow her to keep the children. In 1993, he took Lisa upstairs, Monika in 1994 and Alexander in 1997.<sup>11</sup> Alexander’s twin had died shortly after birth. Josef had burned his body “in the solid fuel furnace and scattered the ashes in the garden, while his other family was away.”<sup>12</sup>

In April, 2008, Kerstin became ill and Elisabeth convinced Josef to get her emergency medical care. Josef consented, most likely because he had transferred his attentions from grey-haired Elisabeth to nineteen-year-old Kerstin.<sup>13</sup> Elisabeth and Stefan had to drag Kerstin out to Josef’s car so he could drive Kerstin to the hospital. It was Elisabeth’s first glimpse of the outside world in twenty-four years. For her son,

it was his first experience of life above ground. [Josef] bundled them both back into the cellar while he took Kerstin to the hospital, again using the lie that he had found her dumped on the doorstep. The hospital did not believe him and neither did the police, who began to investigate. Doctors insisted on seeing Elisabeth because they needed information about Kerstin as she lay at death’s door. Elisabeth said Fritzl ordered her to tell doctors she had abandoned Kerstin because she could not cope with her. But the game was up for Fritzl: officers took them to separate rooms at Amstetten police station. After she was given a guarantee that she would never have to see her father again, [Elisabeth] chronicled her stolen life.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Josef and Rosemarie raised these children as foster children and received money from the state for their care (*The Longest Night*).

<sup>12</sup> Hall, 10.

<sup>13</sup> Staff Reporters, <http://thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/article1128690>, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Hall, 10.

Of all of the abuse she suffered, Elisabeth said the “most paralyzing, fear-inducing factor she had to live with was the uncertainty of her situation and that of her children.”<sup>15</sup>

On April 6, 2009, Josef Fritzl pled guilty “to incest and depriving his family of their liberty, *charges which carry a maximum combined penalty of eleven years.*”<sup>16</sup>

However, the testimony of psychiatrist Adelheid Kastner about Fritzl’s depraved mental condition ensured that he would “be sentenced to life imprisonment to be served in a secure psychiatric institution.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Hall, 7.

<sup>16</sup> Hall, 4.

<sup>17</sup> Hall, 5.

## APPENDIX 2 – TRANSLATIONS

### SEPTUAGINT

1. Dinah, Leah's daughter whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to look at the daughters of the inhabitants.
2. Shechem, the son of Hamor the Chorroean, the local chieftain saw her and seizing her, he lay with her, mortifying her.
3. He was held fast by the soul of Jacob's daughter Dinah. He loved the girl dearly and he addressed himself to the girl's state of mind.
4. Shechem said to his father Hamor, "Get me this girl-child as a wife."
5. Jacob heard that Hamor's son had defiled his daughter Dinah. His sons were with his cattle in the field. Jacob remained silent until they returned.
6. Shechem's father Hamor, went out to Jacob to speak to him.
7. Jacob's sons came in from the field. When they heard, the men were stung to the quick. It made them very distressed, because he had brought disgrace to Israel, having lain with Jacob's daughter. This shall not stand.
8. Hamor spoke with them, saying, "My son Shechem has his heart set on your daughter. Give her to him as a wife."
9. Intermarry with us. Your daughters give to us and our daughters you take for your sons.
10. Live among us. See, the land is wide open before you. Live among us. Trade in it and obtain holdings in it.
11. Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me meet with your approval and whatever you say to me, we will give.
12. Greatly increase the marriage settlement and I will give in whatever manner you tell me and you give me this girl-child as a wife."
13. Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor with deceit and because he had defiled their sister Dinah.
14. And Leah's sons, Dinah's brothers Simeon and Levi, said, "We cannot do this thing: give our sister to a man who is uncircumcised, for this is a disgrace to us.

15. Only on this condition will we become like you and live among you: if you become like us and be circumcised, every male.
16. Then we will give our daughters to you and we will take your daughters for ourselves as wives and we will settle alongside you and become one people.
17. But if you do not comply with us and be circumcised, we will take our daughter and leave.”
18. Their words pleased Hamor and Hamor’s son Shechem.
19. The young man did not hesitate to do the thing for he was very attached to Jacob’s daughter. In all his father’s household, he was the most admired.
20. Hamor and his son Shechem went to the gate of their city and they spoke with the men of their city, saying
21. These men are peaceable toward us. Let them occupy the land and trade in it. See how spacious the land before them is. Their daughters we will take as wives and we will give them our daughters.
22. Only on this condition will the men assimilate to us to live with us in order to become one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they themselves are circumcised.
23. Their herds and their possessions and their large animals—won’t these be ours? Only in this one thing let us acquiesce to them and they will live with us.”
24. They listened to Hamor and his son Shechem. All who march out of the gate of his city were circumcised in the flesh of their foreskin, every male.
25. And then on the third day, when they were in pain, two of Jacob’s sons, Dinah’s brothers Simeon and Levi, each with his sword, entered the city unafraid and killed every male.
26. They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the edge of the sword and they took Dinah from Shechem’s house and they left.
27. Jacob’s sons came in upon the wounded and plundered the city where they had defiled their sister Dinah.
28. They took their sheep and their oxen and their asses and what was in the city and what was in the field.
29. And all their people, and all their possessions and their wives they took captive and they plundered everything in the city and everything in the houses.



30. Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have made me odious so that I am villainous to all of the inhabitants of the land, to the Canaanites and the Perizzites. I am few in number. They will gather together against me to cut me to pieces and I will be destroyed root and branch, I and my house.

31 And they said, “But should they make use of our sister like a prostitute?”

This translation was made from the Gottingen version of the Septuagint.

## OLD LATIN

1. Dinah, Leah's daughter whom she had borne to Jacob, went out in order to talk with the girls of that region.
2. Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the region, saw Jacob's daughter Dinah and he took her to himself and slept with her and humiliated her.
3. He paid close attention to the soul of Jacob's daughter Dinah and he loved the the girl and he spoke kindly to the very heart of the girl .
4. And going straight to his father Hamor, he said, "Get me this girl-child as a wife."
5. Because his sons were away and occupied with pasturing the cattle when Jacob heard, he remained silent until they returned.
6. In order to get Jacob's daughter Dinah for his son Shechem, Hamor went out to speak with Jacob where he was; and his sons who had been away returned.
7. And Jacob's sons returned from the field and when they heard, the men were cut to the quick and each one was totally despondent because he had dealt disgracefully with Israel, because he had slept with Jacob's daughter. This will not stand.
8. "My son Shechem chooses the soul of your daughter; therefore, give her to him as a wife.
9. Let us unite through intermarriage. Your give your daughters to us and take our daughters for yourselves
10. and live with us. The land is at your disposal. Till it, trade in it, and take possession of it."
11. In addition, Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me gain your approval personally and whatever arrangements you make I will honor.
12. Increase the marriage settlement and ask for gifts and I will grant whatever you request with pleasure. Only give me this girl-child as a wife."
13. Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father with guile because they were enraged about the disgrace of their sister.
14. "We cannot do what you ask, nor give our sister to an uncircumcised man, which is unlawful and repugnant to us.
15. The only way we will be the same as you and live with you is if you become like

- us and all of your males be circumcised.
16. Then we will take your daughters for ourselves and also give ours, reciprocally, and we will live with you and become one people.
  17. If you are unwilling to be circumcised, we will take our daughter and leave.”
  18. Their offer pleased Hamor and his son Shechem.
  19. Nor did the young man delay but indeed at once fulfilled what had been asked for. Truly, he was attaché to Jacob’s daughter. And he himself was the most admired of all of his father’s household.
  20. And Hamor and his son Shechem went to the gate of their city and they spoke to the male citizenry, saying
  21. These men are friendly with us and they wish to live with us. Let them trade in the land and cultivate it, which, being spacious, is badly in need of cultivators. Their daughters we will take for ourselves as wives.
  22. There is one reason why so great a good is delayed: in the hope that we will circumcise our males, imitating their tribal custom.
  23. Their property and their cattle and all which they possess will be ours. Only let us acquiesce in this to them and, living together, we will become one people.
  24. They all agreed, circumcising all of the males.
  25. And, then, on the third day, when the pain of the wound is most severe, two of Jacob’s sons, Dinah’s brothers Simeon and Levi, creeping, swords in hand, went cautiously into the city and killed all of the males.
  26. They killed Hamor and his son Shechem at the same time, taking their sister Dinah away from the house.
  27. After they had left, Jacob’s other sons rushed in upon the slain and destroyed the city in revenge of the rape.
  28. They took their sheep and their cattle and their asses, everything that was in the city and everything that was in the field.
  29. They captured all of their people, their wives and their children, and they plundered everything that was in the city and everything that was in their houses.
  30. Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have made me hateful in that I will be

regarded as barbarous by Canaanites and the Perizzites, the inhabitants of this land. Now, I am few in number and they will gather against me, killing me: to destroy me and my house.”

31. They answered, “Ought they abuse our sister like a prostitute?”

This translation was made from the *Sacrorum Latinae Versiones Antiquae seu Vetus Italica: Quae cum Vulgata Latina, & Textu Graeco comparantur*. D. Petri Sabatier, Munich: Friedrich Ziffer, 1976.

## VULGATE

1. Now Dinah, Leah's daughter, went out to see the women of that region.
2. When Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, ruler of that land, saw her, he loved her and he abducted and lay with her, overpowering the girl with force.
3. And his soul was closely bound to her and, because she was sad, he spoke soothingly and coaxingly.
4. And going straight to his father Hamor, he said, "Get me this girl for a wife.
5. Because his sons were away and occupied with feeding the cattle, when Jacob heard about it, he remained silent until they returned.
6. Now Shechem's father Hamor went out in order to talk to Jacob.
7. Then his sons came in from the field and, hearing what had happened, they were furious, he had done a foul thing against Israel, and by violating Jacob's daughter, he had committed an unlawful act.
8. And so Hamor said to them, "My son Shechem's soul has fixated on your daughter. Give her to him as a wife.
9. Let us unite through intermarriage. You give your daughters to us and take our daughters
10. and live with us. The land is at your disposal: till it, trade in it, and take possession in it."
11. In addition, Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me win your approval personally and whatever arrangements you make I will honor.
12. Increase the bride-price and ask for gifts and I will grant whatever you ask with pleasure. Only give me this girl as a wife."
13. Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father with guile because they were enraged on account of the disgrace of their sister.
14. "We cannot do what you ask, nor give our sister to an uncircumcised man--which is unlawful and repugnant to us.
15. But in this way we may be allied with you: if you are willing to be like us and all of your males become circumcised.

16. Then we will take your daughters for ourselves and also give ours, reciprocally, and we will live with you and be one people.
17. But, if you are not willing to be circumcised, we will take our daughter and leave."
18. Their offer pleased Hamor and his son Shechem.
19. The young man did not delay, but indeed fulfilled at once what had been asked for. He truly loved the girl. And he himself was the most admired of all of his father's household.
20. Coming to the gate of the city, they spoke to the people.
21. "These men are peaceful. They want to live with us. Let them trade in the land and cultivate it, which, being wide and extensive, is badly in need of cultivators. We will take their daughters as wives and we will give them ours.
22. There is one reason why so great a good is delayed: in the hope that we will circumcise our males, imitating their tribal custom.
23. And their property and their cattle and all which they possess will be ours. Only in this one thing, let us acquiesce to them and, living together, we will become one people.
24. They all agreed, circumcising all the males.
25. And then, on the third day, when the pain of the wound is the most severe, two of Jacob's sons, Dinah's brothers Simeon and Levi, creeping, with swords in hand, went confidently into the city and killed all the males.
26. They put Hamor and Shechem to death at the same time and they took their sister Dinah away from Shechem's house.
27. After they had left, Jacob's other sons rushed in upon the slain and destroyed the city in revenge of the disgrace from the rape.
28. They plundered their sheep and their herds and their asses: all that was in the houses and in the fields.
29. Their children and their wives they led away into captivity.
30. And when they had courageously accomplished these things, Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have stirred things up for me and made me hateful to the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the inhabitants of this land. We are few. They will gather together and kill me: to destroy me and my house.

31. They answered, "Ought they abuse our sister like a prostitute?"

This translation has been made from the Biblia Vulgata. Colunga-Turrado. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1977.

## TARGUM NEOFITI

1. Dinah, the daughter whom Leah had borne to Jacob, went out to be seen with the daughters of the local people.
2. Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, the chief of the land saw her and he took her and slept with her. He ruined her.
3. His soul delighted in Jacob's daughter Dinah. He loved the girl and he spoke comforting words to the girl's heart.
4. Shechem said to his father Hamor, "Get this girl as a wife for me."<sup>1235</sup>
5. When Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah, his sons were with his cattle in the open country,<sup>1236</sup> so Jacob held his peace until he summoned them to come.
6. Shechem's father Hamor went out to<sup>1237</sup> Jacob to speak with him.
7. Jacob's sons came in from the countryside when they heard. The men were shaken and united in their displeasure because of the abomination he had done in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter. It is not proper for things to be done this way.
8. Hamor spoke with them, saying, "My son Shechem—his soul delights in your daughter. Now give her in marriage to him as his wife.
9. Intermingle<sup>1238</sup> with us. Give your daughters to us and take our daughters for yourselves.
10. Live with us. The land is available to you. Live and trade in it and acquire holdings in it."<sup>1239</sup>
11. Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me find favor and mercy with you and I will give whatever you tell me to.
12. Greatly increase the bride-price and gifts<sup>1240</sup> and I will give you whatever you tell me to and you give me the girl in marriage as a wife."

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<sup>1235</sup> The *af"el* form of נסב requires לִי (as in v 12, Grossfeld's text, 30) and this is lacking in TN. Grossfeld (231, 230) notes that לִי appears "in TO, Ps. Jon. and Pesh." and suggests that its absence in TN may be "due to an oversight."

<sup>1236</sup> TN has בראפיא ברא. According to Grossfeld, this is "peculiar to N" and refers to "the open country" rather than "to any *specific field*," 68 (italics his).

<sup>1237</sup> The form in Schiffman's text is לִיית. Levy comments on the "interchange of *Daleth* and *Taw*" in TN,"<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>1238</sup> See note 9 below.

<sup>1239</sup> אהסן: "Take possession of a landed inheritance," Sokoloff, 46.

<sup>1240</sup> This is Grossfeld's (231, n. 12) translation.



13. When Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor, they spoke with great cunning<sup>1241</sup> to the one who had defiled their sister Dinah.

14. They said to them, "We cannot marry our sister to an uncircumcised man,<sup>1242</sup> it is a disgrace to us.

15. Only on this condition will we mingle<sup>1243</sup> with you: if you become like us and submit to a knife, every male.

16. We will give our daughters to you and you marry your daughters to us and we will live with you and we will all become one nation.

17. But if you do not listen to us and submit to the knife, we will take our daughter and leave."

18. What they said pleased Hamor and Hamor's son Shechem.

19. The young man did not delay to do the thing because his soul delighted in Jacob's daughter. He was the most honored of all the members of his father's household.

20. Hamor and his son Shechem went to the gate of their city and they spoke with the men of their city. They said,

21. "These men are peaceful, doing good toward us.<sup>1244</sup> Let them live in the land and do business in it. This land is a wide open territory before them. We will take their daughters for ourselves as wives and we will give our daughters to them.

22. Only on this condition will the men intermingle with us to live with us as one nation: if we submit to the knife—every one of you males—and become circumcised as they are.

23. Their property and their wealth and their cattle—see, it will be ours when we intermingle with them and they live with us."

24. All who go out from the gate of the city listened to Hamor and to his son Shechem and all the males were circumcised—all who go out from the gate of the city.

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<sup>1241</sup> Lit, "with *their* great wisdom." The attribution to Jacob's sons of the ability to determine what needs to be done here lessens somewhat the probability that Jacob came up with the plan but does not eliminate the possibility. The MT makes no such attribution. Grossfeld (197-198) comments that the "euphemistic translation of Heb. מרמה" in TN is due to the desire to "soften the sharp criticism" implied by the term מרמה.

<sup>1242</sup> TN lacks עורלה. Both Díez Macho and Schiffman agree that emendment here is necessary. Schiffman suggests that the lack of עורלה here may parallel the similar lack in Gen 17:14 of TN, which he and Díez Macho attribute to the work of a censor (Grossfeld, 51, 47).

<sup>1243</sup> Grossfeld (231-232) notes that the rendering "we will mingle" in TN is different from all other Aramaic versions. Both TO and TPJ refer to intermarriage, 231-232.

<sup>1244</sup> "With good deeds" is Grossfeld's translation. He (229) notes that this insertion in TN is reflected in the *Babyloninan Talmud Sab. 33b*.

25. Then on the third day, when they were in pain from their circumcision, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and entered the city unafraid<sup>1245</sup> and killed all the men.

26. Hamor and his son Shechem they killed with a slash<sup>1246</sup> of the sword and they took Dinah from Shechem's house and they left.

27. The sons of Jacob came in over the slain and plundered the city where they had defiled their sister.

28. Their flocks and their oxen and what was in the city and what was in the countryside they took.

29. And all their wealth and all their children and all their wives they brought back. They plundered all that was in the house of Hamor.

30. Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have damaged me by giving me a bad name with the local people—the Canaanites and the Perrizites. I and my people are so few we can be counted. They will gather a company and wipe me and my entire household out.

31. Jacob's two sons Simeon and Levi answered him and said to their father Jacob, "It would not be proper for it to be said in their assemblies and in their expositions that the uncircumcised defiled virgins and worshipers of idols the daughter of Jacob; but it would be proper if it was said in the assemblies of Israel and in their houses of study that the uncircumcised were killed on account of the matter of the virgin—because, from among all the virgins they defiled Jacob's daughter Dinah. Therefore, it did not happen that Hamor's son Shechem derided us to himself, vilifying us in his heart and saying, 'She was like a woman who did not have anyone to avenge her—her humiliation.' Even so, how he treated our sister Dinah like an outcast,<sup>1247</sup> a prostitute!"

This translation is based on the text provided by Bernard Grossfeld. See bibliography.

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<sup>1245</sup> Grossfeld (232, n. 21) notes that "TN here is in agreement with Peshitta and Genesis Rabbah 80:10 in understanding בטח to refer to the disposition of Simeon and Levi during their act. This is in opposition to TO... and TPJ ... both of which regard בטח to refer to the city."

<sup>1246</sup> Both Díez Macho and Schiffman agree that לפגם in TN requires emendation to לפתגם, citing this form in both TO and TPJ (Grossfeld, 51).

<sup>1247</sup> אֵתָה טַעִיא: wandering woman.

## TARGUM ONKELOS

1. Dinah, the daughter whom Leah had borne to Jacob went out to look at the local girls.
2. Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite the local chief, saw her. He took her and forced forced her. He ruined her.
3. His soul delighted in Jacob's daughter Dinah and he loved the girl and he spoke to the girl, using persuasion.
4. Shechem said to his father Hamor, saying, "Get this girl as a wife for me."
5. When Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah, his sons were with his herds in the field. Jacob held his peace until his sons came.
6. And Shechem's father Hamor went out to Jacob to speak with him.
7. Jacob's sons came in from the field when they heard. The men were troubled and firmly united because he had created disgrace for Israel by forcing Jacob's daughter This is not the proper way to do things.
8. Hamor spoke with them, saying "My son Shechem's soul delights in your daughter Dinah. Now, give her to him as a wife.
9. Become connected to us through marriage. Give your daughters to us and take our daughters for yourselves.
10. Live with us. The land is open to you. Live and work in it. Move around freely and acquire holdings in it."
11. Shechem said to her father and to her brothers, "Let me find mercy in your eyes and whatever you say to me, I will give.
12. Greatly increase the bride price and gifts and I will give whatever you tell me and give me the girl as a wife."
13. Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor shrewdly. They spoke to those who had defiled their sister Dinah
14. And they said to them, "We cannot give our sister to a man who is uncircumcised because that is a disgrace to us.
15. Only on this condition will we agree with you —if you become like us— and you become circumcised—every male.

16. Then we will give our daughters to you and we will take your daughters for ourselves and we will live with you and become one people.
17. But if you do not agree with us and become circumcised, we will take our daughter and go.”
18. What they said pleased Hamor and Hamor’s son Shechem.
19. The young man did not hesitate to do the thing because he delighted in Jacob’s daughter. He was the most honored in all his father’s household.
20. Hamor came and his son Shechem went to the gate of their city and they spoke with the men of their city, saying
21. “These men are completely friendly toward us. Let them settle in the surrounding area and work it. There is plenty of room for them.<sup>1248</sup> We will take their daughters for ourselves as wives and we will give our daughters to them
22. Only on this condition will the men make a covenant with us to live with us and become one people: that we become circumcised—every male—as they are circumcised.
23. Their flocks, their cattle and all their oxen—will not these things of theirs be ours? We just have to accede to their requirement and they will live with us.”
24. All of those who go out of the city gate listened to Hamor and to his son Shechem. And all of the males—all who go out of the city gate—were circumcised.
25. Then on the third day when their pain consumed them<sup>1249</sup> two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword and entered the trusting city<sup>1250</sup> and killed all the men.
26. They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with a slash<sup>1251</sup> of the sword and they took Dinah from Shechem’s house and they left.
27. The sons of Jacob came in to strip the slain and plundered the city where they had defiled their sister.
28. They plundered their sheep and their oxen and their asses and what was in the city and what was in the field.

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<sup>1248</sup> Lit, “This land is wide to the hands before them.” The image conjured up is one of Hamor spreading his hands before his audience in order to indicate the breadth of available territory.

<sup>1249</sup> Lit, “when their pain went out upon them.”

<sup>1250</sup> Lit, “the city dwelling in faith [or security].”

<sup>1251</sup> לִפְתָּחַם : from פָּתַח, “to cut,” Jastrow, 1250.

29. Their possessions, all their children and their wives they captured. They plundered everything of the house [of Hamor].
30. Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have stirred up trouble for me by creating<sup>1252</sup> enmity between me and the local people—the Canaanites and the Perremites. And there are so few of us we can be numbered!<sup>1253</sup> They will gather together against me and wipe me out! I will be annihilated, I and every person in my household.
31. And they said, “Should he have treated our sister as a prostitute?”

This translation is based on Alexander Sperber’s text. See bibliography.

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<sup>1252</sup> נתן

<sup>1253</sup> “And I am a people who [can be] numbered.”

## TARGUM PSEUDO-JONATHON

- 1) Dinah, the daughter whom Leah had borne to Jacob, went out to see the customs of the daughters of the people of the land.
- 2) Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, chief of the land, saw her and took her by force and lay with her and hurt her.
- 3) His soul delighted in Jacob's daughter, Dinah. He loved the girl and he spoke as a consoler to the girl's heart.
4. Shechem said to his father Hamor, "Get this girl-child for me as a wife."
5. When Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah, his sons were with his herds in the field. Jacob held his peace until they came.
6. Shechem's father Hamor went out to Jacob to speak with him.
7. Jacob's sons came in from the field when they heard. The men were troubled and firmly united because Shechem had created disgrace in Israel by sleeping with Jacob's daughter. It is not fitting for things to be done in this way.
8. Hamor spoke with them, saying, "My son Shechem's soul delights in your daughter. Please give her to him as a wife.
9. Intermingle in marriage with us. Give your daughters to us and take our daughters for yourselves.
10. Live with us. The land is available to you. Settle where it is satisfactory to you and work it. Do business and acquire holdings in it."
11. Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me find mercy in your eyes and whatever you say to me I will give.
12. Increase the bride price and gifts as much as you want and I will give whatever you tell me to and you give me the girl as a wife."
13. Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor shrewdly. They spoke in this way because he had defiled their sister Dinah.
14. And they said to them, "We are not able to to give our sister to a man who is uncircumcised, because that is a disgrace to us.
15. Only on this condition will we make a covenant with you—if you become like us—and every male become circumcised.

16. Then we will give our daughters to you and we will take your daughters for ourselves and we will live with you and we will become one people.
17. But if you do not agree with us and become circumcised, we will take our daughter by force and go.”
18. What they said pleased Hamor and his son Shechem.
19. The young man did not wait to do the thing because he found pleasure in Jacob’s daughter. He was the most honored in all his father’s household.
20. Hamor and his son Shechem went to the gate of their city and they spoke with the the men of the gate of their city, saying
21. “These men are entirely friendly toward us. Let them live in the land, work it, and do business. Look, the land before them is boundless. We will take their daughters for ourselves as wives and we will give our daughters to them.
22. Only on this condition will the men make a covenant with us to live with us and become one people: that we become circumcised—every male—as they are circumcised.
23. Their property and their possessions and their livestock—look—won’t they be ours? We just have to accede to their requirement and they will live with us.”
24. All who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and his son Shechem. They circumcised every male—all who went out of the gate of his city.
25. Then, on the third day when they were weakened by the pain of their circumcision, two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword and entered the trusting city<sup>1254</sup> and killed every male.
26. They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with a slash of the sword and they took Dinah from Shechem’s house and left.
27. Then Jacob’s sons came in to strip the slain and they plundered the city because they had defiled their sister in it.
28. They plundered their sheep and their oxen and their asses and what was in the city and what was in the field.
29. All their possessions and all their children they took captive and they plundered all that was in the house of Hamor.

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<sup>1254</sup> דְּהַבָּא read דְּהַבָּא, Clarke, x.

30. And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have stirred up trouble for me, spreading a bad reputation among the local people—the Canaanites and the Perizzites. I have few men, and if they gather against me and attack me, I will be wiped out—I and the members of my household.
31. Simeon and Levi answered, “It is not fitting that it be said in the congregations of the children of Israel, ‘The uncircumcised defiled the virgin and the worshipers of idols polluted the daughter of Jacob.’ These are the fitting things which should be said, ‘The uncircumcised were killed on account of the virgin and the worshipers of idols on account of the daughter of Jacob.’ And Hamor’s son Shechem will not sneer at us with boasting words. He would have treated our sister like an outcast, a prostitute who has no avenger, if we had not done this thing.”

This translation is based on the text provided by E. G. Clarke, as well as on Michael Maher’s exegesis and commentary. See the bibliography.



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