Managing Men:

Marriage and Masculinities in Ezra 9-10

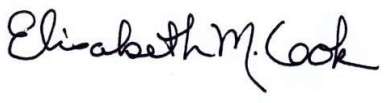
Submitted by Elisabeth Marie Cook, to the University of Exeter

as a thesis for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Theology and Religion

In November, 2019

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that any material that has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University has been acknowledged.



Abstract

The expulsion of the 'foreign' women in Ezra 9-10 has significantly dominated scholarly discussions of this text, where the identity, bodies, sexuality, and religious practices of the women are analysed as issues that pertain to their roles as women, daughters, and wives. It is men, however, who are the primary actors in the text. It is men who initiate the marriage ties and are implicated in alliances by marriage; it is men's 'holy seed' that is at stake; it is men's possession of the land that is disputed. These debates, it is argued in this thesis, are better analysed as they pertain to men and the production of masculinities.

Drawing on contributions from critical studies of masculinities this thesis interrogates men and masculinities in Ezra 9-10 as they are represented, constituted, performed, and embodied in the text. It attends to the 'feminized' masculinity of the peoples-of-the-lands, the unstable masculinity of the *golah*, Ezra's performance of penitential masculinity, and the rehabilitation of divine masculinity. It explores the way in which the rejection of the marriages and the call for the expulsion of the women and children are rendered sites on which *golah* masculinities are produced, and power relations within the *golah* are articulated.

This analysis sheds light on the ways in which traits and performances that are culturally ascribed to women, femininity and inferior masculinities are appropriated in the production of masculinities and power relations between men in Ezra 9-10. This thesis posits that the debate over intermarriage is not concerned with who the women are or what they have done; it is concerned with dissenting *golah* men, and with bringing their masculinities, bodies, and practices under 'management' of those who wield the Torah in the narrative world of the text.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Over the eight years during which I have researched and written this thesis many people have contributed to and supported this process. Many life events have challenged me during this time and were it not for my family, friends, and colleagues, and of course, my supervisor, Francesca Stavrakopoulou, this task would have been much more difficult.

I want to thank Francesca for her immediate and encouraging response to my e-mail inquiry asking if she would work with me on this proposal. Without her guidance, insightful comments, constructive feedback, and critique, and above all, encouragement, the thesis I present here would not have come to fruition. She introduced me to a world of critical approaches to biblical texts that I had not yet explored, and for that, I am most grateful. I wish to express my thanks as well to David Horrell, my second supervisor, for his feedback and his support and encouragement throughout.

My co-workers and colleagues at the Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana in Costa Rica, where I have continued to work with increasing responsibilities during the writing of this thesis, have been overwhelmingly supportive of this project. I thank the University for several periods of leave I was granted and my colleagues Mireya Baltodano and José Enrique Ramírez for taking over my teaching and administrative responsibilities during these times. I cannot but mention the countless hours of discussion and debate provided by my colleague and friend José Enrique Ramírez that sharpened my ideas and provided much-needed perspective in moments of desperation. Without the support of my co-workers and colleagues, this would have been a much more arduous and lonelier task.

I am grateful for the support of my family, my brothers, sisters-in-law, nieces, and nephews, and close friends, all of whom are eagerly awaiting my presence at the many activities I have missed during this time. Lastly, I want to acknowledge my mother, Beverly Jean Steike, a woman whose strength, integrity, and kindness I can only aspire to. It is to my mother, and the memories she has gifted me even as they began to escape her, that I dedicate this thesis.

Introduction: The Problem with the Problem

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah have been productive sites for scholarly discussions concerning the history, literature, identity, social configuration, and religious practices of Persian period Yehud.[1] Persian involvement in temple building, the authorization of the Torah, and Ezra's scribal role are key areas of interest, as well as the construction of Yehudite identity, relationships between 'Israelites' and 'foreigners', and the impact of Persian imperialism. Ezra 9-10 stands out amid this growing field of research as a particularly intriguing,

[1] The raft of publications even since the turn of the century attests to this. Key collected works of the past twenty years include: Rainer Albertz, Bob Becking, and European Association for Biblical Studies, *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era: Papers Read at the First Meeting of the European Association for Biblical Studies, Utrecht, 6-9 August 2000*, Studies in Theology and Religion (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 2003); Yigal Levin, *A Time of Change: Judah and Its Neighbours in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods*, Library of Second Temple Studies (London; New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2007); Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming, *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006); Oded Lipschitz, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming, *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011); Philip R. Davies and John M. Halligan, *Second Temple Studies III: Studies in Politics, Class, and Material Culture*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Richard J. Bautch and Gary N. Knoppers, *Covenant in the Persian Period: From Genesis to Chronicles* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015); Ehud Ben Zvi, Diana Vikander Edelman, and Frank Polak, *A Palimpsest: Rhetoric, Ideology, Stylistics, and Language Relating to Persian Israel*, Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and Its Contexts (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009); Jon L. Berquist, *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period*, Semeia Studies (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008); Peter R. Ackroyd et al., *Exile and Restoration Revisited: Essays on the Babylonian and Persian Periods in Memory of Peter R. Ackroyd*, Library of Second Temple Studies (London: T & T Clark, 2009); Jon L. Berquist, "Constructions of Identity in Postcolonial Yehud," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006). See also numerous monographs including Melody D. Knowles, *Centrality Practiced: Jerusalem in the Religious Practice of Yehud and the Diaspora in the Persian Period*, Archaeology and Biblical Studies (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006); Sara Japhet, *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006); Diana Vikander Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem*, 1st ed., Bibleworld (London; Oakville: Equinox Pub., 2005); Lisbeth Fried, *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire*, Biblical and Judaic Studies (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004); Peter Ross Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2001); Erhard Gerstenberger, *Israel in the Persian Period: The Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.E*, Society of Biblical Literature Biblical Encyclopedia (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010); Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period Vol 1.*, Library of Second Temple Studies (London; New York: T & T Clark International, 2004); *An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism: History and Religion of the Jews in the Time of Nehemiah, the Maccabees, Hillel and Jesus* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2010); Bob Becking, *Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Construction of Early Jewish Identity*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011). Essays are too numerous to cite, but will be referenced throughout this thesis as appropriate.

polemical and paradigmatic textual unit, especially as concerns the debate over intermarriage and the expulsion of the 'foreign' women as called for in Ezra 10.2-5.[2]

> Shecaniah son of Jehiel, of the sons of Elam, said to Ezra, 'We have been unfaithful to our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, but now there is hope for Israel despite this. So now let us make a covenant with our God to expel all the women and those born from them, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and according to the Torah let it be done' (Ezra 10.2-5).[3]

The demand that women and children be expelled from the community and their homes in what is presented as an act of fidelity to Yhwh has rested uneasily among many scholars and readers of this text. Hugh Williamson's evaluation that it is 'one of the least attractive parts of Ezra-Nehemiah, if not of the whole OT [*sic*]', is echoed by those who variously describe the measure as inhumane, radical, severe, and ethically insensitive.[4] Most problematic, however, is the absence of any clear argument in the text that might explain why the women

[2] Marriage between Yehudite men and 'foreign' women is also debated in Neh 13.23-29 but has not received the sustained attention given to the 'foreign' women in Ezra 9-10. This may be due, in part, to the ambiguity surrounding the identity of the women and the threat they appear to represent, as well as scholarly discomfort with the decision that women and children should be expelled from the community. Precisely because of the ambiguity surrounding the identity of the women, I will use scare quotes around the term 'foreign' used to describe them in Ezra 10. The foreignness involved, I suggest, is an ideological category produced in the world of the text rather than a reference to a specific polity.

[3] Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

[4] H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, ed. David Hubbard and Glenn Barker, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985), 159. See also Sara Japhet, "The Expulsion of the Foreign Women (Ezra 9-10): The Legal Basis, Precedentes, and Consequences for the Definition of Jewish Identity," in *'Sieben Augen auf einem Stein' (Sach 3,9): Studien zur Literatur des Zweiten Tempels*, ed. Friedhelm Hartenstein and Michael Pietsch (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2007), 35-36; Bob Becking, "On the Identity of the Foreign Women," in *Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Construction of Early Jewish Identity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011); Gerald A. Klingbeil, "'Not So Happily Ever After...': Cross-Cultural Marriages in the Time of Ezra-Nehemiah," *Maarav* 14, no. 1 (2007); Philip F. Esler, "Ezra-Nehemiah as a Narrative of (Re-Invented) Israelite Identity," *Biblical Interpretation* 11, no. 3/4 (2003); Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary*, 1st ed., The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988).

should be expelled and the families broken up, along with the divine sanction this measure is granted.[5]

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that scholarly inquiries into Ezra 9-10 have been intently focused on elucidating the reasons for the expulsion of the women and children.[6] Not only are the women silent in this text, but the text is also largely silent about the women and their children. The curiosity generated by the women is aptly summarized by Bob Becking: 'What intrigues me is the question of the identity of these women. Who were they? Why did they evoke the anger of the community?'[7] This line of inquiry that seeks, in Tamara Eskenazi's words, to bring women 'out from the shadows', has drawn a quasi-voyeuristic gaze upon the women of Ezra 9-10.[8] It has placed the burden of proof on the women and rendered them the problematic figures in the text: their ethnicity, assumed religious and sexual proclivities, social and gender roles, are examined in search of clues to decipher this uncomfortable text.[9]

In this Introduction, I consider the complications that arise from the prioritization of the women and their expulsion in scholarly studies. I explore various approaches to the problem of the 'foreign' women in the context of the

[5] By reference to the Torah as mediated by the scribe-priest Ezra (9.10b-12; 10.3b).
[6] Ehud Ben Zvi, "Re-Negotiating a Putative Utopia and the Stories of the Rejection of the Foreign Wives in Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Worlds That Could Not Be: Utopia in Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah*, ed. Steven James Schweitzer (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 104-128.
[7] Becking, "On the Identity of the Foreign Women," 58.
[8] Tamara C. Eskenazi, "Out from the Shadows: Biblical Women in the Postexilic Era," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 17, no. 54 (1992): 25-43.
[9] The issue persists in feminist studies of Ezra 9-10 that employ 'recuperative' strategies in order to identify the traces of 'real women' and their lives in the text, and in apologetic endeavours that 'rescue' either the women or the community (i.e. the men) who deem their expulsion necessary. See critique of feminist scholarship on Ezra 9-10 in Roland Boer, "No Road: On the Absence of Feminist Criticism of Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Her Master's Tools?: Feminist and Postcolonial Engagements of Historical-Critical Discourse*, ed. Caroline Vander Stichele and Todd C. Penner (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005), 233-252; and Julie Kelso, "Reading Silence: The Books of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, and the Relative Absence of a Feminist Interpretative History," in *Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Retrospect: I. Biblical Books*, ed. Susanne Scholz (2013), 268-289.

broader scholarly discussion concerning the books of Ezra and Nehemiah and their contribution to social and historical reconstructions of fifth-century BCE Yehud. Rather than seeking to locate the text's historical referent or argue for a specific compositional theory, I propose a reading of Ezra 9-10 that primarily explores the 'narrative world' it produces. With the phrase 'narrative world' I reference not only the narrative artistry of the text but also the ways in which Ezra 9-10 constructs a conceptual and embodied 'world' for readers of the received text. It is one in which the authoritative status of Torah and that of the figure of Ezra are debated, and in which they function as sites on which cultural memory is constituted and memorialized in Second Temple Judaisms and beyond.[10] In this narrative world – and in this thesis – the term 'Israel' references an ideological biblical construct rather than a historical entity.[11]

The Problem with the Problem of the 'Foreign' Women

The 'foreign' women of Ezra 9-10 are not only a problem for the 'returned' exiles – the *golah* – in the text, they are also a problem for biblical scholars – a problem they seek to resolve.[12] Despite infrequent engagement with this text from feminist and gender-critical perspectives,[13] women's gendered roles and

[10] Ben Zvi argues that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah allowed readers later than the 'putative time of the stories' to explore 'not only of an image of a utopian "pure" Israel and a memory of a "memorable" attempt to implement it, but…a reminder that implementing "utopia" ran, unsurprisingly, into problems'; Ben Zvi, "Re-Negotiating a Putative Utopia," 119. On cultural memory in the Hebrew Bible, see Ronald S. Hendel, *Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory, and History in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[11] In the rest of this thesis, I will avoid scare quotes for the word 'Israel' because of the frequency with which the term appears. On Israel as a biblical construct, see Philip R. Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel'*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1992). Where I reference a geo-political entity, I will use Judah, Yehud, or the Kingdom of Israel as appropriate.

[12] The term הגולה (בני הגולה) is used throughout the book of Ezra to designate only the Judean exiles who 'returned' to Yehud. Both Judean and exilic lineage are criteria for membership in Israel, as highlighted in Ezra 2.59-63.

[13] See Boer, "No Road," 233-252; Kelso, "Reading Silence," 268-289. Feminist works on Ezra 9-10 are limited to Eskenazi, "Out from the Shadows," 25-43; and Christiane Karrer-Grube, "Ezra

attributes, and gendered assumptions that pertain to these roles are on display wherever the women are placed under the scholarly lens. Their roles in the narrative as daughters of indigenous inhabitants of the land, wives of *golah* men, and mothers of the community's new members, are brought to the fore as elements that render them threatening and problematic.[14] The insistent scholarly focus on the women as the key to unlocking the mysteries of the text – and even its assumed historical referents – takes at face value, as Claudia Camp notes, the 'textual claim that the problem [with intermarriage] lies only with foreign wives'.[15] The men, however, are not similarly analysed, and neither are their gendered roles as fathers, sons, and husbands explored.

And yet, it is the men who are the primary actors in Ezra 9-10. Men take wives and bring them into the *golah,* an act that necessarily involves a relationship between *golah* men and the male kin of these daughters (9.2). Men accuse other men (9.1-2), they gather around Ezra (9.3; 10.1, 12), mourn, pray, tremble, fall to the ground, weep (9.3-10.1), propose covenants (10.3), swear (10.5), make pledges (10.19), fast (10.6), issue orders that affect the property and status of other men (10.8), assemble (10.9), plan (10.13-14), voice dissenting opinions (10.15), and occupy all the social and cultic roles in the text. It is men's

---

and Nehemiah: The Return of the Others," in *Feminist Biblical Interpretation: A Compendium of Critical Commentary on the Books of the Bible and Related Literature*, ed. Luise Schottroff, Marie-Theres Wacker, and Martin Rumscheidt (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 192-206. For intersectional approaches that include gender, see Christl M. Maier, "The 'Foreign' Women in Ezra-Nehemiah: Intersectional Perspectives on Ethnicity," in *Feminist Frameworks and the Bible: Power, Ambiguity, and Intersectionality*, ed. L. Juliana M. Claassens and Carolyn J. Sharp (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 79-97; Willa Mathis Johnson, *The Holy Seed Has Been Defiled: The Interethnic Marriage Dilemma in Ezra 9-10* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011).

[14] They are, furthermore, associated with menstruation and biological reproduction (Ezra 9.11; 10.3b, 44).

[15] Claudia V. Camp, "Feminist- and Gender-Critical Perspectives on the Biblical Ideology of Intermarriage," in *Mixed Marriages: Intermarriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Christian Frevel (New York: T & T Clark International, 2011), 306. This would appear to be true even in gender-critical approaches that, Roland Boer argues, isolate the women from the broader pattern of opposition and dissent in the book; Boer, "No Road," 234.

bodies that are encountered, men's relationships that are disputed, the men's cultural memory of captivity and plundering that is memorialized (9.6), and the men's relationship with Yhwh that is called into question (10.2). Studies of Ezra 9-10 however, do not analyse, problematize, or consider the ways in which these men are constructed and deployed in the text as *men*. Nor have the masculine performances, attributes, and bodies of these narrative players been the object of gendered analysis.

Scholars concerned with the expulsion of the women and children in Ezra 9-10 as a central feature of Ezra's mission have sought to identify the women, explain the rejection of the marriages, and why their expulsion is required. Little is revealed about these women in the text itself, however: they are daughters of the peoples-of-the-lands (9.2),[16] they are 'foreign' women (נשים נכריות; 10.2,10,11,17,18,44), and they have children (10.3,44). A more elaborate, although still ambiguous description, is provided of the peoples-of-the-lands to whom the women are said to belong: in 9.1 they are associated with the abominations of 'Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites';[17] in 9.11, their abominations make them impure (נדה) and contaminate the land, and in 9.14 they are 'abominable peoples' (עמי התועבות) with whom the *golah* should not intermarry. What precisely these 'abominations' are, and in what way the peoples-of-the-lands are understood to be similar to ancient indigenous inhabitants of the land of Canaan and other neighbouring peoples, is similarly vague. To fill in these gaps, scholars look to

[16] Two different plural forms of this designation are used in Ezra 9-10. Ezra 9 uses עמי הארצות in verses 1, 2,11, while Ezra 10 employs עמי הארץ in verses 2 and 11. I discuss this terminology further in Chapter 2.

[17] Ezra 9.1b: כתועבות ל־

other biblical texts concerning intermarriage, and to other biblical 'foreign' women. Reconstructions of the social and historical context of fifth-century BCE Yehud also play an important role in these interrogations of the text.

The terminology used in Ezra 9-10, and the characterization of foreign women in the Hebrew Bible more generally, has led several scholars to conclude that the women in Ezra 9-10 are rejected because they are apostate, foreign, sexually deviant, and impure.[18] Their association with 'Canaanites' and other undesirable peoples (whether these are understood as a social or genealogical construct, or as a pejorative reference to those who are not Israel), suggests that the women were prone to lead Israel after other gods,[19] and to participate in practices deemed unsuitable for Israel.[20] This image is reinforced by the designation 'foreign' women (נשים נכריות) used in Ezra 10, a label that also describes Solomon's foreign wives who turn his heart from Yhwh toward the gods of their peoples.[21] Other problems associated with biblical נשים נכריות include the cultural influence of the wives in Nehemiah 23.23-27 whose in the children forget יהודית in favour of their mother's tongue and the allure of the seductive adulteress (נכריה) in Proverbs whose sexual guiles lead Israelite men down the wrong path.[22] Based on these biblical resonances and the 'exodus paradigm' he finds

[18] Donald P. Moffatt, *Ezra's Social Drama: Identity Formation, Marriage and Social Conflict in Ezra 9-10* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013); David Janzen, *Witch-Hunts, Purity and Social Boundaries: The Expulsion of the Foreign Women in Ezra 9-10*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); A. Philip Brown II, "The Problem of Mixed Marriages in Ezra 9-10," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 162(2005): 437-458; Johnson, *The Holy Seed Has Been Defiled*; F. Charles Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982); Jacob Martin Myers, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 1st ed., AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965); Klingbeil, "'Not So Happily Ever After...'," 39-75.

[19] Deut 7.3; Exod 24.15-16; Josh 23.6-7; Judg 3.5.

[20] Lev 18.2,24-30; 20.23.

[21] See 1 Kgs 11.1-8. Solomon's marriages are used by Nehemiah as an example of grave sin (Neh 13.26).

[22] See Prov 2.16; 5.20; 6.24; 7.5; 23.27, where the term נכריה is often rendered 'adulteress' in modern translations. But see Nancy Tan who argues that the term נכריה in Proverbs refers to

in Ezra 9-10, Donald Moffatt argues that the women in Ezra 9-10 function as a 'powerful symbol' that encompasses their role as 'agents of apostasy, contagious impurity, an alluring temptation that carried destruction for the community'.[23] The orientalising tendency evidenced in Moffatt's characterization is further developed in Willa Johnson's description of the women as 'alluring, defiling, and mysterious' due to their foreignness.[24]

David Janzen's monograph on Ezra 9-10, *Witch-hunts, Purity and Social Boundaries*, similarly makes the women responsible for their expulsion.[25] The impurity ascribed to the women is the reason for their expulsion: it is a witch-hunt, and their expulsion is a 'ritualized act'. [26] For Janzen, this treatment of the women has little to do with their foreignness or anything they do. Rather, witch-hunts tend to target women, he argues, because they are women, and are therefore more closely identified with nature (birth and death).[27] The expulsion is ultimately beneficial to the community, he concludes, as it addresses the exacerbated social anxiety and weakening internal adherence to social norms generated by the

ethnic foreignness; Nancy Nam Hoon Tan, *The 'Foreignness' of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9: A Study of the Origin and Development of a Biblical Motif*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008). On feminine otherness in the book of Proverbs and its social context, see Harold C. Washington, "The Strange Woman of Proverbs 1-9 and Post-Exilic Judaean Society," in *Second Temple Studies. 2, Temple and Community in the Persian Period*, ed. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Kent Harold Richards (Sheffield, England: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1994), 217-242; Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Social Context of the 'Outsider Woman' in Proverbs 1-9," *Biblica* 74(1991): 457-473; Gale A. Yee, "I Have Perfumed My Bed with Myrrh: The Foreign Woman ('Issa Zara) in Proverbs 1-9," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 43(1989): 53-68.

[23] The women are dangerous and therefore, their expulsion is seen as a necessary act; Moffatt, *Ezra's Social Drama*: 152.

[24] Johnson, *The Holy Seed Has Been Defiled*: 99.

[25] Janzen, *Witch-Hunts*.

[26] *Witch-Hunts*: 19.

[27] *Witch-Hunts*: 79-80. Janzen reproduces Sherry Ortner's problematic 'nature' versus 'culture' model, singling out of women based on their presumed closer relationship to 'nature', while assigning men to the realm of 'culture'. Janzen's proposal draws on Mary Douglas and Richard Fenn's theories of ritualization and social integration. See Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*, 2nd ed. (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1973); and Richard K. Fenn, *The End of Time: Religion, Ritual, and the Forging of the Soul* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1997), 131-132.

presence of Persian military and foreign traders.[28] It functions to produce assent to a pre-existing worldview, norms, and authority structure.[29] Janzen's study embraces with uncritical gusto the problematic dichotomies that associate women with magic, nature, and deviancy, as inferior to religion, culture, and orthodox behaviours. [30] The women are found to be impure because they are women, and therefore natural targets of such a witch-hunt.[31]

The women are not the sole bearers of impurity in Ezra 9-10, rather this trait is ascribed to the peoples-of-the-lands (9.11), a male social group that inhabits that land the *golah* claims as its rightful possession. The mother-tongue of these women is not discussed in Ezra 9-10, neither are their sexual proclivities a subject of critique. The text does not offer any information concerning the religious practices of the women, much less is it suggested that they worshipped other gods. Thus, unlike other נשים נכריות in the Hebrew Bible, the women in Ezra 9-10 are not explicitly accused of doing anything at all.

If the polemics found in other biblical texts are to be at all indicative, the writers of Ezra 9-10 had ample opportunity to highlight the unacceptable religious practices of the women, if they were indeed at stake, but they did not.[32] Furthermore, while scholars may point to biblical tropes concerning intermarriage and 'foreign' women to argue that the women in Ezra 9-10 are problematic, these

[28] Janzen, *Witch-Hunts*: 55.
[29] Citing Roy Rappaport, Janzen suggests that participation in ritual indicates assent, if not always 'belief'; *Witch-Hunts*: 22. See Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 120.
[30] On gender relations, power hierarchies and the feminization of witchcraft as a way of constructing 'men', see Kimberly B. Stratton, *Naming the Witch: Magic, Ideology, & Stereotype in the Ancient World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 24-25.
[31] Janzen provides case studies to support his claim that the women are natural targets of what is a witch-hunt, and that this is a ritualized act whereby the community 'subjugates itself to the social order'; Janzen, *Witch-Hunts*: 62-82 (62).
[32] The term תועבה is used three times in Ezra 9 to characterize the peoples-of-the-land, but no specific practices are mentioned. And while there are resonances of the Torah prohibitions in Deut 7.1-3 and Exod 34.15-16, Ezra 9.12 omits the religious argumentation found in these texts.

characterizations do not convincingly explain why they and their children must be expelled. Such conclusions extrapolate from other biblical texts, and from representations of other 'foreign' women in the Hebrew Bible.

Neither do arguments derived from Ezra's putative use of Torah prohibitions in 9.11-12 explain the decision to expel the women and children:

> The land that you are entering to possess is a land unclean with the pollutions of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations. They have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness. Therefore do not give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity, so that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever.

The similarities in the arguments, terminology, and phrasing in Ezra 9.11-12 to that found in Deuteronomy 7.3-4 and Leviticus 18.24-30 suggest that the writer was familiar with similar prescriptions.[33] The notion that Ezra applies established Torah norms to a new context, as some scholars argue,[34] is fraught with complications, however.

References to Torah legislation in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah evidence numerous differences that call into question the existence of an established version of the Torah, and raise doubts concerning the nature of its authoritative status during the Persian Period.[35] While Ezra 9.12 is indeed quite

[33] See comparisons in Juha Pakkala, "The Quotations and References of the Pentateuchal Laws in Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Changes in Scripture: Rewriting and Interpreting Authoritative Traditions in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Hanne von Weissenberg, Juha Pakkala, and Marko Marttila (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 193-221.

[34] Saul Olyan posits that 'expansive and creative exegesis of earlier texts such as Lev 18.24-30, Deut 23.4-9, and Deut 7.1-6 plays a central role in the exclusionist program' in Ezra 9-10. Saul M. Olyan, "Purity Ideology in Ezra-Nehemiah as a Tool to Reconstitute the Community," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 35, no. 1 (2004): 2. Fishbane argues that the call for the expulsion of the women is an exegetical development of Torah legislation; Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 114-123. See also Benedikt J. Conczorowski, "All the Same as Ezra? Conceptual Differences between the Texts on Intermarriage in Genesis, Deuteronomy 7 and Ezra," in *Mixed Marriages: Intermarriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Christian Frevel (New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 103-107; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 95-96; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 179.

[35] LeFebvre argues that the Torah was not prescriptive, but rather an ideal from which Ezra modelled his decision; Michael LeFebvre, *Collections, Codes, and Torah: The Re-*

similar to Deuteronomy 7.3, the religious rationale provided in Deuteronomy is notably absent in Ezra's version. The women in Ezra 9.11-2 are not accused of leading Israelite men after other gods, as are the daughters of the indigenous inhabitants of the land in the Torah text. And while Leviticus 18.24-25 indicates that the abominations of the indigenous inhabitants of the land of Canaan contaminated the land, which resulted in their expulsion, at issue in this text is not intermarriage, but Israelite avoidance of such abominations. Another complicating factor is that neither the Torah nor any biblical texts concerned with intermarriage prescribe the expulsion of foreign wives and their children.[36]

Ezra's citation of Yhwh's commandments includes a reference to the contaminating effects of the abominations practiced by the peoples-of-the-lands: the land itself is 'impure with the impurity of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations that have filled the land with impurity' (9.11).[37] Based on this verse and the description of the *golah* as a 'holy seed' (זרע הקדש, in 9.2), scholars have argued that the fundamental problem with the women, and the reason for their expulsion, is their impurity. These discussions largely focus on the scholarly category in which biblical notions of impurity may be located, whether ritual, moral, genealogical, sexual or a combination thereof.[38] Jonathan Klawans argues

Characterization of Israel's Written Law, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 115. Michael Satlow makes a distinction between the literary, normative and oracular authority of biblical texts, and argues that the prescriptive status of texts as authoritative Torah before the Hellenistic era is unlikely; Michael L. Satlow, *How the Bible Became Holy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 3-7.

[36] See Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*: 114-123.

[37] ארץ נדה היא בנדת עמי הארצות בתועבתיהם אשר מלאוה מפה אל־פה בטמאתם

[38] Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Christine Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Eve Levavi Feinstein, *Sexual Pollution in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Olyan, "Purity Ideology in Ezra-Nehemiah," 1-16; Hannah Harrington, "Holiness and Purity in Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Unity and Disunity in Ezra-Nehemiah: Redaction, Rhetoric, and Reader*, ed. Mark J. Boda and Paul L. Redditt (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), 98-116; Harold C. Washington, "Israel's Holy Seed and the Foreign Women of Ezra-Nehemiah: A Kristevan Reading," *Biblical Interpretation* 11, no. 3/4 (2003): 427-437.

that Ezra 9.11 points to moral impurity as the problem with the 'foreign' women: the 'abominable acts of the women in question defile the land of Israel.[39] Christine Hayes proposes, however, that the impurity in question is genealogical so that it profanes the 'seed' of these marriages.[40] Eve Feinstein posits, along similar lines, that the fear evidenced in the text is that these 'polluting women will contaminate the pure male Israelite body'.[41]

These scholarly discussions attach impurity primarily, or even solely, to the women. In Ezra 9.11, however, impurity is attributed not to the women, but to the peoples-of-the-lands. The use of the term נדה, which is associated with menstrual impurity in Levitical prescriptions,[42] should be considered in terms of its implications for the peoples-of-the-lands, rather than a reference to the impurity of the 'foreign' women as such. Similarly, the 'abominable acts' that Klawans presents as evidence of moral impurity, are not solely those of the women. The relationship that is at stake in Ezra 9-10 is that of two male peoples; it may be mediated or illustrated by women, but it is *about* the men.

Scholars similarly fail to consider the gendered implications of the designation 'holy seed' that is closely tied to the male body and masculine

[39] Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*: 44. See critique of Klawans in Hannah Harrington, "The Use of Leviticus in Ezra-Nehemiah," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 13.a3(2013). Moral impurity, Jonathan Klawans argues, is derived from acts 'that are so heinous that they are explicitly referred to in biblical sources as defiling'. Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*: 26. This type of impurity is what he finds in Ezra 9.11 where the 'abominable acts (תועבות) of the women in question defile the land of Israel' (44). Klawans bases his argument on Lev 18.24-30; it should be noted, however that it is the land (and Yhwh) who expel the inhabitants, not the Israelites. Furthermore, Ezra 9-10 provides no indication that the expulsion of the women is viewed as an act of purification.

[40] For Hayes, the problem is the profanation of the 'holy seed' which 'has intermingled with the peoples of the land*'* (9.2). This seed, she argues, refers to the descendants of the *golah*, making this a matter of genealogical, rather than moral impurity; Hayes, *Gentile Impurities*: 115-116.

[41] Eve Feinstein argues that intermarriage is a form of inherited sexual pollution whereby the 'essence of foreignness' (the women) contaminates the 'genealogical essence of Israel'; Feinstein, *Sexual Pollution in the Hebrew Bible*: 154-155.

[42] See Lev 15.19,20,24,25,26,33; 18.19.

participation in procreation ('holy semen').[43] Arguably, holiness and impurity have much to do with men and masculinities in Ezra 9-10, but these issues are not addressed by most scholars. Furthermore, the performative effects of impurity constructions in this text are overlooked in the interest of locating this impurity within a category or symbolic system primarily constructed by scholars themselves.[44]

In short, while scholars look to the text to provide insight into why the women are to be expelled, it does not provide enough information to explain this decision. Uncritical conflations with other biblical texts lead to conclusions that, in my opinion, are not warranted by Ezra 9-10. The result is an image of female otherness that is not supported by the text in question, and one that subjects the women to continual re-vicitimisation. The ambiguities in Ezra 9-10 are better served, I suggest, by engaging with them as a constitutive element of the text rather than attempting to 'fill in the blanks' where information concerning the women is lacking.

The 'Real' Women of Yehud

Inquiries into the social and historical context of early fifth century BCE Yehud similarly seek to 'fill in the blanks' left in Ezra 9-10, by providing evidence external to the text that might illuminate questions concerning the identity of the women, the reasons why *golah* men might have married them in the first place, and why the women are to be expelled and families are to be broken up. These

[43] This is mentioned, but not developed, in Feinstein, *Sexual Pollution in the Hebrew Bible*: 154-155.
[44] For a critique of the scholarly focus on systems of impurity rather than the performative effects thereof, see T.M. Lemos, "Where There Is Dirt, Is There System? Revisiting Biblical Purity Constructions," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 37, no. 3 (2013): 265-294; and Christian Frevel and Christophe Nihan, "Introduction," in *Purity and the Forming of Religious Traditions* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 1-9.

reconstructions draw on material evidence and nonbiblical textual sources concerning the political and social history of Persian period Yehud and the circumstances of Persian rule in the region more broadly. Documents and archaeological studies pertaining to Yahwistic groups in Egypt and Samaria are also called upon to elucidate the internal workings of Yehudite society,[45] and demographic and epigraphic studies have sought to shed light on the social world of Yehud, especially the city of Jerusalem.[46] The Elephantine Papyri have offered a wealth of textual information concerning cultic and social dimensions of the life of this Egyptian community that has, in turn, been extensively employed in discussions concerning the status of women in Yehud.[47]

The broad context in which these studies locate the events in Ezra 9-10 is the displacement and dispersal produced by the Babylonian conquest and the 'return' under the Persian king Cyrus. A fundamental shift in the territorial, political, social and religious conditions triggering the transformation of Judah into Yehud is associated with the Exile – an event cast both in the Hebrew Bible and historical-critical studies as a definitive moment in the 'history' of this people.[48]

[45] For a discussion of Elephantine sources see Reinhard G. Kratz, "The Second Temple of Jeb and of Jerusalem," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 247-264. For sources on Persian period Samaria and problems with historical reconstructions see Gary N. Knoppers, "Revisiting the Samarian Question in the Persian Period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 265-289; "Aspects of Samaria's Religious Culture During the Early Hellenistic Period," in *The Historian and the Bible: Essays in Honour of Lester L. Grabbe*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe, Philip R. Davies, and Diana Vikander Edelman (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 159-174.

[46] For demographic studies of Persian Period Jerusalem and Yehud, see Israel Finkelstein, "Persian Period Jerusalem and Yehud: A Rejoinder," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 9, no. 24 (2009); Oded Lipschits, "Persian Period Finds from Jerusalem: Facts and Interpretations," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 9, no. 20 (2009); Charles E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

[47] See especially Eskenazi, "Out from the Shadows," 27-31. For methodological considerations concerning the use of these texts, see Annalisa Azzoni, "Women of Elephantine and Women in the Land of Israel," in *In the Shadow of Bezalel: Aramaic, Biblical, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bezalel Porten*, ed. Alejandro F. Botta (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 3-12.

[48] Some have argued that the Exile is more a scholarly construct than a historic watershed in the history of Israel. It is clearly a definitive context for the group called *golah* in the book of Ezra. On the Exile in history, in the Hebrew Bible and in biblical interpretation see Robert P. Carroll, "Exile!

The conflict with the peoples-of-the-lands in the book of Ezra is located by most scholars in the context of 'return', settlement and encounter with the local inhabitants, institutions and practices.

It is in this context of displacement and dispersion that scholars explore the issues of ethnicity and identity that come to the fore in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, including the identity of the 'foreign' women. The assumed influx toward Yehud from neighbouring regions during the exile, along with the ethnic designations that describe the women in Nehemiah 13.23-27 – Ashdodite, Ammonite, Moabite – lead some scholars to identify the women in Ezra with these polities.[49] Bob Becking argues, however, that there is little material or epigraphic evidence for a sustained presence of foreigners in Yehud, suggesting that foreign presence was 'negligible, certainly not enough to generate the type of crisis reported in Ezra 9-10'.[50]

A proposal that has gained traction amongst scholars suggests that the peoples-of-the-lands, to whom the women belong, are non-exiled Judahites who do not meet the stringent requirements for an Israelite identity that derives from

---

What Exile? Deportation and the Discourses of Diaspora," in *Leading Captivity Captive: "The Exile" as History and Ideology*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 62-80; Ehud Ben Zvi, "Total Exile, Empty Land and the General Intellectual Discourse in Yehud," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 155-168; Philip R. Davies, "Exile? What Exile? Whose Exile?," in *Leading Captivity Captive: "The Exile" as History and Ideology*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 128-138; Adele Berlin, "The Exile: Biblical Ideology and Its Postmodern Ideological Interpretation," in *Literary Construction of Identity in the Ancient World*, ed. Hanna Liss and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 341-356.

[49] See, for example, Klingbeil, "'Not So Happily Ever After...'," 39-75.

[50] Becking, "On the Identity of the Foreign Women," 58-73. He suggests that the dispute more likely results from competing cultic centres and the ties between high priestly families. Hensel argues similarly that at issue in the rejection of intermarriage are competing cult centres; Benedikt Hensel, "Ethnic Fiction and Identity-Formation: A New Explanation for the Background of the Question of Intermarriage in Ezra-Nehemiah," in *The Bible, Qumran, and the Samaritans*, ed. Magnar Kartveit (Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 133-148. Blenkinsopp on the other hand, posits that 'the womenfolk of the "peoples of the lands"… would presumably have included indigenous Judeans and resident non-Judeans, including Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites and women originating in Samaria and Philistia'; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Judaism, the First Phase: The Place of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Origins of Judaism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 67.

the experience of exile, as proposed in the book of Ezra.[51] This argument assumes a historical conflict between the *golah* and the inhabitants of the land, however, that is not borne out by other texts of the period, such as Chronicles, Haggai and Zechariah, nor by external sources or archaeological data.[52]

The perceived lacuna in scholarly studies concerning the lives and experiences of real women in Yehud, as well as assumptions that women's roles were diminished in the Persian period, are addressed by feminist scholars who seek to 'recover' women's roles, judicial rights, and status in this context.[53] These studies draw primarily from the Elephantine Papyri, as noted above, so that their value for reconstructing the lives of 'real' women in Yehud – a very different context – merits due caution. Furthermore, the assumption that the 'real' lives of

[51] For this proposal, see Daniel Smith-Christopher, "The Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9-10 and Nehemiah 13: A Study of the Sociology of Post-Exilic Judaean Community," in *Second Temple Studies. 2, Temple and Community in the Persian Period*, ed. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Kent Harold Richards (Sheffield, England: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1994), 243-265; Ehud Ben Zvi, "Inclusion in and Exclusion from Israel as Conveyed by the Use of the Term 'Israel' in Post-Monarchic Biblical Texts," in *The Pitcher Is Broken. Memorial Essays for Gösta W. Ahlström*, ed. Steven W. Holloway and Lowell K. Handy (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 95-149. Hensel argues that the category foreigner in Ezra and Nehemiah, is likely a 'cipher for other forms of Yahwism of the post-exilic period, and by this literary means secures ideologically the identity and the uniqueness of the Judean Israel-denomination'; Hensel, "Ethnic Fiction and Identity-Formation: A New Explanation for the Background of the Question of Intermarriage in Ezra-Nehemiah," 141. See the summary of archaeological remains and biblical texts that point to the existence of several Yahwistic cult centres outside of Yehud and within the province during the Persian Period in Knowles, *Centrality Practiced: Jerusalem in the Religious Practice of Yehud and the Diaspora in the Persian Period*: 40-52. This issue is not, however, clearly stated in the book, much less as part of the characterization of the 'foreign' women.

[52] Dalit Rom-Shiloni suggests that such disputes are not a result of the 'return', but 'deliberations over identity issues among Judean communities' that are already evidenced in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Jehu Pakkala's literary critical analysis leads him to conclude, however that such disputes between exiles and the non-exiled populations are not evidenced in the earliest text of the book of Ezra but incorporated by *golah* editors. See Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "From Ezekiel to Ezra-Nehemiah: Shifts of Group Identities within Babylonian Exilic Ideology," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*, ed. Oded Lipschitz, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 128-130; Juha Pakkala, "The Exile and the Exiles in the Ezra Tradition," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 91-102.

[53] This approach is explicit in Eskenazi, "Out from the Shadows," 25-43; Karrer-Grube, "Feminist Biblical Interpretation," 192-206.

women may 'recovered' from a biblical text has been called into question.[54] The received text offers no precise details concerning these women, leaving only an ambiguity that should be highlighted and addressed rather than buried under textual and historical reconstructions.

A related issue prompted by Ezra 9-10 and debated in biblical scholarship concerns the marriages themselves. Why did the *golah* characters of Ezra 9-10 secure 'foreign' women as wives? Why are the marriages rejected by Ezra and others in the community? The focus of this debate revolves primarily around assumed territorial concerns – specifically land possession and inheritance – which scholars have tied to anthropological models of endogamy and hypergamy, among others. *Golah* land possession is placed at risk by these marriages, some scholars argue, because the sons of these 'cross-cultural' unions would inherit the land.[55] More threatening, however, is the prospect that the women could themselves inherit in the event of their husband's death.[56]

There is no biblical or material evidence, however, to support the conclusion that the *golah* was in control of the land. This has led some scholars to posit that the marriages were entered into as a means of elevating the status of *golah* men and gaining access to the land.[57] In any of these scenarios, the women are located as the key problem: it is their foreignness and their ties to

[54] See Esther Fuchs, "Reclaiming the Hebrew Bible for Women: The Neoliberal Turn in Contemporary Feminist Scholarship," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 24, no. 2 (2008): 45-65; Kelso, "Reading Silence," 268-289.
[55] Japhet, "The Expulsion of the Foreign Women," 144-150.
[56] For this perspective, see Eskenazi, "Out from the Shadows," 35; Washington, "The Strange Woman of Proverbs 1-9 and Post-Exilic Judaean Society," 230-235.
[57] The scenario whereby it is the peoples-of-the-lands who are landowners is considered by Daniel Smith-Christopher who posits that some of the *golah* men may have married foreign women in order to enhance their social status. By marrying daughters from the peoples-of-the-lands they are 'marrying up'; Smith-Christopher, "The Mixed Marriage Crisis," 260-261. Willa Johnson draws on archaeological studies and other biblical texts to support a similar argument; Johnson, *The Holy Seed Has Been Defiled*: 37-55. Her extensive reconstruction of the social, political, and economic context leads her to conclude that the marriages opposed in Ezra 9-10 were between *golah* men and the daughters of Achaemenid rulers.

other peoples that places the *golah* at risk. The implications of the marriages for masculine performance, social ties, and the gendering of *golah* men are lacking in such studies.

A final point I address here has to do with the social and historical reconstructions underlying theories concerning the rejection of the marriages and the expulsion of the women. Some scholars appeal to external influences, such as Persian policy concerning marriage ties among provincial elites,[58] and Athenian laws that restricted citizenship – and thereby land ownership – to children of Athenian citizens.[59] Others offer alternative solutions to the problem of the marriages in Ezra 9-10 by suggesting either that the women are best understood as secondary wives, or that the marriages are illegitimate.[60] Both scenarios are assumed to allow for the women to be expelled, rather than require formal divorce proceedings.[61]

As noted above, biblical constructions of exile and 'return' underlie most scholarly reconstructions of the social and historical context by means of which Ezra 9-10 is explored. Ethnicity and identity feature prominently in discussions concerning the re-negotiation of assumed ethnic boundaries and markers of

[58] Kenneth G. Hoglund, "The Achaemenid Context," in *Second Temple Studies 1. The Persian Period*, ed. Philip R. Davies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 65-68. Some scholars suggest that Persia encouraged marriages between *golah* men and Persian women in order to strengthen allegiance to Persia. See Cheryl B. Anderson, "Reflections in an Interethnic/Racial Era on Interethnic/Racial Marriage," in *They Were All Together in One Place: Toward Minority Biblical Criticism*, ed. Randall C. Bailey, Tat-Siong Benny Liew, and Fernando F. Segovia (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009), 49; Johnson, *The Holy Seed Has Been Defiled*: 18.

[59] For Ezra 9-10 and Athenian citizenship laws see Lisbeth Fried, "The Concept of 'Impure Birth' in 5th Century Athens and Judea," in *In the Wake of Tikva Frymer-Kensky*, ed. Steven Holloway, Jo Ann Scurlock, and Richard Henry Beal (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 121-141; Wolfgang Oswald, "Foreign Marriages and Citizenship in Persian Period Judah," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 12, no. 6 (2012).

[60] Japhet, "The Expulsion of the Foreign Women," 141-161.

[61] Southwood suggests that the terminology used for marriage reveals that the author 'did not consider the marriages to retain legal standing', and therefore that 'divorce proceedings were unnecessary'; Katherine E. Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9-10: An Anthropological Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 181; see also Richard J. Bautch, *Glory and Power, Ritual and Relationship: The Sinai Covenant in the Postexilic Period*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies (New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 99-103.

identity in a new context.[62] The relationship between the *golah* and the indigenous inhabitants of Yehud and well as regional elites are key issues in these discussions. Also considered by scholars is the relationship between the *golah* and the diaspora and the role of the Torah in identity construction.[63]

Intermarriage is a prime site for this negotiation, as it establishes new kinship ties and blurs the boundaries between groups.[64] Katherine Southwood's analysis of ethnicity in Ezra 9-10 highlights the 'plurality of margins' that are delineated and enforced in the text, that have the effect of polarizing difference between the *golah* and the peoples-of-the-lands by reducing differentiation within these groups.[65] Intermarriage challenges these boundaries and is thereby addressed by expelling the women and children.[66] Control over intermarriage is

[62]See, for example, Tamara C. Eskenazi, "Imagining the Other in the Construction of Judahite Identity in Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple Period*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana Vikander Edelman (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2014), 230-256; Esler, "Ezra-Nehemiah as a Narrative of (Re-Invented) Israelite Identity," 413-426; Johnson, *The Holy Seed Has Been Defiled*; Gary N. Knoppers, "Ethnicity, Genealogy, Geography and Change: The Judean Communities of Babylon and Jerusalem in the Story of Ezra," in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 147-171; Maier, "The 'Foreign' Women in Ezra-Nehemiah," 79-97; Rom-Shiloni, "From Ezekiel to Ezra-Nehemiah: Shifts of Group Identities within Babylonian Exilic Ideology," 127-151; Daniel Smith-Christopher, "Between Ezra and Isaiah: Exclusion, Transformation and Inclusion of the 'Foreigner' in Post-Exilic Biblical Theology," in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, ed. Mark G. Brett (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), 117-142; Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis*; Berquist, "Constructions of Identity in Postcolonial Yehud," 53-66; Armin Siedlecki, *Negotiating Identity: The Portrayal of Foreigners in Ezra-Nehemiah* (Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Publishing, 2010); Moffatt, *Ezra's Social Drama*.

[63] On the relationship between the *golah* and the diaspora, see Peter Ross Bedford, "Diaspora: Homeland Relations in Ezra-Nehemiah," *Vetus Testamentum* 52, no. 2 (2002): 147-167; John Kessler, "The Diaspora in Zechariah 1-8 and Ezra-Nehemiah: The Role of History, Social Location, and Tradition in the Formulation of Identity," in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 119-146; Ralf Rothenbusch, "The Question of Mixed Marriages between the Poles of Diaspora and Homeland: Observations in Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Mixed Marriages: Intermarriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Christian Frevel (New York: T & T Clark International, 2011), 69-77; John Kessler, "Persia's Loyal Yahwists: Power, Identity, and Ethnicity in Achaemenid Yehud," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 91-122; Gary N. Knoppers, "The Construction of Judean Diasporic Identity in Ezra-Nehemiah," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 15, no. a.3 (2015).

[64] See the relationship negotiated between the sons of Jacob and the Shechemites in Gen 34, for example.

[65] Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis*: 140-145.

[66] This act, she argues, creates a 'new, anomalous, zone between the categories consisting of supposedly 'foreign' women, their children, and those who had married such women'; "An Ethnic

one of the behaviours typically associated with contexts of return migration and resulting hybridity, she argues.[67]

A similar, albeit less extensive, argument is developed by Mark Smith-Christopher's in his essays on ethnicity and intermarriage that explore the impact of exile on the social configuration of the exilic community, and on the encounter between 'returnees' and those who remained in the land.[68] These issues are not extraneous to the text, but they fail to take sufficiently into account the distance between the world of the narrative, and historical reconstructions of the particular contexts the text is assumed to reflect. The conflict narrated in the book of Ezra between 'returnees' and peoples-of-the-lands, for example, is not attested in other biblical texts, such as Haggai and Zechariah, that also reflect issues pertaining to Jerusalem and temple building and after the Exile.[69] Matters of ethnicity may derive from a context later than the 'return' as described in the book of Ezra.

Gendered constructions are seldom considered in such discussions, even though a primary issue addressed as concerns ethnicity and identity is that of intermarriage and the presence of 'foreign' women in the midst of the *golah*.[70] despite the prevalent scholarly focus on the 'foreign' women as the problem in Ezra 9-10, issues of gender are not critically considered in these studies. Furthermore, discussions of intermarriage frequently focus on the women involved, as Claudia Camp insightfully notes, while failing to recognize that the

---

Affair? Ezra's Intermarriage Crisis against a Context of 'Self-Ascription' and 'Ascription of Others'," in *Mixed Marriages: Intermarriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Christian Frevel (New York: T & T Clark International, 2011), 56-57.

[67] *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis*: 210.

[68] Smith-Christopher, "The Mixed Marriage Crisis," 243-265.

[69] See Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*: 183; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 45.

[70] Gender is considered as it pertains to ethnic identity construction in studies by Maier, "The 'Foreign' Women in Ezra-Nehemiah," 79-97; Johnson, *The Holy Seed Has Been Defiled*.

Israelite identity being constructed in these texts is a '*male* identity'.[71] She argues that

> the trope of intermarriage depends on the construction of Strange Woman. Such a construction does imply an identity issue, but the identity problem is at base one of gender identity, male identity, in particular, rather than political/religious identity.[72]

Thus, the scholarly gaze upon the biblical women who are rendered prone to religious, cultural, sexual, economic, and ethnic otherness, and must thereby be controlled, omits the implications of these representations for men, male bodies, men's religious practices, sexuality, social status, and identities. This is even more pertinent where women are significantly absent, or 'absented', as in Ezra 9-10. This focus on the men does not exclude consideration of the women but should suggest that the 'male-only' world constructed in Ezra 9-10 and predicated on the expulsion of the women, merits analysis beyond the sole focus on the women.[73]

Historical reconstructions must, furthermore, deal with issues pertaining to the sources and compositional history of the text evidenced in its literary fractures and fissures. Claims that Ezra 9-10 offers a broadly reliable degree of historicity must contend with the disputed dating of its composition and compelling inner-textual evidence that various sources and editorial hands were involved in this composition over a significant period of time.[74] In what follows, I consider some of the textual 'issues' pertaining to Ezra 9-10 and the ambiguities that remain

[71] Camp, "Feminist- and Gender-Critical Perspectives," 306. Emphasis in the original.
[72] "Feminist- and Gender-Critical Perspectives," 307.
[73] Julie Kelso argues for this approach in her study of Chronicles in which she notes that a construction of Israel's past that is 'a world and a history produced largely by men alone' merits consideration; Julie Kelso, *O Mother, Where Art Thou?: An Irigarayan Reading of the Book of Chronicles*, Bibleworld (London; Oakville, CT: Equinox Pub., 2007), 12.
[74] For source and redaction critical issues in Ezra-Nehemiah see Gary N. Knoppers, "Revisiting the Composition of Ezra-Nehemiah: In Conversation with Jacob Wright's Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah Memoir and Its Earliest Readers," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 7, no. 12 (2007).

despite extensive source and redaction-critical analysis. I ask whether these ambiguities, along with those that concern the text and its context of production, are more helpfully addressed by embracing them and engaging with their significance within the world of the narrative.

Embracing Ambiguity

The final redaction of the so-called 'Ezra narrative' (Ezra 7-10) has been dated to various periods, ranging from a time very close to the events it narrates, all the way to the Hellenistic and even Hasmonean eras.[75] Issues of dating inevitably rely heavily on scholarly opinions concerning the historicity of the figures Ezra and Nehemiah, the relationship between the books that bear their names, and the perceived reliability of chronological markers in these texts.[76] The unity of Ezra 9-10 has itself been disputed, as the chapters evidence diverse terminology and what some identify as distinct approaches to the issue of intermarriage.[77] The shift from first- to third-person narration is likewise a major issue for some scholars, as is the repeated sequence of events in 9.1-5 and 10.1-8.[78]

[75] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: xxxv-xxxvi; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 41-47; Philip R. Davies, "Scenes from the Early History of Judaism," in *The Triumph of Elohim: From Yahwisms to Judaisms*, ed. Diana Vikander Edelman (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1996), 160-163; Becking, "Ezra on the Move:," 1-23; Raik Heckl, "The Composition of Ezra-Nehemiah as a Testimony for the Composition between the Temples in Jerusalem and on Mt. Gerizim in the Early Years of Seleucid Rule over Judah," in *The Bible, Qumran, and the Samaritans*, ed. Magnar Kartveit and Gary Knoppers (Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 115-132.

[76] See summary of discussions on the relationship between Ezra and Nehemiah in Kyung-Jin Min, *The Levitical Authorship of Ezra-Nehemiah*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 6-48. See also essays in Mark J. Boda and Paul L. Redditt, *Unity and Disunity in Ezra-Nehemiah: Redaction, Rhetoric, and Reader* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008).

[77] In Ezra 9, the women are בנותיהם, while in Ezra 10, they are נשים נכריות; Ezra 9 uses the plural form עמי הארצות, while Ezra 10 uses עמי הארץ; there is no reference to issues of holiness and impurity in chapter 10; and Ezra 9 offers no solution to the problem of intermarriage while in Ezra 10 expulsion and separation are advocated.

[78] See summary of scholarly discussions on the unity these chapters in Moffatt, *Ezra's Social Drama*: 59-66.

Numerous reconstructions of the history of the text, its sources, and composition have been proposed by scholars who seek to identify the original contexts of its sources and editorial layers and describe the process by which the received text was composed. These reconstructions range from a one-source text that was adapted by an editor,[79] to various editorial hands that introduced their perspectives on the issues narrated in the text,[80] to proposals that posit several textual layers that reflect different versions of the intermarriage crisis,[81] or that reflect developing debates internal to the Yehudite community at various points in time.[82] While these studies offer important insight into textual issues in Ezra 9-10, they are just as tentative as are reconstructions of the social and historical context reflected in the text.[83] As Ehud ben Zvi argues, text-critical analyses of Ezra 9-10 ultimately call into question the 'reliability of these texts for reconstructing the historical Persian Yehud in general and that of the alleged periods of Ezra and Nehemiah in particular'.[84]

Narrative approaches that explore the way in which the received text is presented to its readers and hearers, its ideological interests and implications,

[79] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 145-149.
[80] Jehu Pakkala identifies three editorial hands in Ezra 9-10: the brief original account of Ezra dealing with a case of intermarriage reflects a Deuteronomistic/nomistic theology (Ezra 10.2-3, 14a, 16b-17), that was expanded with Ezra's prayer (Ezra 9.1,3,6-9,15-16). To this, a *golah* editor incorporated the interests of this group (10.3,6-9,15a, 16) and a third editorial hand emphasized priestly and Levitical roles and interests (9.1;10.5,15b,18,20-44). Juha Pakkala, *Ezra the Scribe: The Development of Ezra 7-10 and Nehemiah 8*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin; New York: W. de Gruyter, 2004), 132-135
[81] Dor identifies three separate reports concerning intermarriage disputes that were combined into Ezra 9-10 (9.1-15; 10.2-6; 10.7-44). The closest to the 'events' it reports, she suggests, is 10.7-44; Yonina Dor, "The Composition of the Episode of the Foreign Women in Ezra IX-X," *Vetus Testamentum* 53, no. 1 (2003): 26-47.
[82] Wright argues that Ezra 10 was composed much later than Ezra 9 and that both are later than the book of Nehemiah; Jacob Wright, *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah-Memoir and Its Earliest Readers*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 251-257.
[83] Wright's literary and tradition critical analysis of Ezra 9-10 leads him to conclude that 'one must exercise extreme caution with regard to the attempt to employ Ezra 9-10 in a reconstruction of the social conditions in Judah during the fifth and fourth centuries'; *Rebuilding Identity*: 256.
[84] Ben Zvi, "Re-Negotiating a Putative Utopia," 110.

offer a more productive venue for my study of masculinities in Ezra 9-10.[85] Here, however, I am less concerned with narrative artistry than with the ways in which an embodied, material, sensory, and discursive narrative world is constituted. In other words, I am interested in the ways in which the present and past are represented in the text and with how the social world conjured in the narrative is configured. I consider how characters perform and engage in this landscape, and what the cultural contours of this piece of biblical literature can contribute to our understanding of the gendered relationships in this text.

At first glance, Ezra 9-10 follows a familiar narrative storyline that begins with a problem, moves toward a turning point, and ends with a resolution. The narrative begins with an accusation against some of the men of the *golah* because they have taken daughters from the peoples-of-the-lands in marriage (9.1-2). Ezra's mourning and public prayer over this infidelity lead to the gathering of an assembly (9.3-10.1), at which Shecaniah calls for a covenant with Yhwh to expel the women (10.2-3). Ezra exhorts a larger assembly, 'the men of Judah and Benjamin' (10.6-7), to 'separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and the foreign women' (10.11). They agree to do so and implement a plan to this effect (10.12-16). The concluding verses list the names of the men who are found guilty of marrying 'foreign' women (10.17-43).

There are, however, several curious twists and turns in the development of the narrative. The problem of intermarriage is announced three times: first in

[85] Tamara Eskenazi's narrative analysis of Ezra-Nehemiah identifies three major unifying themes that she suggests offer insight into the interests of the redactor: a) the primacy of community over heroic figures, b) the expansion of the house of God to encompass Jerusalem; and c) the primacy of the written text. While she argues for the unity of these books, this does not, she indicates, 'annul tension and differences'; rather, she argues, the 'fissures' in the book become 'clues to the book's overall intention'; Tamara C. Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach to Ezra-Nehemiah*, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 2,13. Becking argues, along similar lines, that research on the book of Ezra 'would gain from a strict narrative analysis of the book'; Becking, "Ezra on the Move:," 14.

9.1-2, where Ezra responds with mourning and prayer (9.3-15), then in 10.2-3, where Ezra responds by having leaders in the community swear to expel the women (10.4-5), and again in 10.10-11, where it is Ezra who levels the accusation and calls for separation. Ezra's return to mourning in 10.6, after the leaders have committed to the expulsion of the women in 10.5, seems rather strange, as does the gathering of the assembly in 10.7 which appears repetitive since it has already gathered in 10.1. And then, when 'all the assembly' agree to separate from the peoples-of-the-lands and the foreign women (10.12), a lengthy investigation is put into place (10.13-17), objectors arise out of nowhere (10.15), and once again a pledge is made to expel the women, this time by some of the priests (10.19). Most curious of all is the absence of a concluding statement indicating whether or not the women and children were finally expelled.

When these issues are embraced, rather than fragmented into sources and editorial layers, the repetitions, inconsistencies, and ambiguities may be explored as constitutive elements of the narrative world produced by the text, and of the men and social groups that inhabit that world. Repeated reports of Ezra's mourning in 9.3-5; 10.1; and 10.6, for instance, are considered in this thesis as they contribute to the construction of Ezra's masculinity and to that of Yhwh. The various groups that assemble around Ezra are similarly considered in terms of the social dynamic they evidence and produce in this narrative world,[86] as are the various men and male groups that are involved in resolving the issue of intermarriage throughout the text.[87] By way of introduction, I briefly consider Ezra

[86] The tremblers in 9.3-4; an assembly of men, women, and children from Israel 10.1; all the men of Judah and Benjamin 10.9

[87] Including the שׂרים (9.1-2;10.7,14), Ezra and חרדים (9.3-4;10.3), Shecaniah (10.2), heads of the priests, Levites, and Israelites (שׂרי הכהנים והלוים וכל־ישׂראל;10.5), elders (זקנים;10.7;14), (שׁפטים;10.14), heads of families (ראשׁי אבות;10.16).

10.44, the closing verse of the book of Ezra, and its implications for my approach to this narrative world.

As noted, the book's final verse might reasonably be expected to provide a satisfactory conclusion by announcing the expulsion of the 'foreign' women and their children. Where we expect to find a statement about the 'success of the operation', Joseph Blenkinsopp notes, the Hebrew text of 10.44b is almost unintelligible.[88] Literally translated, it states that 'there were among them women who had put/placed (שׂים) sons'. Most modern translations amend the second half of the verse based on the more satisfactory conclusion in 1 Esdras 9.36 which reads, 'all these married foreign women, *and they sent them away with their children*'.[89] Williamson however, insists that the Masoretic Text (MT), 'though problematic, is not impossible', and should be preferred based on the principle of *lectio difficilior potior*.[90] His translation accordingly reads: 'All these had married foreign women, and some of the women had even borne children'.[91]

Other studies of this verse similarly consider textual criticism, or draw on theories concerning the historical development of the text, or even propose a conclusion more palatable for modern sensibilities than the expulsion of the women and children.[92] But, like Williamson's work, they do not adequately

[88] כל־אלה נשׂאו נשׁים נכריות ויש מהם נשׁים וישׂימו בנים; see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 200.
[89] πάντες οὗτοι συνῴκισαν γυναῖκας ἀλλογενεῖς καὶ ἀπέλυσαν αὐτὰς σὺν τέκνοις (1 Esd 9.36). Emphasis mine.
[90] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 145.
[91] For details on Williamson's conclusion see *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 143. Pakkala, on the other hand, finds that the original conclusion to the text is 10.17, and that 10.44 is an 'unsuccessful attempt to create a new conclusion after v.18, 20-44a had been added'. Pakkala, *Ezra the Scribe*: 102. Kratz similarly argues that the 'dissolution of the marriages is already complete in v.17'; Reinhard G. Kratz, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 69.
[92] Yonina Dor suggests that Ezra 9-10 is a description of 'symbolic ceremonies or rituals', that are not meant to actually expel the women, but to 'enable(s) the acceptance of outsiders as part of the community'; Yonina Dor, "The Rite of Separation of the Foreign Wives in Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*, ed. Oded Lipschitz, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake:

address its implications for readers of the received MT. If Ezra 9-10 does not conclude either by announcing the expulsion of the women or by lamenting the community's refusal to abide by the decision to carry out this act, then its role in the text merits a closer look. The redactor of the received text chose to conclude this narrative with two observations: men who married foreign women have been identified (כל־אלה נשאו נשים נכריות), and some of the wives of these men have 'placed' sons (ויש מהם נשים וישימו בנים).[93]

The first statement is consistent with the charge given to the heads of the families by Ezra in 10.16 after the assembly introduces a plan to address the matter of the 'foreign' women: 'let all in our towns who have taken foreign wives come at appointed times…' (10.14). The three-month investigation accordingly concludes when those in charge 'came to the end of all the men who had married foreign women' (10.17) and report on their findings (10.18-43).

The second statement suggests that some of the wives have given birth to sons for the *golah* men, but it employs unusual terminology. It is not found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible to designate giving birth, and furthermore obscures the husbands' participation in the production of these sons. If the terminology is temporarily set aside (to be addressed in a chapter that follows), the 'placing' of sons appears to serve as a means of characterizing the actions of the women by highlighting their reproductive function. The participation of the men is not explicitly acknowledged, however, thus raising questions concerning

Eisenbrauns, 2011), 173-188. This problematic interpretation of the 'expulsion' as a 'symbolic act' that does not actually effect expulsion or the breaking up of marriages is also posited by Arnaud Sérandour, "Les femmes étrangères dans les livres grec et hébraïques d'Esdras: Répudiation ou Exclusion du culte?," *Transeuphratène* 36(2008): 155-163.

[93] The verb שׂים is not used for giving birth elsewhere, a matter that will be addressed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. See Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 145. It should be noted that the suffixed pronoun of the verb is masculine, which sheds doubt on whether it is the women or the men that have 'placed' these sons.

the exclusion of these men from a key masculine performance, the engendering of sons.

These brief reflections on Ezra 10.44 point us toward issues pertaining to masculinity. Firstly, the verse highlights the infidelity of *golah* men as a key problem; one that is addressed by the identification of the men who had married 'foreign' women. Secondly, it problematizes male participation in reproduction by distancing the men from the sons that have been 'placed'. Thirdly, it highlights the problematic issue of which sons – or more precisely, whose sons – may be rightfully 'placed' in the land. The decreed expulsion is not only an act of power over women and children, it is also a means by which some men establish control over others. Thus, the gendered issues debated in this narrative world are not limited to the subordination or exclusion of women at the hands of men, but rather involve more complex and diverse configurations of gendered power relations. It is this complexity, that I highlight and explore in this thesis.

Gender Matters: Toward a Statement of Intent

Gendered 'matters' in Ezra 9-10 are considered explicitly by only a handful of scholars. As noted above, despite the overwhelming scholarly concern with the women in Ezra 9-10, studies of the text seldom engage with critical feminist or gender analysis.[94] All too often, gender is simply equated with women, and therefore, gendered analysis is restricted to women's roles and participation in biblical texts. This tendency is not restricted to biblical scholars, however, as Joan C. Scott highlighted in her seminal essay, 'Gender: a useful category for historical analysis', where she explores the construction and use of gender among

[94] See note 13 on pages 9-10.

historians.[95] Gender, she emphasized, is not a descriptive category but rather 'a primary way of signifying relationships of power'.[96] It thereby requires a critical deconstruction of assumptions concerning sexual and gender difference and the ways in which they serve to legitimize the social order.[97] Judith Butler's reflection on this essay, more than twenty years after its publication, highlights the continued importance of locating gender within the power systems and structures by which it is produced and in which it is deployed:

> [W]e cannot understand gender as a useful category unless we can understand the purposes for which it is deployed, the broader politics it supports and helps to produce, and the geopolitical repercussions of its circulation.[98]

The 'recovery' of women's presence and the 'retrieval' of their social and cultic roles is not sufficient for this task, Esther Fuchs argues.[99] Rather, feminist criticism must 'question the very notion and definition of women', and 'delineate the hierarchical power relations in the most basic representation of this subject'.[100] This task has had important implications for biblical studies and has contributed to deconstructing the assumed 'naturalness' of masculine domination and female subordination in biblical texts and in the modern social world in which these texts are awarded, if not normative and prescriptive status, then significant cultural influence.

Feminist approaches that seek to bring women 'out of the shadows' or to find 'traces' of historical women in the text, do not 'attend to the complexities of

---

[95] Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-1075.
[96] "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," 1064.
[97] "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," 1056-1057.
[98] Judith Butler and Elizabeth Weed, "Introduction," in *The Question of Gender: Joan W. Scott's Critical Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 3.
[99] Fuchs, "Reclaiming the Hebrew Bible for Women," 64.
[100] "Reclaiming the Hebrew Bible for Women," 64.

the absence and silence of women', as Julie Kelso notes.[101] The absence and/or silence of women is a constitutive feature of some biblical texts that, she suggests, paint 'a picture of a society functioning disconcertingly well enough without women'.[102] The implications of this picture of society for women, and for men I would add, merit scholarly attention.

Critical studies of men and masculinities, queer theories, and biblical scholarship's engagement with these approaches, calls for a few necessary considerations in relation to the intent with which Fuchs and Kelso approach biblical texts. Gender-critical biblical scholarship has largely focused on the 'lower end of the hierarchy', specifically on women, who have frequently been the focus of analysis, problematization, and recuperation, as Jorunn Økland observes.[103] Men's behaviour and social roles, on the other hand, have long gone unquestioned, for their gendered identities have been taken for granted.[104] Esther Fuchs's call to question the 'notion and definition of women' and to explore Hebrew Bible as a site on which 'woman' is constructed are inquiries, therefore, that should be addressed not only to women but to men and masculinities as well. Furthermore, 'woman' and 'man', femininity and masculinity, should be explored as diverse and relationally constituted and constructed categories.

---

[101] Kelso, "Reading Silence," 269.
[102] "Reading Silence," 269.
[103] Jorunn Økland, "Requiring Explanation: Hegemonic Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Traditions," *Biblical Interpretation* 23(2015): 481. Sally Johnson likewise argues that male roles, behaviour and language are assumed to be normative, while women 'continue to be the object of problematization'. Sally A. Johnson, "Theorizing Language and Masculinity," in *Language and Masculinity*, ed. Sally A. Johnson and Ulrike Hanna Meinhof (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 12.
[104] This is, Sally Johnson argues, a key to their hegemony. "Theorizing Language and Masculinity," 12. See also Alberti, who argues that in the study of archaeology, 'men…have always been visible, but their gender has been "unmarked"'; Benjamin Alberti, "Archaeology, Men and Masculinities," in *Identity and Subsistence: Gender Strategies for Archaeology*, ed. Sarah M. Nelson (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 69.

A second consideration I wish to add to the critical feminist agenda outlined by Fuchs and Kelso concerns the 'sources' for the study of gendered constructs and representations in biblical texts. As scholars of ancient texts, we necessarily focus on what performance theorist Diana Taylor refers to as the 'archive',[105] texts and material artefacts that are analysed in terms of rhetoric, discourse and representation, and have been canonized within Western intellectual culture.

In recent years, scholars in diverse disciplines – including religious studies – have increasingly called for a focus on the ways in which bodies are deployed and engage with their material world.[106] A focus on materiality, embodiment, and performance, helpfully complements and complicates the interpretation of texts and images by raising questions concerning the production and productivity of bodies.[107] Thus, while representation and discursive constructions are important dimensions of masculinities in Ezra 9-10, and will be addressed in this thesis, I also consider the ways in which the text under examination deploys masculinities in embodied and material ways, and how bodies participate in their own production in the narrative world produced by the text.[108]

---

[105] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 16-33.

[106] See Dick Houtman and Birgit Meyer, *Things: Religion and the Question of Materiality*, 1st ed., The Future of the Religious Past (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012); Tim Hutchings, *Materiality and the Study of Religion: The Stuff of the Sacred* (London; New York: Routledge, 2017); David Morgan, *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010); Manuel A. Vásquez, *More Than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Francesca Stavrakopoulou, "Making Bodies: On Body Modification and Religious Materiality in the Hebrew Bible," *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 2, no. 4 (2013): 532-553; David Morgan, "The Material Culture of Lived Religion: Visuality and Embodiment," in *Mind and Matter: Selected Papers of Nordic Conference 2009*, ed. J. Vakkari (Helsinki: Society of Art History, 2010), 14-31.

[107] See John Tosh's critique of the cultural turn in studies of gender and masculinities that, he argues, 'regards the interpretation of texts and images' and issues of identity, as 'more significant than the materiality of power relations or the subjectivity of experience'; John Tosh, "The History of Masculinity: An Outdated Concept?," in *What Is Masculinity?: Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, ed. John Arnold and Sean Brady (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 25.

[108] See Stavrakopoulou, "Making Bodies," 532-533.

The agenda underlying this approach is an important matter for clarification, not least because masculinities studies have sometimes been critiqued for abandoning women as the focus of gendered analysis, in favour of men. As a scholar who casts her gaze on the biblical text, I am formed and informed by my own experience and interests. These have led me to approach masculinities as a method for exploring the complexity of gendered issues and identities present in both the text and in my own social, cultural, and political contexts where the bodies of women are firmly under control of men and 'male' religious institutions.[109] Critical studies of men and masculinities have important implications for feminist agendas. By de-naturalizing the male 'default position', they not only defy the assumed normativity and 'neutrality of the masculine' but challenge the subordinate status of the feminine.[110] This is a feminist act, Rhiannon Graybill argues, that is both political and critical – and I agree.[111]

The focus that I place upon the men in Ezra 9-10 throughout this thesis does not in any way imply that the women, their silencing and expulsion, as well as the structures, systems, and institutions that perpetuate and naturalize their subordinated status, are not important. What I would ask, rather, is why the silence and expulsion of the women 'seem necessary to this particular version of the past'.[112] This approach seeks to broaden the horizon of gender criticism to consider the ways in which the male/female binary is employed to construct and sustain the 'othering' of the 'non-masculine' while mapping the 'less-than-

[109] In Costa Rica, where I live, Roman Catholicism is the official state religion and women's rights, and those of the LGBTQI population are controlled by church hierarchies, and in recent years, by increasingly influential neo-conservative Evangelical and Catholic politico/religious groups. Thus, not only are women's bodies rendered subordinate, so also are those of non-normative men.
[110] Rhiannon Graybill, *Are We Not Men?: Unstable Masculinity in the Hebrew Prophets* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 482.
[111] *Are We Not Men?*: 23.
[112] Julie Kelso argues for this approach in her study of Chronicles. Rather than focus on recovering the largely silent and absent women in this book, she asks why this silence and absence is deemed necessary for 'this particular version of the past'; Kelso, "Reading Silence," 288.

masculine' onto female bodies. I explore not only the ways in which gender is implicated in the naturalization of the power of men over women, but also the power of some men over others on a spectrum of diverse, culturally and socially situated, and relationally produced masculinities.[113]

The Outline of this Thesis

In this thesis, I interrogate the construction of masculinities as they are represented, constituted, performed, and embodied in the narrative world of Ezra 9-10. I consider the issues debated in the text as they pertain to culturally situated masculine roles, bodies, performances, and ideals. This involves attending to the masculinity of the peoples-of-the-lands and the *golah*, to Ezra's performance of penitential masculinity, and to the rehabilitation of divine masculinity. In the final chapter, I focus on the expulsion of the women and the role it plays in the production of *golah* and divine masculinities.

Accordingly, this study is developed in five chapters, following the agenda set out by this Introduction, which has presented a critical analysis of scholarly approaches to the expulsion of the women and has addressed the ways in which literary and compositional issues are dealt with in studies of the book of Ezra.

Chapter 1 develops a framework for employing critical studies of men and masculinities as a theoretic approach for reading Ezra 9-10. I consider some of the key issues in the developing field of masculinities studies and highlight contributions that allow for the incorporation of insights from studies of

[113] For the relational dimension of masculinities, see Virginia Burrus, "Mapping as Metamorphosis: Initial Reflections on Gender and Ancient Religious Discourses," in *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses*, ed. Todd C. Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 1-10; Martti Nissinen, "Relative Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament," in *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity*, ed. Ilona Zsolnay (New York: Routledge, 2016), 340-379; R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005).

intersectionality, materiality, embodiment, ritualization, and performance to the study of masculinities in Ezra 9-10. I consider idealized images of masculinity and masculine performance in biblical and ancient West Asian texts and iconographic representations as they highlight the role culturally situated gendered constructs play in the discourses of disputed masculinity, especially in the realms of warfare and kingship. These images and the gendered dynamic they portray, contribute to my exploration of masculinities in Ezra 9-10.

Chapter 2 begins the analysis of masculinities in Ezra 9-10 by taking an inventory of the men in this text, identifying the different ways in which they are represented. I then argue that Ezra 9-10 constructs a feminized representation of the peoples-of-the-lands by locating them in subordinated female social and kinship roles, employing feminized ethnic constructs, and attributing 'feminine' impurity to the bodies of these peoples. This leads me to consider how the *golah* is constituted in opposition to this figure of feminized – not feminine – otherness, and the inherent ambiguities and slippages in *golah* claims to superior masculine status.

In Chapter 3, I examine Ezra's mourning and lamentation as a performance that is productive of a model of liminal masculinity. In this performance, Ezra modifies his masculine body, distances himself from his Persian emissarial duties, and positions himself in subordination to Yhwh. In this liminal place, as the privileged wielder of the Torah, he is dominant over other men as he mediates the *golah's* relationship with Yhwh.

Chapter 4 turns to Yhwh and explores the impact of exile and Persian imperial rule, as portrayed in the text, on the masculinity of Yhwh. Here, the silence and passivity of Yhwh in Ezra 9-10 come to the fore, suggesting that the

deity of the *golah* is either absent and defeated, or unconcerned with minor issues in Jerusalem. The Persian kings, as portrayed in the book of Ezra, provide a model for the rehabilitation of Yhwh's masculinity and thereby for securing the status of the *golah* who remain servants of that empire.

In Chapter 5, I focus on marriage and the prohibition of intermarriage in Ezra 9-10 as a locus for the construction of *golah* masculinities. I consider the text's rejection of the marriages and the call for the expulsion of women and children as sites on which conflicts between men, including issues of territoriality and land settlement, but above all masculine performance, are disputed. It is important to clarify that while this study does not aim to reconstruct historical events that may lie behind Ezra 9-10, it locates this text within the broader social and cultural world it references and in which it was produced.

Drawing on my analyses in these chapters, the Conclusion points to the ways in which the construction and contestation of masculinities can provide a new understanding of the expulsion of the women that has so concerned biblical scholars and readers of Ezra 9-10. Far from excluding the women from consideration, the focus on the men serves to highlight the ways in which the women are appropriated for the production of the masculinities of the *golah*, and even of Yhwh.

Chapter 1 What Masculinities Do to Help

To unveil and problematize the gendering of male characters in biblical texts is an important complement to the feminist scholarly agenda that identifies and deconstructs the strategies by which the subordination of women and femininity is naturalized. While feminist and gender-critical approaches have long been an essential part of biblical studies, these approaches have not sufficiently addressed the gendered identities of men, nor have they accounted for the differences between men, and the political, ethnic, and institutional configurations of 'manliness' and male performance.

As with any category of analysis, the focus on masculinities runs the risk of essentializing and imposing modern Western constructs as universal and 'preconstructed frame(s) of meaning'.[114] Masculinities, as scholars have argued, do not inherently attach to male bodies; however, the narrative world of Ezra 9-10 is dominated by men, and it is these characters, figures, and groups that will be the focus of my analysis. The deconstruction of the gendered binaries that structure the text – or at the least, scholarly readings thereof – seeks to reveal fractures through which the plurality, situatedness, slippage, and instability of these categories may be explored. I do not seek, however, to bring any 'real men of Yehud' out of the shadows, but rather to explore the ways in which men and masculinities are constituted, represented, and deployed in the narrative world of Ezra 9-10. My primary dialogue partners for this analysis can be found in the

[114] See Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Between Movement and Academy: Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century," in *Feminist Biblical Studies in the 20th Century: Scholarship and Movement* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 9.

growing field of critical studies of men and masculinities, especially as it has influenced recent developments in biblical scholarship.

1.1 What Do Masculinities Do to Help?

During the past four decades, critical studies of men and masculinities have developed into a multi- and interdisciplinary exploration of the representations, discourses, performances, and embodiments of that which is culturally identified as 'being a man' in diverse times, places, and institutional contexts. Arising out of feminist inquiries, queer theories, and gay liberation movements, studies of masculinities address how 'relations of power and powerlessness are gendered' and 'how power is related to attributions of masculinity.'[115] Masculinity is analysed as constituted by, and productive of, a system of gendered hierarchies that sustain and legitimate relations of subordination and marginalization.[116]

The model of 'hegemonic masculinity' developed by Tim Carrigan, R.W. Connell, and Robert Lee has become a widely influential paradigm for theorizing the socially constructed nature of masculinities, the ways in which masculinities are implicated in power relations, and their diverse and relational nature.[117] This approach considers how hegemonic models of masculinity legitimate unequal

[115] Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne, "Dislocating Masculinity: Gender, Power and Anthropology," in *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 20.

[116] See Chris Haywood and Mártín Mac an Ghaill, *Men and Masculinities. Theory, Research and Social Practice* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2003), 8; Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne, *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994).

[117] Connell defined hegemonic masculinity as the construction of masculinity that 'embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women'; R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender & Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 832. Messerschmidt notes that 'hegemonic masculinity has been cited in scholarly refereed journal articles 540 times (between 2006 and 2010)' and with increasing frequency; James W. Messerschmidt, "Engendering Gendered Knowledge: Assessing the Academic Appropriation of Hegemonic Masculinity," *Men and Masculinities* 15, no. 1 (2012): 57.

relationships between men and women, masculinities and femininities, but also among men in a particular setting, as Messerschmidt and Michael Messner explain.[118] This involves recognizing the 'differences between men… and the way these differences work together as a coherent system of power'.[119] Connell argues that

> to recognize diversity in masculinities is not enough. We must also recognize the *relations* between the different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, domination, and subordination. These relationships are constructed through practices that exclude and include, that intimidate, exploit, and so on. There is gender politics within masculinity.[120]

While hegemony is implicated in power structures, it does not reference a static dominant position. Rather, as theorized by Antonio Gramsci on whom Connell draws, it indexes an ongoing struggle for power in the face of oppositional forces.[121] In the words of Roland Boer, hegemony functions by 'articulating and spreading a specific set of cultural assumptions, beliefs, ways of living… that are assumed to be "normal"…'.[122] It is thus vulnerable, unstable, and contested, and

---

[118] James W. Messerschmidt and Michael A. Messner, "Hegemonic, Nonhegemonic, and 'New' Masculinities," in *Gender Reckonings: New Social Theory and Research*, ed. James W. Messerschmidt, Patricia Yancey Martin, and Michael A. Messner (New York: New York University Press, 2018), 37.

[119] Johnson, "Theorizing Language and Masculinity," 20; see also Richard Howson, *Challenging Hegemonic Masculinity*, Routledge Advances in Sociology (New York: Routledge, 2006), 57-58.

[120] Connell, *Masculinities*: 37. Emphasis in the original.

[121] Gramsci's theory of hegemony refers to the ways in which a dominant class acquires the consent of dominated groups and thereby maintains its domination through persuasion, educations, institutions, media, and by force, such that they appear 'normal' and 'natural'. Gramsci posits different strategies for establishing and maintaining the hegemony of a social group: 'a social group is dominant over those antagonistic groups it wants to 'liquidate' or to subdue even with armed force, and it is leading with respect to those groups that are associated and allied with it;' Gramsci Prison Notebooks 3.19 cited in Benedetto Fontana, *Hegemony and Power: On the Relation between Gramsci and Machiavelli* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 141. On Gramsci's use of the term 'hegemony' and the context in which he develops his theorization, see Perry Anderson, *The H-Word: The Peripeteia of Hegemony* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2017), 13-24. On hegemony as an unstable position and its relevance for Biblical Studies, see Roland Boer, "Of Fine Wine, Incense and Spices: The Unstable Masculine Hegemony of the Book of Chronicles," in *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, ed. Ovidiu Creanga (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), 21-22; *Marxist Criticism of the Bible* (London New York: T & T Clark International, 2003).

[122] "Marx, Postcolonialism, and the Bible," in *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*, ed. Stephen D. Moore and Fernando F. Segovia (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 168.

requires the continual negotiation and incorporation of diverging and dissenting positions. It is the fluidity of hegemony that has rendered this term useful for theorizing how 'power is related to attributions of masculinity',[123] and, Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne explain, for theorizing how power structures are organized through plural, antagonistic, and even alternatively constituted masculinities.[124]

Despite its relational aspects, Connell's characterization of masculinities as hegemonic, subordinate, complicit, and marginalized runs the risk of being applied as a static paradigm.[125] Benjamin Alberti aptly notes that the 'idea of multiple masculinities does not do away with the problem of a stable and unified subject – there are just more of them'.[126] Critiques of essentialized notions of masculinity are addressed by various studies that advocate a more intent focus on intersectionality, embodiment, and materiality, to complement social constructionist approaches. Ann-Dorte Christensen and Sune Qvotrup Jensen, for example, seek to analyse power relations that are not necessarily dependent on men's domination of women by exploring the intersection of gender with categories of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and age, among others.[127] Elizabeth Grosz's corporal feminism raises the important issue of the materiality and corporeality of men for discussions of femininity and masculinity.[128] This is also

[123] Cornwall and Lindisfarne, "Dislocating Masculinity," 20.
[124] "Dislocating Masculinity," 20.
[125] As noted by Messerschmidt and Messner, "Hegemonic, Nonhegemonic, and 'New' Masculinities," 35-36.
[126] Alberti, "Archaeology, Men and Masculinities," 83.
[127]Ann-Dorte Christensen and Sune Qvotrup Jensen, "Combining Hegemonic Mascuinity and Intersectionality," *Norma* 9, no. 1 (2014): 67. Although Christensen and Jensen suggest that theorization should allow for hegemonic masculinities that are not necessarily grounded in the oppression of women and the feminine, the term 'gender-equality friendly masculinities' they employ is reflective of the same female/male gender dichotomy that pervades Connell's work (65).
[128] A key argument in her study is that the 'masculinity of the male body cannot be the same as the masculinity of the female body, because the kind of body inscribed makes a difference to the meanings and functioning of gender that emerges'. E. A. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, Theories of Representation and Difference (Bloomington: Indiana University

advocated by David Wallace, who critiques hegemonic masculinity's social constructionism which, he argues, 'reifies hegemonic models of masculinity rather than discerning and dismantling them'.[129] Wallace explores the notion of 'material masculinities' as a way of conceiving of men '*both* as discursively conceptual *and* as embodied material subjects' that are 'always inscribing themselves…and always being inscribed upon'.[130]

These theoretical approaches, drawn from the experiences of different groups and contexts, have helpfully nuanced and complicated gender categories – and the notion of hegemonic masculinity –thus highlighting the complexity, instability, and locatedness of masculinities.[131] These insights suggest new ways in which masculinities in Ezra 9-10 might be explored not only as textually-produced representations, but also in terms of the ways in which ritual performance, body modification, and engagement with the material world are implicated in the politics of masculinities in this text.

Thus, while the notion of hegemonic masculinity has proved productive for biblical scholars' incursions into the study of masculinities, it has been the object of frequent critique.[132] Furthermore, its frequent employment as an umbrella-term

---

Press, 1994), 59. She notes, for example, the absence of discussion on men's body fluids in relation to women's bodily fluids (178).

[129] David R. Wallace Jr, "Mapping Men: Towards a Theory of Material Masculinities" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Texas at Arlington, 2013), 26. His work, as yet unpublished, offers a valuable incentive for studies of masculinities to embrace third-wave feminist gender theories and theories of materiality and embodiment.

[130] "Mapping Men: Towards a Theory of Material Masculinities," 32.

[131] Eve Sedgwick and Judith Butler have likewise made important contributions to deconstructions of essentialized gendered constructs that have significantly influenced studies of masculinities, See, especially, Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

[132] For critiques of hegemonic masculinity, including its theorization of power, the essentializing of masculinity, and the need to recognize the complexity of men's practices, see Demetrakis Z. Demetriou, "Connell's Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique," *Theory and Society* 30, no. 3 (2001): 337-361; Douglas Schrock and Michael Schwalbe, "Men, Masculinity, and Manhood Acts," *Annual Review of Sociology* 35(2009): 277-295; Michael Moller, "Exploiting Patterns: A Critique of Hegemonic Masculinity," *Journal of Gender Studies* 16, no. 3 (2007): 263-276; Mimi

for a dominant male social position risks denuding the term of its complexity as a category of analysis. I will generally avoid the term 'hegemony' as a descriptor for masculinity, and instead employ terminology that more specifically addresses the performances, embodiments, and relationships under discussion and the ways in which they are relationally produced.

A helpful notion for envisioning such a dynamic, and one appropriate to the ancient contexts discussed in this thesis, is that of a spectrum of masculinities, which Marti Nissinen argues, 'can be monitored from the perspectives of body, social hierarchy and performance'.[133] It is this spectrum of masculinities, he notes, 'that made it important to signify and identify acceptable ways of masculine performance' since in the ancient world masculinity was constantly threatened and needed to be 'demonstrated, done, and accomplished by means of proper male performance'.[134] Nissinen well characterizes one of the goals of this thesis, which is to analyse how masculinity is done and how 'proper male performance' is debated and enforced in Ezra 9-10.

My research for this thesis began when very little scholarship on masculinities in the Hebrew Bible was available.[135] Today, the discussion offered

Schippers, "Recovering the Feminine Other: Masculinity, Femininity, and Gender Hegemony," *Theory and Society* 36, no. 1 (2007): 85-102.

[133] Nissinen, "Relative Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible," 344.

[134] "Relative Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible," 342-343. Men who do not correspond to the hegemonic ideal may nevertheless occupy dominant positions within a gendered social configuration and may do so while also inhabiting a subordinate location in relation to other men.

[135] This scholarship in included David J. A. Clines, "David the Man: The Construction of Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible," in *Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 212-241; "He-Prophets: Masculinity as a Problem for the Hebrew Prophets and Their Interpreters," in *Sense and Sensitivity: Essays on Reading the Bible in Memory of Robert Carroll*, ed. Alastair G. Hunter and Philip R. Davies, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* (Sheffield; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 311-328; Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *God's Phallus and Other Problems for Men and Monotheism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994); Susan E. Haddox, "(E)Masculinity in Hosea's Political Rhetoric," in *Israel's Prophets and Israel's Past: Essays on the Relationship of Prophetic Texts and Israelite History in Honor of John H. Hayes*, ed. Brad E. Kelle and Megan Bishop Moore (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 174-200.

here engages numerous essays, various collected volumes, and several monographs addressing the subject.[136] This growing collection of scholarly studies has inspired and informed my research, and it is among it that I locate my study of masculinities in Ezra 9-10.

1.2 Men and Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible

With his now-classic essay, 'David the Man',[137] David Clines gave impetus to scholarly engagement with masculinities in the Hebrew Bible. The traits identified by Clines in his early work on biblical masculinities have been widely employed by various scholars as a catalogue of attributes that characterize what it means to 'be a man' in the Hebrew Bible. The list, that gradually increased as Clines added more texts to his repertoire, includes strength (especially associated with skilfulness in battle), violence, persuasive speech, physical beauty, honour, male bonding, detachment from women, and contact with the deity.[138] The influence of Clines' contributions is well summarized by Marcel Măcelaru in the introduction to his essay on the masculinity of Saul, where he

[136] Among these are the edited volumes and monographs by Ovidiu Creanga, ed. *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, The Bible in the Modern World (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010); Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit, eds., *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014); Susan E. Haddox, *Metaphor and Masculinity in Hosea*, Studies in Biblical Literature (New York: Peter Lang, 2011); Ilona Zsolnay, ed. *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity*, Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East (New York: Routledge, 2016); Stephan M. Wilson, *Making Men: The Male Coming-of-Age Theme in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Graybill, *Are We Not Men*; Brian Charles DiPalma, *Masculinities in the Court Tales of Daniel: Advancing Gender Studies in the Hebrew Bible*, Routledge Studies in the Biblical World (London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018). For surveys of research on masculinities in the Hebrew Bible see Susan E. Haddox, "Masculinity Studies of the Hebrew Bible: The First Two Decades," *Currents in Biblical Research* 14, no. 2 (2016): 176-206; and Peter-Ben Smit, *Masculinity and the Bible: Survey, Models, and Perspectives*, Biblical Interpretation (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 28-35.

[137] Clines, "David the Man: The Construction of Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible," 212-241.

[138] Clines has numerous published and unpublished essays on biblical masculinities in the Hebrew Bible including, "He-Prophets: Masculinity as a Problem for the Hebrew Prophets and Their Interpreters," 311-328; "Being a Man in the Book of the Covenant," in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham*, ed. Gordon Wenham, J. G. J.McConville, and Karl Möller (New York; London: T & T Clark, 2007), 3-9; "Dancing and Shining at Sinai: Playing the Man in Exodus 32-34," in *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, ed. Ovidiu Creanga (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), 54-63.

advocates for using Clines' check-list as a 'rod against which biblical portrayals of masculinity can be measured'.[139] While the use of this catalogue of traits has since been problematized, not least by Clines himself, it began an important debate and inspired scholars to break new ground.[140]

What began as an attempt to identify masculine attributes in the Hebrew Bible developed into a critical engagement with Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity and an exploration of alternative configurations of masculinities in biblical texts.[141] The notion of hegemonic masculinity proves itself to be most helpful where scholars emphasize the relational and contingent character of masculinities, rather than approach them as fixed categories on which biblical characters are mapped. The instability and deconstruction of hegemonic ideals in biblical texts have also led to discussions of the performances, traits, relationships, and bodies that challenge or subvert the hegemonic or dominant model of masculinity in any given text. [142]

---

[139] Marcel V. Macelaru, "Saul in the Company of Men: (de)Constructing Masculinity in 1 Samuel 9-31," in *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, ed. Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 55.

[140] Clines has himself raised doubts concerning the usefulness of such classifications noting that 'there still remains the headache whether we have done rightly in so defining hegemonic masculinity as to exclude the masculinities that are best attested in reality'. Clines, "Final Reflections on Biblical Masculinity," 234-235. On the limitations of Clines' model of 'biblical masculinity' see Hilary Lipka, "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks: Shame and the Undermining of Masculine Performance in Biblical Texts," in *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity*, ed. Ilona Zsolnay (New York: Routledge, 2016), 289; Wilson, *Making Men*: 30; Ovidiu Creanga, "Variations on the Theme of Masculinity: Joshua's Gender in/Stability in the Conquest Narrative," in *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, ed. Ovidiu Creanga (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), 87-88; Brian Charles DiPalma, "De/Constructing Masculinity in Exodus 1-4," in *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, ed. Ovidiu Creanga (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), 37-38.

[141] A significant number of essays and monographs draw on Connell's theorization of hegemonic masculinity, Clines' work, or both. See the essays in volumes edited by Creanga, *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*; Creanga and Smit, *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*; and Ilona Zsolnay, "Introduction," in *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 16-31.

[142] See, for example, Creanga, "Variations on the Theme of Masculinity," 83-109; Boer, "Of Fine Wine, Incense and Spices," 20-33; Macelaru, "Saul in the Company of Men: (de)Constructing Masculinity in 1 Samuel 9-31," 51-68; Graybill, *Are We Not Men?*

Ovidiu Creanga's analysis of Joshua's masculinity is a helpful example of the ways in which masculinities in the Hebrew Bible are increasingly addressed as multi-faceted constructions that resist fixed categorization.[143] Joshua is characterized variously as a warrior, a persuasive speaker, and a scribe, and he is also an unmarried, childless man. Such contradictions are evocative of the characterization of Ezra, who never quite seems to fulfil his calling either as a priest, scribe, or Persian emissary, much less as a virile producer of progeny. Nevertheless, both these men occupy positions of power in the narrative world of the text. Milena Kirova likewise contributes to such a deconstruction of the gendered assumptions that attach to certain traits or performances with her analysis of King David's 'un-masculine' weeping that, she argues, serves as a powerful tool for dominance over other men. [144]

While hegemonic masculinity in the Hebrew Bible is frequently associated with wider ancient West Asian paradigms of physical strength, military prowess, and virility, alternative performances of masculinity are considered by scholars as they arise in distinct social and literary contexts.[145] In Proverbs, inner strength is elevated over physical might, as are wisdom, piety, self-discipline, and integrity,

[143] Creanga, "Variations on the Theme of Masculinity," 83-109.
[144] Milena Kirova, "When Real Men Cry: The Symbolism of Weeping in the Torah and the Deuteronomistic History," in *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, ed. Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 35-50.
[145]On the attributes and performances of dominant masculinity in ancient West Asian texts and iconography, many of which are evidenced in the Hebrew Bible, see Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter*, Harvard Semitic Monographs (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 20-59; Lipka, "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks," 271-304; Julia Assante, "Men Looking at Men: The Homoerotics of Power in the State Arts of Assyria," in *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity*, ed. Ilona Zsolnay (New York: Routledge, 2016), 76-134; "The Lead Inlays of Tukulti-Ninurta I: Pornography as Imperial Strategy," in *Ancient Near Eastern Art in Context: Studies in Honor of Irene J. Winter*, ed. Irene Winter, Jack Cheng, and Marian H. Feldman (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 370-407; Irene Winter, "Sex, Rhetoric and the Public Monument: The Alluring Body of the Male Ruler in Mesopotamia," in *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy*, ed. Natalie Kampen and Bettina Ann Bergmann (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Hilary Likpa argues.[146] Another form of masculinity is probed by Brian DiPalma, who explores the negotiation of 'scribal masculinity' in the court tales of Daniel as it is constituted in relation to the dominant ancient West Asian and Achaemenid imaginaries of warfare and kingship.[147] Daniel's scribal masculinity not only saves him from the vicissitudes of life in the courts of foreign kings; it offers Yhwh, who failed to protect his people, the opportunity to 'address his initially inadequate performance'.[148] The narrative context of the texts DiPalma analyses bears similarity to that of Ezra 9-10. In both texts, Israelites negotiate life under foreign domination and, unable to compete with dominant performances of masculinity, must reconfigure their masculine bodies and performances, including that of Yhwh.

The body, still undertheorized in biblical studies of masculinities, is a site for the production and negotiation of masculinities. In the Hebrew Bible, dominant masculinities are often associated with bodies that are upright, whole, strong, and virile. The head, buttocks, and genitals are rigidly monitored and covered.[149] But not all biblical bodies fulfil such expectations. Recent interest in disability studies has produced several essays that highlight normative assumptions concerning the wholeness of the male body as they pertain to masculinity, and consider the feminization, or at the least, the nuanced status of differently-abled bodies.[150] The

[146] Hilary Lipka, "Masculinities in Proverbs: An Alternative to the Hegemonic Ideal," in *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, ed. Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 99.
[147] DiPalma, *Masculinities in the Court Tales of Daniel*.
[148] *Masculinities in the Court Tales of Daniel*: 133.
[149] Lipka, "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks," 280-281; Susan Niditch, *My Brother Esau Is a Hairy Man: Hair and Identity in Ancient Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 95-98.
[150] See Fontaine, who analyses female gender as disability Carole R. Fontaine, "'Be Men, O Philistines!' (1 Samuel 4: 19): Iconographic Representations and Reflections on Female Gender as Disability in the Ancient World," in *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies*, ed. Hector Avalos, Sarah J. Melcher, and Jeremy Schipper (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 61-72. Cf. Saul Olyan who argues that while the disabled are associated with marginal groups, foreigners, and other social vulnerable groups in the Hebrew Bible, 'feminization…is a seldom attested strategy'; Saul M. Olyan, *Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Differences* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 128. For a

material accoutrements of masculinity, which in the Hebrew Bible include the bow and arrow,[151] royal seals and texts, the scribal stylus, and the Torah, are intricately tied to the material production and embodiment of masculinities.[152] These are often addressed, however, as cyphers of the person's character or ability, thus problematically perpetuating post-Cartesian dichotomies.

More focused attention to embodiment, materiality, and bodies as sites on which masculinity is inscribed and with which masculinity is materialized, produced, and performed, problematizes such dichotomies and allows for the incorporation of intersectionality into such analyses.[153] Both Marti Nissinen and T.M. Lemos, for example, highlight the contradictory figure of the eunuch.[154] While the eunuch's 'modified' body may render him 'less than masculine' in terms of physical wholeness and virility, he is also seen to occupy important military, social and political positions. The eunuch's status, Lemos argues, is not dependent on these traits alone, but is 'situational and negotiated rather than…fixed and determined only by the dominant discourses of a society'.[155]

---

nuanced analysis of disability and gender, especially the status of eunuchs, see T.M. Lemos, "'Like the Eunuch Who Does Not Beget': Gender, Mutiliation and Negotiated Status in the Ancient Near East," in *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature*, ed. Candida R. Moss and Jeremy Schipper (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 47-66; and Nissinen, "Relative Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible," 228-247.

[151] On the bow and arrow as an emblem of male fertility and prowess in battle, see Harry A. Jr. Hoffner, "Symbols for Masculinity and Femininity. Their Use in Ancient Near Eastern Sympathetic Magic Rituals," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 85, no. 3 (1966): 326-334; Assante, "Men Looking at Men," 103-106.

[152] On writing and writing implements, scribalism, and masculinity, see DiPalma, *Masculinities in the Court Tales of Daniel*: 146.162; Roland Boer, "Spermatic Sputtering Pens: Concerning the Construction and Breakdown of Prophetic Masculinity," in *Prophets Male and Female: Gender and Prophecy in the Hebrew Bible, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jonathan Stökl and Corrine L. Carvalho (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 215-237; Francesca Stavrakopoulou, "Materialist Reading: Materialism, Materiality, and Biblical Cults of Writing," in *Biblical Interpretation and Method: Essays in Honour of John Barton*, ed. Katharine J. Dell and Paul Joyce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 223-237.

[153] See "Making Bodies," 532-553; Lemos, ""Like the Eunuch Who Does Not Beget"," 47-66; "Shame and the Mutilation of Enemies in the Hebrew Bible," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 125, no. 2 (2006): 225-241; Graybill, *Are We Not Men*; Lipka, "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks," 271-304.

[154] See Lemos, ""Like the Eunuch Who Does Not Beget"," 47-66; Nissinen, "Relative Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible," 340-379.

[155] Lemos, ""Like the Eunuch Who Does Not Beget"," 54.

Thus, as Francesca Stavrakopoulou notes, the social effects of body modifications are contingent.[156] Some cutting practices degrade the male 'Israelite' body, while circumcision marks the male body as a 'site of Yhwh-religion'.[157] Material modifications of male bodies are seen to be productive of distinct locations on a gendered spectrum of masculinities.

Queer approaches to biblical masculinities further deconstruct the notion of a stable subject and highlight the slippage and instability of masculinities. The biblical prophets have provided ample opportunity for exploring these instabilities, especially where biblical men are placed in relation to Yhwh. This dynamic is explored in Ken Stone's essay on Hosea,[158] Stuart Macwilliam's work on Jeremiah,[159] and most recently, Rhiannon Graybill's study of prophetic bodies.[160] The queer bodies of the prophets, Graybill argues, are open, fluid, leaky, disabled, characterized by hysteria and vocal disturbances, soft, penetrated, suffering, and submissive, and present a challenge to hegemonic masculinities.[161]

Questions have arisen in some studies of biblical masculinities concerning the usefulness of applying the model of hegemonic masculinity to biblical texts, given that Yhwh so often occupies the role of 'most masculine' and is attributed a 'hypermasculine' status. Biblical men, Susan Haddox observes, always occupy non-hegemonic positions within this pattern.[162] Perhaps, as she argues, this is a

[156] Stavrakopoulou, "Making Bodies," 432-553.
[157] "Making Bodies," 535.
[158] Ken Stone, *Lovers and Raisin Cakes: Food, Sex, and Manhood in Hosea*, Practicing Safer Texts: Food, Sex and Bible in Queer Perspective (London; New York: T & T Clark International, 2005), 111-128.
[159] Stuart Macwilliam, "Queering Jeremiah," *Biblical Interpretation* 10, no. 4 (2002): 384-404.
[160] Graybill, *Are We Not Men?*
[161] *Are We Not Men?*: 21.
[162] Susan E. Haddox, "Favoured Sons and Subordinate Masculinities," in *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, ed. Ovidiu Creanga (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), 2-19.

way in which Israel locates itself as a subordinate people amid empires.[163] An important consideration, however, is the perceived need in the Hebrew Bible to continually reinforce Yhwh's masculinity, lest Israel is left bereft of a 'most masculine' deity. If biblical men are non-hegemonic, and their deity hangs onto his hegemonic status by a thread, what is left for Israel? This is one of the challenges faced by the *golah*, I suggest, in the narrative world of Ezra 9-10.

A familiar example of the gendering of the relationship between Israel and Yhwh is the prophetic marriage metaphor in which the 'feminization' of 'Israelite' men may be addressed not only as a challenge to the masculine status of these men but also to the masculine performance of Yhwh as the husband of Israel.[164] The study of biblical masculinities thus has implications not only for the characterization of a biblical character (male or female), other nations, including conquering empires, neighbouring peoples, and the indigenous inhabitants of the land of Canaan, it also has implications for Yhwh.

The problematic issue of the sexed and gendered body of Yhwh was highlighted by Eilberg-Schwartz in his 1994 monograph, *God's Phallus and Other Problems for Men and Masculinities*, and addressed by Stephen Moore in monographs published in 1996 and 2001.[165] In his concluding essay to the edited volume *Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond* (2015), Clines points to the

[163] "Favoured Sons and Subordinate Masculinities," 18-19.
[164] For this approach, see Stone, *Lovers and Raisin Cakes*: 111-128; T.M. Lemos, "The Emasculation of Exile: Hypermasculinity and Feminization in the Book of Ezekiel," in *Interpreting Exile: Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, ed. Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritchel Ames, and Jacob L. Wright (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 377-393; Ilona Zsolnay, "The Inadequacies of Yahweh: A Re-Examination of Jerusalem's Portrayal in Ezekiel 16," in *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. S. Tamar Kamionkowski and Wonil Kim (New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 57-74.
[165] Stephen D. Moore, *God's Gym: Divine Male Bodies of the Bible* (New York: Routledge, 1996); *God's Beauty Parlor: And Other Queer Spaces in and around the Bible*, Contraversions (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Eilberg-Schwartz, *God's Phallus and Other Problems for Men and Monotheism*.

‘elephant in the room, the quintessence of masculinity, Yahweh’ who is otherwise addressed only in passing in that volume.[166] The materiality of Yhwh’s body has recently been addressed by Alan Hooker’s explorations of the corporeality of divine sexuality.[167] Furthermore, challenges to scholarly assumptions that Yhwh’s temples were bereft of cult statues offer a realm of productive exploration that complicates notions of Yhwh’s ethereal being and related claims to divine ‘invincibility’ claims that will be addressed in this thesis.[168]

The study of masculinities in the Hebrew Bible, it must be emphasized, is not the study of actual men and women in ancient Israel, nor an ethnography of masculine attributes and practices. The production of biblical masculinities is intricately tied to the ideological interests and rhetorical intent of the biblical texts. Creanga urges for an agenda for studies of biblical masculinities, arguing that ‘the social and sexual biases (elitist and heterosexual), the ideological foundations and asymmetry of Hebrew Bible’s portraiture of men need to be exposed’.[169] Ultimately, masculinities in the Hebrew Bible are implicated in the appropriate gender performances allowed different biblical men in relation to the demands of Yhwh.

As evidenced in the discussion above, studies of masculinities are primarily concerned with men and relationships between men. This shift in the

[166] Clines, "Final Reflections on Biblical Masculinity," 239.
[167] See Alan Hooker, "'Show Me Your Glory': The Kabod of Yahweh as Phallic Manifestation?," in *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, ed. Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 17-34; Alan Bernthal-Hooker, "'You Shall Know Yahweh': Divine Sexuality in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond" (Unpublished PhD, University of Exeter, 2017).
[168] On Yhwh’s cult statue, see Herbert Niehr, "In Search of Yhwh's Cult Statue in the First Temple," in *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. K. van der Toorn (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 73-95; Christoph Uehlinger, "Anthropomorphic Cult Statuary in Iron Age Palestine and the Search for Yahwhe's Cult Images," in *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. K. van der Toorn (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 95-155.
[169] Creanga, "Variations on the Theme of Masculinity," 47.

scholarly gaze complements feminist critical analyses of women's representations and complicates notions of a uniform, homogenous patriarchal bloc as a model for masculine dominance and feminine subordination. The culturally constructed gendered spectrum that locates femininity at one end and 'hegemonic' or idealized masculinity at the other, may be analysed not only as it sustains the subordination of femininity, but also as it configures power relations between men. Incorporating masculinities into the analysis of Ezra 9-10 suggests, as I argue in this thesis, that the subordination of women is not the *objective* of Ezra 9-10, but rather the (problematic) *premise* that is assumed and appropriated as the basis on which differences between men are constituted and sustained.

1.3 Gendering Otherness

The gendered representations that inform my study of this dynamic in Ezra 9-10 derive not only from biblical texts but also from ancient West Asian and Achaemenid texts and iconography.[170] These studies offer insights into dominant discourses and related gender imaginaries prevalent in the cultural milieu in which Ezra 9-10 arises and in which it was read. Gender-critical scholarly engagement with ancient West Asian iconography and inscriptions offers glimpses of some of the stereotypical images, traits, and performances identified with superior or dominant masculinities, especially as they pertain to the realms

[170] Gendered issues pertaining to Achaemenid texts and iconography have received less scholarly attention to date than have neo-Assyrian representations. Continuity between neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid models of masculinity are evidenced in Cool Root's study of royal representations in Achamenid art; Margaret Cool Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art: Essays on the Creation of an Iconography of Empire*, vol. 19, Acta Iranica (Leiden: Brill, 1979). See also Irene Madreiter and Kordula Schnegg, "Gender and Sex," in *A Companion to the Achaemenid Empire*, ed. B Jacob and R. Rollinger, *Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, Forthcoming); DiPalma, *Masculinities in the Court Tales of Daniel*: 114-145.

of kingship and warfare.[171] Such studies highlight the ways in which dominant traits and performances, on the one hand, and 'feminized' or 'less-than-masculine' ones, on the other, sustain claims to diverse realms of power and privilege.

As Ilona Zsolnay explains, some masculine constructs are held to be 'less masculine, less powerful', thereby stigmatizing 'othered' men by associating them with femininity.[172] Biblical texts and ancient West Asian iconography offer numerous examples of such 'feminizing' strategies by which men and male groups are portrayed as socially inferior, sexually humiliated, weak and fearful, and thereby 'un-manned'. They evidence the ways in which the assumed inferiority, weakness, and cowardice of women are employed to challenge the status of men.[173]

Prophetic oracles that describe enemy nations and their warriors as women rhetorically discredit the enemy and elevate the status of Israel and its deity. This gendered rhetoric is found in Isaiah 19.16, for example, where the prophet announces that the Egyptians 'will be like women (כנשים), and tremble (חרד) with fear before the hand that Yhwh Zebaoth raises against them'.[174] Jeremiah likewise ridicules the Babylonians as weak and vulnerable: 'their strength is exhausted; they turn into women' (היו לנשים; Jer 51.30). [175] Foreign

[171] See Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*; Megan Cifarelli, "Gesture and Alterity in the Art of Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria," *The Art Bulletin* 80, no. 2 (1998): 210-228; Assante, "The Lead Inlays of Tukulti-Ninurta I," 370-407; "Men Looking at Men," 76-134; Hoffner, "Symbols for Masculinity and Femininity," 326-334; Madreiter and Schnegg, "Gender and Sex."
[172] Zsolnay, "Introduction," 19.
[173] See Claudia Bergmann, "We Have Seen the Enemy, and He Is Only a "She": The Portrayal of Warriors as Women," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69(2007): 651-672; Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 48-58.
[174] The verb חרד used here is the same term that describes 'those who tremble (חרד) at the words of the God of Israel' and join in Ezra's mourning in Ezra 9.4.
[175] Also, Nah 3.13: 'Babylon's warriors have stopped fighting: they remain in their strongholds. Their strength is exhausted; they turn into women…'.

nations are also feminized by means of their women and cultural markers of 'femininity'. Nineveh is admonished by Nahum to 'look at your people, they are all women in your midst. The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies…' (Nah 31.3).[176] Such images draw on feminine inferiority, female corporeality, and sexual vulnerability to humiliate male warriors and conquered peoples. Other feminizing strategies include physical mutilation that modifies normative markers of masculinity, defeat at the hands of a woman, and the association of men with 'feminine' artefacts such as the spindle.[177]

Prophetic depictions of apostate Jerusalem and Samaria similarly feminize ('emasculate', Lemos argues),[178] the leaders of these cities who are vehemently addressed as prostitutes and adulterous women.[179] Ezekiel 23.25-26, for example, depicts the male citizens of Jerusalem as a woman deprived of her sons and daughters and stripped of her clothing.[180] Thus, Jerusalem not only becomes a woman, but she is a failed woman who has lost her children and whose body is exposed. Cynthia Chapman notes the gendered political implications of this

[176] The open gates offer a vivid image of female openness and vulnerability, as is prevalent in the sexualized terminology employed for the conquest of territories in various ancient and modern conquest accounts.

[177] See Lemos, "Shame and the Mutilation of Enemies," 225-241; Sophus Helle, "Weapons and Weaving Instruments as Symbols of Gender in the Ancient Near East," in *Fashioned Selves: Dress and Identity in Antiquity*, ed. Megan Cifarelli (Philadelphia: Oxbow, 2019), 105-115. Such 'feminized' images are all the more grievous in light of cultural expectations that warriors remain 'clean' of women, especially in times of battle. See Deut 20.7; 24.5; 1 Sam 23.10-12.

[178] Lemos, "The Emasculation of Exile," 377-393.

[179] In Ezek 16.38, Yhwh announces to Jerusalem, 'I will judge you as women who commit adultery and shed blood are judged and bring blood upon you in wrath and jealousy'. See also Hos 1-3, Jer 2-3, and Ezek 16 and 23. On the representation of Jerusalem as Yhwh's unfaithful wife, see Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Gerlinde Baumann, *Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between Yhwh and Israel in the Prophetic Books* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003); Carol Dempsey, "The 'Whore' of Ezekiel 16: The Impact and Ramifications of Gender-Specific Metaphors in Light of Biblical Law and Divine Judgment," in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Victor Harold Matthews, Bernard M. Levinson, and Tikva Simone Frymer-Kensky (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 57-78; Stuart Macwilliam, *Queer Theory and the Prophetic Marriage Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2011); Julie Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh's Wife*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

[180] Verse 26 reads, 'They shall also strip you of your clothes and take away your fine jewels'.

scene: ‘Ezekiel’s female-gendered sacred city resembles the feminized conquered male soldiers of the [Assyrian palace] reliefs who are likewise dismembered, stripped, and shamed before their families’.[181] The effect of this representation, I suggest, is not unlike that of the peoples-of-the-lands in Ezra 9, who are rendered menstrually impure (נדה, 9.11), among other ‘feminizing’ attributes that will be explored in the next chapter of this thesis.

In the neo-Assyrian iconography analysed by Chapman, idealized royal masculinity is portrayed in terms of unrivalled power over other kings,[182] the ability to protect and provide for subjects, virility, and divine chosenness.[183] The portrayal of the Assyrian king’s physical strength, courage, and skilled use of the implements of war contrasts with the ‘feminizing’ portrayals of naked, beheaded, impaled enemy warriors, and fleeing kings who abandon their subjects.[184] The message, Carole Fontaine notes, is clear: ‘men can be disabled as warriors simply by regendering them’.[185] In such portrayals, as Claudia Bergmann helpfully observes, women are not the primary concern; rather, ‘woman becomes the lens through which to see man’.[186]

In the political realm, this gendered dynamic is evidenced in ancient West Asian curses that threaten enemies and disobedient vassals with becoming

[181] Cynthia R. Chapman, "Sculpted Warriors: Sexuality and the Sacred in the Depiction of Warfare in the Assyrian Palace Reliefs and in Ezekiel 23: 14-17*," *Lectio Difficilior: European Electronic Journal for Feminist Exegesis* 1(2007).
[182] *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 27.
[183] *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 28-33.
[184] *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 20-59.
[185] Fontaine, "'Be Men, O Philistines? (1 Samuel 4: 19)," 61-72.
[186] Bergmann, "We Have Seen the Enemy," 654.

women or prostitutes, and losing their masculinity.[187] The treaty between Assur-nerari V and Mati-ilu, King of Arpad is a case in point:

> If Mati`-ilu sins against this treaty with Aššur-nerari, king of Assyria, may Mati`-ilu become a prostitute, his soldiers women, may they receive (a gift) in the square of their cities like any prostitute… may Mati`-ilu's (sex) life be that of a mule…may Ištar, the goddess of men, the lady of women, take away their bow, bring them to shame and make them bitterly weep…[188]

Any breach of the political treaty that commits Mati`-ilu to fidelity to the king of Assyria, is punished in this curse by the complete feminization and humiliation of the vassal king and his soldiers. They are women, prostitutes, and unable to procreate; they sit in the open square, vulnerable to the advances and sexual abuse of other men. Most threatening, perhaps, is the removal of the bow, evidencing the removal of the penis.[189] This curse, and others like it, signal the fluidity of gendered identities and their susceptibility to ritual manipulation.[190]

---

[187] For a gender critical consideration of these curses, see "We Have Seen the Enemy," 655-658; Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 41-58; Amélie Kuhrt, "Women and War," *Journal of Gender Studies in Antiquity* 2 (2001): 126.

[188] Simo Parpola and Kazuko Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*, State Archives of Assyria (Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University Press, 1988), 12, Ins. 18-15; cited in Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 49. Ištar is often called upon in such curses as she is the goddess who is reported to possess both female and male markers and the ability to re-gender mortals, transforming men into women and vice versa. See discussion in *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 55-57; Rivkah Harris, "Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox and a Coincidence of Opposites," *History of Religions* 30, no. 3 (1991): 261-278. On the bow as a symbol of virility and strength in ancient West Asian texts and iconography, see Hoffner, "Symbols for Masculinity and Femininity," 326-334; Assante, "Men Looking at Men," 103-106. The bow is a prominent representation of dominant masculinity in Achaemenid royal iconography as well, evoking both strength and sexual potency; Root, *The King and Kingship*, 19: 164-169. See, however, Sophus Helle's critique of scholars who fail to engage with the complex cultural performances indexed by such weapons; Helle, "Weapons and Weaving Instruments as Symbols of Gender in the Ancient Near East," 111-114.

[189] A prayer to Ištar employs similar imagery: '…grind away from the men manliness, potency…take away their swords, bows, arrow, daggers…put into their hands the distaff and mirror of a woman and clothe them as women'. Cited in Delbert R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and Old Testament Prophets*, vol. 16, Biblica et Orientalia (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964), 66.

[190] Instruments associated with gendered identities, such as the spindle and bow, Helle explains, could be ritually deployed either to index these identities or to transform them; Helle, "Weapons and Weaving Instruments as Symbols of Gender in the Ancient Near East," 105-115. Among other examples, she references a Hittite ritual text that prescribes a cure for 'effeminacy' involving placing a spindle in a man's hand and exchanging it for a bow and arrows (107).

Julia Assante observes that by depicting enemies as women, Neo-Assyrian palatial reliefs and royal inscriptions render these enemies 'inferior and conquerable'.[191] Conquest, she notes,

> obviously belonged to the virile upper end of the hierarchy and was quintessentially Assyrian. Military ideology in images carefully directed desire for conquest away from the Assyrian military body and toward the foreign other, or 'right' conquerable body'. [192]

And conquest, 'is what the super masculine does to the comparatively feminine'.[193] These feminizing traits are compounded by ascriptions of inferior social class and foreignness. The enemy warrior is not only a 'woman' but he is also a prostitute, a 'lowly *harimtu*, a female with no standing whatsoever in the patriarchal system…'.[194] Likewise, the 'enemy' and 'foreigner', or *nakru*, Assante observes, 'acquires its greatest dimension of humiliation when imbricated with women's sexuality'.[195] This gendered otherness incorporates sexuality, social class, and foreignness.

These representations speak to stereotypical images of low-status women and socially unacceptable femininities, but they are not directed at women: their concern is the construction of gendered power relations between men.[196] The 'right' conquerable body in these representations is not that of women; rather,

---

[191] Assante, "Men Looking at Men," 78.
[192] "Men Looking at Men," 80.
[193] "The Lead Inlays of Tukulti-Ninurta I," 385. Assyrian imperial ideology, she argues, 'banked on the nuanced interplay of sex, gender, and power to do its work'. She emphasizes that the 'feminization of the enemy…is way of thinking perpetuated from the court' (384).
[194] "Men Looking at Men," 80.
[195] "The Lead Inlays of Tukulti-Ninurta I," 384-385. The intersection of gender and foreign otherness is evidenced in Egyptian art as well, Carole Fontaine explains. Defeated enemies are depicted with severed genitalia, while foreigners are sometimes portrayed as female, or sporting a flaccid or absent penis; Fontaine, "'Be Men, O Philistines? (1 Samuel 4: 19)," 65.
[196] Assante locates this gendered dynamic in the context of a rigorous male hierarchy; Assante, "Men Looking at Men," 78. Women are rarely represented in Assyrian reliefs, Cifarelli notes, and most frequently as captives, in postures that indicate sexual vulnerability and humiliation; Cifarelli, "Gesture and Alterity," 220-223.

control of women and of the representations of femininity are means for controlling and dominating other men.

Intersecting categories of otherness are similarly gendered in Ezra 9-10: the peoples-of-the-lands are 'foreign', female, and impure. Ezra performs an 'estranged', open, emotion-ridden, fallen, leaky masculinity that embodies the guilt of the *golah*. Yhwh, the deity of the *golah*, is problematically revealed to have been subjected to exile and unable to protect his people – hardly a promising situation for the *golah* as it resides under the power of the kings of Persia. Thus, I argue in this thesis that the debate waged over the foreign women is not primarily concerned with the women themselves. Rather, it is about the contestation and negotiation of masculinities in the narrative world of Ezra 9-10.

Lest the gendering of otherness described above seem far removed from the cultural world of the modern biblical scholar, I close this section with a consideration of the ways in which this gendered dynamic pervades Western cultural imaginaries and biblical scholarship.[197] Western culture is permeated, if not constituted, by European imperial and colonial legacies that map masculinity and femininity onto notions of 'civilized' religion, values, practices, economic systems, and ways of 'being' and 'knowing'.[198] These legacies constitute the

[197] I use the term 'Western' to reference above all a socio-economic and cultural project that locates itself intellectually and philosophically amid the Greco-Roman tradition. The 'West' is itself a product of colonialism and imperialism, and is not particular to a geographical region, although it is generally associated with Europe, the United Kingdom, and North America.

[198] Coloniality, a term coined by Latin American philosophers and historians in contradistinction to the notion of the postcolonial, describes the continued perpetuation of the effects of colonial domination as evidenced in the economic and political structure, racial configurations, gendered identities, and the ways of being and knowing that are valued in Western societies today. On coloniality in the Latin American context, see Aníbal Quijano, "Colonialidad del poder, cultura y conocimiento en América Latina," in *La colonialidad del saber: Eurocentrismo y Ciencias Sociales*, ed. E. Lander (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2005), 201-246; Walter Mignolo, *Historias locales/diseños globales: colonialidad, conocimientos subalternos y pensamiento fronterizo* (Sevilla: Akal, 2003); Mabel Moraña, Enrique D. Dussel, and Carlos A. Jáuregui, *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, Latin America Otherwise (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

colonizers as much as they have constituted the colonized in the 'post-colonial' world.[199] As scholars we do well, I suggest, to recognize that the 'gendering of otherness' is a dynamic that encompasses both ancient and modern worlds, albeit in historically specific ways, and permeates the cultural representations that shape us and the scholarship that has informed us.

Modern discourses of Western colonial and imperial projects serve to highlight the enduring power of this gendered trope and its influence on biblical scholarship. For example, sixteenth-century accounts of Spanish colonial forays into what is today Latin America and the Caribbean describe the indigenous peoples as weak, cowardly, inferior, religiously unorthodox, cannibals, pagans, sodomizers, or otherwise sexually deviant.[200] Nakedness, beardless faces, the absence of weapons, and sexual 'laxity' were proffered as evidence of their feminized character – their sexual and gendered inferiority.[201] At another latitude and in a different century, British imperial discourses employ strategies of 'effeminization', Revathi Krishnaswamy argues, that 'use women/womanhood' in

[199]Coloniality is 'constitutive of modernity', argues Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 39-49 (39).

[200] Images of the indigenous inhabitants of Latin America and the Caribbean that portray them as cannibals, pagans, and sodomizers circulated widely in Spain, justifying Spanish domination as a moral imperative and religious necessity. David Solodkow analyses the letters and chronicles of Columbus that describe the inhabitants of the colonies as cannibals, cyclops, and amazons, These writings were directed to various Spanish and European elites, and served to justify success of his enterprise and the expectation of wealth and riches to be had amidst these 'monsters'; David Solodkow, "De caníbales, etnógrafos y evangelizadores: versiones de la Otredad en las primeras cartas del 'descubrimiento' (Cristóbal Colón 1493, Michele de Cuneo 1495, Pero Vaz de Caminha 1500)," *The Colorado Review of Hispanic Studies* 3(2005): 17-39. Columbus sought to communicate to his sponsors that what he had discovered was a 'desirable product, malleable and easily accessed and subjugated' (translation mine), notes Sergio Rivera Ayala, *El discurso colonial en textos novohispanos: espacio, cuerpo y poder* (Suffolk, U.K.; Rochester, N.Y.: Tamesis, 2009), 70-71.

[201] In the accounts of Columbus and Vesupcci, Sergio Rivera-Ayala notes, masculinity 'is defined as a privileged state to be enjoyed and achieved only by the male colonizers'. The conquered population is repressed by positioning them 'before the European reader/spectator as an Other, different, and feminine, thus exalting and normalizing the masculine subjectivity of the explorers'. *El discurso colonial en textos novohispanos*: 55.

order to 'delegitimize, discredit, and disempower colonized men.[202] The appropriation of women and femininity aims to establish the 'dominance of white men not over brown women but over brown men'.[203]

The evaluation of the conquest of the Canaanites in the work of influential biblical scholar and archaeologist W.F. Albright offers a classic example of the persistence of this colonial legacy in biblical scholarship. In his well-known 1957 tome, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, Albright commented that

> it was fortunate for the future of monotheism that the Israelites of the Conquest were a wild folk, endowed with primitive energy and ruthless will to exist, since the resulting decimation of the Canaanites prevented the complete fusion of the two kindred folk which would almost inevitably have depressed Yahwistic standards to a point where recovery was impossible.[204]

He further described the 'wild' Canaanites in terms of their 'orgiastic nature-worship, their cult of fertility in the form of serpent symbols and sensuous nudity, and their gross mythology'.[205] These pejoratively characterized, feminized emblems of fleshy, corporeal, magico-religious practices contrast with the very masculine, rational, controlled, simplicity of Israel with its 'purity of life, its lofty monotheism and severe code of ethics.'[206] Albright contextualized his observation by comparing the inevitable decimation of the Canaanites to the inevitable decimation of the indigenous peoples of Australia at the hands of their

---

[202] Revathi Krishnaswamy, *Effeminism: The Economy of colonial Desire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 3. It is important to note that accusations of 'effeminacy' assume and affirm the devaluation and disempowerment of women. See also Ashis Nandy who argues that colonialism 'produced a cultural consensus in which political and socio-economic dominance symbolized the dominance of men and masculinity over women and femininity'; Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 4. This homology, as he refers to it, was a product of the need to legitimate colonial domination, both in the conquered territories – such as India – and in Europe.
[203] Krishnaswamy, *Effemenism*: 3.
[204] William Foxwell Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957), 214.
[205] *From the Stone Age to Christianity*: 214.
[206] *From the Stone Age to Christianity*: 214.

British colonizers. 'It often seems necessary' he noted, 'that a people of markedly inferior type should vanish before a people of superior potentialities'.[207]

While Albright's positions have long since been critiqued, his work remains highly influential, and its colonialized values and assumptions continue to pervade many scholarly works today – much as the same themes continue to shape Western culture more broadly.[208] Scholarly studies of goddesses in the Hebrew Bible, for example, problematically associate these deities not only with women worshippers, but with women's culture, women's religion, and women's bodies, thereby rendering the ancient goddess, and her religio-cultural role, inferior to the purported official 'masculine' cult of the patron deity.[209]

Similarly orientalised, feminized, and exoticized representations of the 'other' are advanced in accounts of colonial and 'biblical' encounter,[210] while the lived religious and cultural experiences of many peoples today are often rendered inferior to 'authoritative' biblical teachings and interpretations. In Latin America, indigenous cultures and practices that survived conquest, colonization, and

[207] *From the Stone Age to Christianity*: 214. Similar explicit conflations of biblical and colonial enterprises are evidenced in various modern contexts. See Michael Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); Keith W. Whitelam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

[208] See Keith Whitelam for a critique of biblical scholarship's portrayal of Palestine; *The Invention of Ancient Israel*.

[209] See Francesca Stavrakopoulou, "The Ancient Goddess, the Biblical Scholar, and the Religious Past," in *The Bible and Feminism: Remapping the Field*, ed. Yvonne Sherwood (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 495-513. Albright's generation of scholars tended to associate goddess worship in the Hebrew Bible with deviant, foreign, and licentious religious practices, she notes (495-496). See also her critique of scholarly distinctions between 'popular' and 'official' religion in ancient Israel and Judah; "'Popular' Religion and 'Official' Religion: Practice, Perception, Portrayal," in *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah*, ed. Francesca Stavrakopoulou and John Barton (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 37-58.

[210] See critique in Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique*; Saad Chedid, "La Torah Leída con los Ojos de los Cananeos o la Otra Cara de la Conquista," in *La Biblia Leída con los Ojos de los Cananeos*, ed. Saad Chedid and Nur Masalha (Buenos Aires: Editorial Canaán, 2011), 185-226; Laurence J. Silberstein and Robert L. Cohn, *The Other in Jewish Thought and History: Constructions of Jewish Culture and Identity*, New Perspectives on Jewish Studies (New York: New York University Press, 1994); R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, colonial, and Postcolonial Encounters* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

genocide, have long been rendered ‘pagan’ and ‘inferior’ to the teachings of both Roman Catholic and Protestant missions. These practices, including the veneration of the Pachamama (Mother Earth) in the Andes, ancestor veneration among the Maya-Quiché, and the religions practised by the descendants of African slaves – such as Candomblé –, have been rejected and suppressed in favour of the ‘superior truth’ and ethics of so-called biblical teachings.[211]

More recently, in many Latin American countries, such gendered religious discourses have undermined state efforts to implement policies of gender justice and inclusivity. Under the guise of ‘gender ideology’, all such efforts are frequently condemned as contrary to ‘biblical’ models for the family and sexuality.[212] This ‘biblically-based’ perspective likewise permeates scholarly representations of non-Israelites, whose deviancy – and threat – are ultimately embodied in the figure of the foreign woman brought into the midst of Israel.

This dynamic of gendered otherness present in both ancient and modern contexts offers insights not only concerning the biblical representation of the foreign women in Ezra 9-10, but also into scholarly interest in pursuing the women, despite their silence in the text and the text’s silence about them.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I argued that critical studies of men and masculinities, complemented with a focus on embodiment, performance, and materiality,

[211] This suppression, however, was not wholly successful as it gave rise to varied expressions of resistance, incorporation, and appropriation by the conquered themselves. See Elsa Tamez, "Quetzalcóatl y el Dios Cristiano: alianza y lucha de dioses," *Vida y pensamiento* 11, no. 1 (1991): 31-54; José Severino Croatto, " La destrucción de los símbolos de los dominados," *Ribla* 11(1992): 37-48.

[212] On ‘gender ideology’ and its impact in Latin America, see Genilma Boehler, "Teorías, Teologías, Género e Ideologías," *Vida y pensamiento: De la ideología de género a la justicia de género* 38, no. 1 (2018): 55-88; Gloria Careaga-Pérez, "Moral Panic and Gender Ideology in Latin America," *Religion & Gender* 6, no. 2 (2016): 251-255.

contribute to ‘complicating’ the scholarly focus on the expulsion of the women in Ezra 9-10. Masculinities are revealed to be diverse, relationally constituted, and unstable. As Nissinen observes, there is ‘a permanent and significant concern for ideal masculinity’ in ancient texts, including the Hebrew Bible, precisely because

> … manhood was a vulnerable quality that was constantly endangered, and had, therefore, always to be demonstrated, done, and accomplished by means of proper male performance: ‘Be a man and do it!’[213]

Thus, the subordinate status attributed to culturally specific traits associated with femininity and inferior masculinities serves not primarily to subordinate or exclude women, but more problematically, as the premise based on which masculinities and associated power relations are disputed. The primary ‘encounter’ in Ezra 9-10, I suggest, is not between men and women but between the various men and male figures who inhabit this narrative world. The peoples-of-the-lands, I argue in what follows, are strategically feminized in this text, in order to establish the dominance of Israelite men *not over foreign women but over other men*. Intermarriage is the ‘playing field’ on which relationships between men and with the deity are disputed and reconfigured. Women are pawns on this playing field – or so the narrator seeks to convince readers and hearers of the text.

[213] Nissinen, "Relative Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible," 342.

Chapter 2 Gendering Otherness in Ezra 9-10

There are two peoples in Ezra 9-10, the 'people of Israel (העם ישׂראל) and the peoples-of-the-lands (עמי הארצות). The problem that is introduced in Ezra 9.1 is that the boundaries between these peoples have been breached: 'The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated themselves (לא־נבדלו) from the peoples-of-the-lands …' (9.1b). This issue arises because some of the men of the *golah* have taken daughters from among the peoples-of-the-lands for themselves and their sons (9.2). While the taking of daughters is the immediate action denounced in the text, the primary issue at stake is the relationship between these two arguably male social groups: the *golah* and the peoples-of-the-lands.[214]

In keeping with the focus of this thesis, in this chapter, I shift my gaze away from the 'foreign' women to analyse the masculinities of the peoples-of-the-lands and the *golah* in this text. While the religious, ethnic, and social status of these groups has been a focus of scholarly exploration, the gendered implications of their characterization, representation, and performance have not been explored. I begin the chapter, therefore, by focusing on the men of the *golah*, calling them to 'stand up' and be counted as *men* in the narrative world of Ezra 9-10. I then explore the dynamic of gendered otherness that I argue is a key to the representation of the peoples-of-the-lands as 'other' in relation to the *golah*. I consider the ways in which images and traits culturally associated with 'feminine'

[214] These 'peoples' are male social groups, as evidenced not only by the use in the Hebrew Bible of the term עם that derives from male kinship ties, but also by the actions attributed to them as discussed in what follows. See Ludwig Köhler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament Vol. I* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 837-838.

inferiority are deployed to strategically 'de-masculinize' the peoples-of-the-lands and legitimate their expulsion. This gendered dynamic is productive of claims concerning *golah* masculinity that are, however, complicated by the social location of the *golah* as constituted in this narrative world. While identified as the 'sons of the Exile' (בני הגלוה), they are no longer in exile, yet neither are they fully in possession of the land (9.11-12). Furthermore, while not abandoned by Yhwh, they continue to exist as slaves of the Persian empire (9.8-9). This reading of the text attends not only to the discourses that sustain binary gender constructs but also to their material and discursive effects and their inherent instability.

2.1 Will the Men Please Stand Up

Readers, hearers, and interpreters of the book of Ezra are introduced from the very first verse of chapter 1 into a world populated by male-gendered characters whose activities involve travel and migration, land settlement, and temple building (Ezra 1.1-5). A particular group of men, the 'sons of the *golah*' (בני הגולה) is granted imperial and divine authorization to populate a territory, build and staff a temple, and engage in cultic worship (Ezra 1-6).[215] These men successfully dispute their claims to imperial authorization and divine favour with other men in the region (Ezra 4-5) and are granted authority over local elites – in the person of Ezra – to enforce the law of Yhwh and of the king in the region (Ezra 7.26). The *golah* is represented in this book by men who occupy a variety of social and cultic roles, and whose identity as a group derives from their kinship ties and the common experience of exile to which they appeal (2.59-63).

[215] Persian and divine participation in temple building is repeatedly referenced in chapters 1-6 (1.1-2; 4.3; 5.1,13-14; 6.3-7,14). For discussions concerning the extent of Persian involvement in the temple-building enterprise, see Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*; Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple*; Fried, *The Priest and the Great King*: 158-183.

This group is represented variously as 'the people of Israel (העם ישׂראל),[216] Israel,[217] 'the men of Judah and Benjamin' (אנשׁי־יהודה ובנימין),[218] the 'holy seed' (זרע הקדשׁ; 9.2), and 'assembly' (קהל).[219] Alongside the name Israel, the book of Ezra most frequently uses the term הגולה to describe those who trace their Israelite lineage to the experience of exile.[220] This terminology, along with numerous other elements in the book, evidence a claim to continuity between the *golah* and the Israel of the Exodus and Exile, and portray the men of the *golah* as rightful heirs to this identity and the only legitimate Israel in the region.[221] The sons of the *golah*, therefore, is a group defined not by continued habitation of a particular territory, but rather by the experience of dispossession, exile in Babylon, and 'return' to Yehud.[222]

Exilic lineage is emphasized in the lists of names in Ezra 2.2b-67 and 8.1-5. Within the sequence of events presented in the book, these lists identify those who 'return' from captivity in Babylon and are therefore the true Israel. Sometimes called '*golah* lists' or 'census lists', scholars have extensively discussed their

[216] Ezra 2.2;6.21; 7.7; 9.1.
[217] Ezra 2.2,59,70; 3.1,11; 7.10,11,28,25,29,35; 10.1,2,5,10,25.
[218] Ezra 1.2;4.1; 10.9.
[219] Ezra 2.64; 10.1,12,14.
[220] In the Hebrew Bible, the term גולה references exile, as it does in Ezra 1.11; 2.1; 6.21. But in the book of Ezra it is also used as a title for a specific group that traces its lineage and identity to the Exile (see 9.4; 10.6). They are the 'sons of the Exile' (בני הגולה; 4.1; 6.19,20; 8.35; 10.7; 10.16), the 'assembly of the Exile' (קהל הגולה;10.8). Juha Pakkala argues that this terminology derives from '*golah* editors' of the book of Ezra whose participation in the editorial phases of the composition of the book 'emphasized the role of the exiles in the events after the Exile'; Pakkala, "The Concept of Exile," 96-97.
[221] The theme of continuity with the traditions and 'stories' of pre-exilic Israel runs through the book. Alluded to are the prophecies of Jeremiah concerning the end of the Exile (1.1); the memories of exodus and conquest (Ezra 1.3-6; 3; 8; 9.2), Solomon's temple building account (Ezra 3), the sins of the fathers that led to exile and captivity (9.6-7); the commandments given to the prophets (9.10); and the promise of the land (9.11-12). Continuity between the Israel that was exiled from Judah and the *golah* is indicated with references to the return from captivity (2.1; 3.8; 8.35) and the restoration of temple vessels (1.7-11; 5.12,14; 6.5; 8.25-33). On the Exile as a key marker of the identity of Israel in the Hebrew Bible, see Ben Zvi, "Inclusion in and Exclusion from Israel," 95-141. On the Exodus motif in the book of Ezra see Klaus Koch, "Ezra and the Origins of Judaism," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 19, no. 2 (1974): 173-197.
[222] See Ben Zvi, "Inclusion in and Exclusion from Israel," 95-149.

authenticity and to what extent they represent lists of actual 'returnees' or perhaps later inhabitants in the region.[223] Others focus on the literary and ideological significance of these lists and the way in which they constitute the identity and nature of the *golah*.[224] What scholars have failed to highlight, however, is the way these lists function to gender the *golah*.

The first observation concerning these lists is that women are absent as members of the *golah*.[225] The community portrayed is one of men: men who are characterized above all as 'sons' or 'descendants' (-בן),[226] in some cases, explicitly described as 'men' (אנשׁי),[227] and in others as 'males' (זכרים).[228] Despite the importance of 'son-ship' in the book, this male kinship group, the 'sons of the *golah*' (בני הגלוה), is not defined by a common ancestor but, above all, by the shared experience of exile. This intersection of male patrilineage and 'exilic'

[223] There is a general consensus amongst these scholars that the lists derive from a later date and do not represent an actual list of 'returnees'. The place names in Ezra 2 have been the focus of both literary, sociological, and demographic studies. See, for example, K. Galling, "The 'Gola-List' According to Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 70(1951): 149-158; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 18-20; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 83-93.

[224] See for example, Donna Laird, *Negotiating Power in Ezra-Nehemiah*, Ancient Israel and Its Literature (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 90-109; Hayyim Angel, "The Literary Significance of the Name Lists in Ezra-Nehemiah," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2007): 143-152; Jonathan E. Dyck, *The Theocratic Ideology of the Chronicler* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1998), 189-198; Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose*: 48-49.

[225] They appear as servants and singers, and in 2.61 the daughter of Barzillai is mentioned, as her father's name is adopted by her husband in order to carry on Barzillai's lineage. This daughter, Hennie Marsman notes, like various others in the Hebrew Bible, plays an 'intermediary role in the continuation of a patrilineage', ensuring the perpetuation of her father's name; Hennie J. Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel: Their Social and Religious Position in the Context of the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 289.

[226] Ezra 2.3-21;24-26,29-58; 8.2-14; 10.18,20-43. This is the term used most frequently to characterize men in the book of Ezra (205x). It is used 147 times in the lists of men's names in 2.1-67; 8.1-20; and 10.18-43 (16 times), and on another 58 occasions it designates both individual men and collective entities. It is one of the words used most frequently in the Hebrew Bible, describing kinship and hereditary relationships (son, grandson, nephew), as well membership in a nation, tribe, place, or social group. See H. Haag, "Bēn," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol II*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 149-153; Köhler and Baumgartner, *HALOT Vol. I*: 137-138.

[227] Ezra 2.22-23, 27-28

[228] Ezra 8.3-14. The term 'male' (זכר) designates the men listed as traveling with Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem in 8.1-20. The term designates biological maleness and is found especially in military and cultic contexts, as in the census list in Numbers 1; those who are registered (Ezra 8.1) or counted (Num 1.2) are males.

identity distinguishes the *golah* as a 'holy seed' (זרע הקדשׁ, 9.2).[229] In Ezra 9.12, it is the sons of the *golah* who are to possess the land and give it to their own sons as a possession (והורשׁתם לבניכם).[230] Thus, the masculinity of the *golah* is tied to exilic lineage, separation from other peoples (indigenous inhabitants of the land), and possession of the land, a land their sons will inherit. Procreation of the 'right sons', בני הגלוה, would appear, therefore, to be a key concern in the text.

The sons of the *golah* are organized by patriarchal houses (בית אבות) that must be registered as proof of exilic lineage.[231] The importance of this lineage is indicated in Ezra 2, where the list of 'returnees' is interrupted with the mention of several families, a total of 652 sons, who cannot prove their בית אבות and their זרע (v.60). This suggests that membership in a בית אבות was one way of determining the correct lineage of a man. Three priestly groups (מבני הכהנים) are

[229] The literal meaning of זרע is agricultural seed and male semen, while figuratively it references offspring, descendants. See Hans Dietrich Preuss, "zāraʿ," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol IV*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 147-162; Baruch Levine, "'Seed' Versus 'Womb': Expressions of Male Dominance in Biblical Israel," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 47th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, July 2-6, 2001*, ed. Simon Parpola and Robert M. Whiting (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text corpus Project, 2002), 337-342.

[230] Legitimate descent and provision for descendants is a marker of neo-Assyrian royal masculinity as noted by Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 29.

[231] The nature of the 'post-exilic' בית אבות and its relationship to the בית אב in 'pre-exilic' texts has been widely debated. It is most frequently used in Chronicles (46x), Ezra and Neh (19x), and only six times in Joshua through 2 Kgs. Williamson argues that the בית אבות replaces the 'pre-exilic' משׁפחה, and is 'thought to be a direct continuation of the earlier בית אב although increased in size' that reflects circumstances of exile and 'return'; H. G. M. Williamson, "The Family in Persian Period Judah: Some Textual Reflections," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina*, ed. William G. Dever, et al. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 472,477-478. Weinberg's detailed analysis of the term in the Hebrew Bible leads him to conclude that בית אבות is a 'new social construction from the pieces of pre-exilic institutions'; Joel Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple Community*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1992), 61. Smith-Christopher also associates the בית אבות with the experience of exile, and emphasises the social adaptation that led to the adoption of 'a familial fiction to use the language of a closer family unit…as an expression of social solidarity'; Daniel L. Smith, *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile* (Bloomington: Meyer-Stone Books, 1989), 99.

singled out in 2.61-62 because they are not enrolled (מתיחשׂים), presumably in the registry of exilic priests, and are thus desecrated (גאל) from the priesthood until a consultation is made with the Urim and Thummin (2.63).[232] The list, and those excluded from it, evidence the fundamental significance of 'seed' in the book of Ezra: only the 'right' seed – registered in the right בית אבות can be a member of the true Israel.[233]

There are differences among these men, the 'seed' of the Israel of the Exile; they occupy different social and cultic roles that determine the realms in which they exercise authority over some and submit to the authority of others. The ראשׁי אבות are the heads of the בית אבות and appear as leaders at key points throughout the book: they are the primary movers in the 'return' under Cyrus (1.5); they give freewill offerings for temple building (2.68-69); they are present along with priests and Levites at the inauguration of temple building (3.12); they lead the temple-building mission and represent the *golah* in the dispute with the 'enemies of Judah and Benjamin' (4.1-5); they are the leaders of the male groups that accompany Ezra to Jerusalem (8.1-14); and they are chosen by Ezra in 10.16 to take charge of the investigation concerning marriage to 'foreign' women. Jonathan Dyck argues that while the heads served as 'representatives of the

[232] The mention of these family groups suggest that the list is concerned with highlighting the criteria for membership in the *golah*, specifically, the experience of exile. While there is no indication that these men were excluded, they are singled out as being of doubtful origin. The priests in vv.61-63 are marginalized from their duties until their lineage is proven.

[233] He argues that the בית אבות reflect the conformation of new social groups during the Exile that served as a strategy for boundary maintenance and were not 'designed' for growth, expansion, or the incorporation of new members; Jonathan E. Dyck, "Ezra 2 in Ideological Critical Perspective," in *Rethinking Contexts, Rereading Texts: Contributions from the Social Sciences to Biblical Interpretation*, ed. M. Daniel Carroll R (Sheffield: Shefflield Academic Press, 2000), 139. This terminology, Dyck emphasizes, serves as a means for social discrimination (141).

community', this representation served a 'system of power and authority' that was built into the kinship structure.[234]

Alongside the 'heads of the father's houses', is an almost dizzying number of social and cultic roles that are occupied by men throughout the book of Ezra, and in Ezra 9-10. Men occupy the roles of elders (שׂב, זקן),[235] officials (שׂרים),[236] leaders (סגנים),[237] judges (שׂפטים), prophets (נביא).[238] Williamson argues that this varied terminology is 'for all intents and purposes interchangeable' in the book of Ezra.[239] This begs the question, however, as to why the redactor decided to maintain the different roles rather than homogenize the terminology of leadership used in the book. The effect, in Ezra 9-10 in particular, is to emphasize the many leadership roles held by the *golah* men who participate in the process of determining the guilt of the married men of the *golah*. It also serves to highlight the absence of priests and Levites in these proceedings.[240]

Men occupying cultic roles, priests and Levites (הכהנים והלוים) in particular,[241] are singled out in Ezra 1-8. They are listed among the 'returnees' in Ezra 2;[242] they take charge of sacrificial service and staff the Temple upon its

[234] "Ezra 2 in Ideological Critical Perspective," 144.
[235] The 'elders of the Jews' are present above all in the Aramaic text, where they are the leaders of the Jews, responsible for temple building (5.5,9;6.7,9,14). In Ezra 10.8, the elders, along with the officials, establish the penalty for those who refuse to gather in Jerusalem to discuss the matter of marriage to the 'foreign' women; they also represent the towns whose men are to come to Jerusalem in the process of identifying the guilty (10.16).
[236] The term שׂר is used in the Hebrew Bible to designate a variety of officials, both civil and military. In Ezra, Neh and Chr it is used to designate heads of the priests (Ezra 8.24,29; 10.5; 2 Chr 36.14), leaders of the people, as in elders, and/or heads of families (Ezra 10.8,14).
[237] The term סגן references a Babylonian state official (Isa 41.25; Jer 51.23,28,57; Ezek 23.6,12,23; and in Ezra and Neh, a leader of the Jewish community. See Ezra 9.2; Neh 2.16; 4.8,13; 5.7,17;7.5. For more details, see Köhler and Baumgartner, *HALOT Vol. I*: 742.
[238] Ezra 5.1-2
[239] Williamson, "The Family in Persian Period Judah," 475.
[240] At the least, their participation is not explicit.
[241] The term כהן is used 33 times in the book, and לוי 29 times. Other than 'sons' it is the most prevalent role occupied by men in the book of Ezra.
[242] Ezra 2 begins with the priests, who are the largest group of cultic personnel (2.36-39); then a very few Levites are listed (2.40), followed by singers and gatekeepers (2.41-42). Last in the list

completion.[243] They play a key role in the account of Ezra's travel to Jerusalem in Ezra 8, especially where the leading priests (שׂרי הכהנים) are separated (הבדל) by Ezra in 8.24-33 and charged to bear treasures sent by King Artaxerxes for the Temple in Jerusalem.[244]

The problem with intermarriage is not brought to the fore by priests or Levites, however, but by the שׂרים (9.1-2). The *golah* is convened to Jerusalem in order to address the matter by officials (שׂרים), judges (שׁפטים), and elders (זקנים) in 10.6, not the priests. In 10.14, the assembly proposes that they are to be represented by the שׂרים, and local שׁפטים and זקנים in each town are to be called upon to accompany the guilty men to Jerusalem (10.17). Ultimately, the ראשׁי אבות selected by Ezra are the men who make inquiries and determine the names of the guilty men (10.16-17). Not only are priests and Levites absent in these proceedings, but they are also among the accused and the guilty.[245] The only priest who takes an active role in the text is Ezra himself – the priest, scribe, and emissary designated by the Persian king (Ezra 7). His performance, however, is not that of priestly sacrificial service, but of mourning and lament (9.3-4; 10.1,6).

The men of the *golah* occupy various and diverse roles that evidence kinship ties, social and cultic structures, and a shared cultural memory of the 'past'. Furthermore, they are the primary actors throughout Ezra 9-10, as I have noted. *Golah* men gather, accuse, marry, mourn, assemble, propose covenants,

---

of cultic personnel are the temple servants (נתינים, 2.43-54) and the descendants of Solomon's servants (2.55-58).

[243] Ezra 3.2,8,10,12; 6.20.

[244] Priests are listed first among those who accompany Ezra to Jerusalem (8.2), and in 8.15-20, Ezra seeks out Levites to join his company.

[245] Ezra 9.1-2; 10.17-22. They are obliged by Ezra to swear an oath to carry out the covenant to expel the women (10.2-5).

take oaths, plan, organize, exercise leadership roles, sacrifice, and investigate, among other varied participation in the text. *Golah* women are absent except for a brief mention in 10.1 where they are part of an assembly of 'men, women, and children' (אנשים ונשים וילדים) that gathers around Ezra.[246]

The active and diverse characterization of *golah* men in Ezra 9-10 contrasts markedly with that of the peoples-of-the-lands (עמי הארצות).[247] The identity of the peoples-of-the-lands, a group that appears various times throughout the book of Ezra and with whom the 'foreign' women are associated, has been the subject of much scholarly debate. A complicating factor in this discussion concerns the different forms in which this designation is found. In Ezra 4.4, the singular 'people of the land' (עם הארץ) designates a group that seeks to inhibit the *golah's* temple building efforts.[248] Two different plural forms are used in the rest of the book: peoples-of-the-lands (עמי הארצות) in Ezra 3.3 and chapter 9,[249] and peoples-of the-land (עמי הארץ) in chapter 10.[250]

In other biblical texts, the singular form often references the landowning citizens of monarchic Judah.[251] The plural form עמי הארץ, usually designates 'all

[246] I return to these women in Chapter 5.

[247] Two variants of this designation are used in Ezra 9-10, both of them plural: עמי הארצות,in Ezra 9.1,2,11, also 3.3; and עמי הארץ in Ezra 10.2,11. The singular form עם הארץ is used in Ezra 4.4, but is not found in chapters 9-10.

[248] See Lisbeth Fried, "The 'Am Ha'ares in Ezra 4: 4 and Persian Administration," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 125; E. W. Nicholson, "The Meaning of the Expression 'Am Ha'arez in the Old Testament," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 10(1965): 59-66; Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Judean 'Am Ha'ares in Historical Perspective," in *Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, ed. World Union of Jewish Studies. (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1967), 71-76; John Tracy Thames, "A New Discussion of the Meaning of the Phrase 'Am Ha'ares in the Hebrew Bible," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, no. 1 (2011): 109-125; A.H.J. Gunneweg, "'Am Ha'arez – a Semantic Revolution," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 95(1983): 437-440.

[249] Ezra 9.1,2,11

[250] Ezra 10.2.11.

[251] For the singular form: 2 Kgs 11.14,18; 15.5; 23.30. See Gunneweg, "'Am Ha'arez – a Semantic Revolution," 437-440; Talmon, "The Judean 'Am Ha'ares in Historical Perspective," 71-76. Fried suggests that the singular form in Ezra 4.4 maintains the technical sense of this definition, the

the peoples of the earth' or of a territory,[252] while the second plural form, עמי הארצות, used only in 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, references the indigenous inhabitants of Canaan.[253] In the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, however, all of these forms appear to be applied to peoples who are rendered 'foreign' in relation to Israel.[254] This has led to scholarly debates concerning the precise identity of these peoples and whether the different forms in the book of Ezra refer to the same or different groups of people.[255]

These discussions, however, veer away from the narrative world of Ezra 9-10 and depend on reconstructions of the social context of fifth-century BCE Yehud. In this thesis, my concern is not what 'actual' peoples may be referred to with this biblical terminology, but rather how this terminology, and the traits and performances attributed to this group are implicated in the construction of masculinities and negotiation of power relations in the text. The ambiguities, including the varied forms of the phrase and the lack of precision concerning the

enemies of the *golah* are landowning citizens of Judah, although in this case they are not Judahites. Her conclusion depends on her identification of the enemies in 4.1 with the satrapal officials who correspond with Artaxerxes; Fried, "The 'Am Ha'ares in Ezra 4:4," 123-145. See critique of Fried's argument in Thames, "A New Discussion," 114-119.

[252] עמי הארץ: Deut 28.10; Josh 4.24; Esth 8.17; 1 Kgs 8.43,53,60; 2 Chr 6.33; Ezek 31.12; Zeph 3.20. In Neh 10.31-32; 1 Chr 5.25; and 2 Chr 32.19, it references the indigenous inhabitants of the land.

[253] עמי הארצות: 2 Chr 13.9; 32.13. This plural form is used only in these texts and in Ezra 3.3; 9.1,2,11; Neh 9.30; 10.29. On this plural form, see Lisbeth Fried, "Because of the Dread Upon Them," in *The World of Achaemenid Persia: History, Art and Society in Iran and the Ancient Near East*, ed. John Curtis and St John Simpson (New York, London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 458-459.

[254] A.H.J. Gunneweg posits that in Ezra and Nehemiah the designation is used for 'hostile foreign people and pagans'; Gunneweg, "'Am Ha'arez – a Semantic Revolution," 438. Nicholson similarly indicates that the peoples-of-the-land were the 'heathen population of Palestine amongst whom the Jews who had returned from exile had to live'; Nicholson, "The Meaning of the Expression 'Am Ha'arez," 66.

[255] Some argue that the terms refer to foreigners who lived in the area traditionally considered the land of Israel, while others specify that the probable reference is to non-exiled Judeans. For these arguments, see Fried, "Because of the Dread Upon Them," 458-459; Lester L. Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, Old Testament Library (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), 183; *A History of the Jews and Judaism Vol I*: 285-288. See also Bob Becking, who finds little evidence of multiple ethnicity within post-exilic Yehud, and looks rather to 'competing Yahwistic temples' as an explanation for this designation; Becking, "On the Identity of the Foreign Women," 41-42.

ethnic or social groups that are being referenced, suggest that it is not who they are, but *what they represent and how they are represented* that is of primary interest for the redactor of the received text of Ezra 9-10.

As noted in the previous chapter, biblical texts, along with texts and iconography from various ancient West Asian contexts, can offer insights into the ways in which traits culturally associated with inferior masculinities or femininities are employed to configure status and power relations between men and male groups. In this context, accusations of effeminacy, emasculation, or being 'like women', functioned within disciplinary discourses to mediate relationships between men, male groups and male ordered institutions.[256] This gendered trope offers a context in which to explore the gendering of the peoples-of-the-lands in Ezra 9-10.

Scholars have characterized the 'foreign' women in terms of their gender, their subordinate social status (daughters of foreigners, secondary wives), their foreignness (Canaanite, 9.2), and impurity (9.11). I argue that these attributes function to undermine the masculinity of the peoples-of-the-lands and thereby assert the superior masculinity of the *golah*. The debate waged on the bodies of daughters and 'foreign' women in Ezra 9-10 functions, I suggest, strategically to 'feminize' the peoples of the land and render them illegitimate inhabitants of the land that the *golah* claims as its rightful possession.

[256] Issues of power were often 'debated as if they were issues of gender', Maude Gleason explains, where the distinction between male and female served 'to divide the male sex into legitimate and illegitimate members'; Maud Gleason, "The Semiotics of Gender: Physiognomy and Self-Fashioning in the Second Century C.e.," in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler, and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 412.

2.2 The Enemy Is a 'She'

In Ezra 9-10, the peoples-of-the-lands are characterized primarily in terms of their relationship to the *golah*. This relationship is defined in 9.1-2, the accusation brought to Ezra by the officials (שׂרים):

> The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands whose abominations are like those of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and for their sons. Thus, the holy seed has intermingled with the peoples of the lands, and in this infidelity, the officials and leaders have been first.

Israel, they state, should be separate from these peoples (9.1), and the intermingling of the 'holy seed' of the *golah* with these peoples is problematic (9.2). Furthermore, these peoples practise abominations like those of the Canaanites with whom, in the Torah, Israel is forbidden to intermarry and enter into covenants (9.2,14).[257] In Ezra 9.11, the peoples-of-the-lands are also characterized as impure, such that they contaminate the land Israel is to possess. Notably absent in these descriptions is any reference to the social structure of the peoples-of-the-lands, or to men who occupy social and cultic roles within this group. They have no assembly, no priests or other temple personnel, no elders, chiefs, judges, or heads of families. Unlike the *golah*, the peoples-of-the-lands have no male representatives, and no one speaks for them in the text. They are not Israel, but neither are their identities – whether ethnic or religious – clearly defined.

In sum, the peoples-of-the-lands are a vaguely characterized group that lacks hierarchal differentiation, has no clear ethnic identity and, furthermore,

[257] Deut 7.1-4; Exod 34.15-16; also, Judg 2.2

evidences no explicit agency in the text. The only social roles mentioned in the characterization of these peoples are those of 'daughters' (בנות; 9.2) and 'wives' (נשׁים, 10.2).[258] While it might well be assumed that these daughters and wives have fathers and brothers, these male members of the peoples-of-the-lands are not explicitly referenced, and any actions they might carry out are invisible in the text. Thus, we are left with 'daughters' and 'women/wives' as sole representatives of these peoples.

The allocation of these social roles to the peoples-of-the-lands places them in positions of social inferiority and dependence.[259] As daughters, they are subject to the authority and protection of their fathers and brothers, who are unmentioned in the text.[260] As wives, they are subject to their husbands, the men of the *golah*. These daughters and wives, furthermore, are acted upon throughout the text by the men of the *golah*: they are taken in marriage (**נשׂא**, lit. 'lifted', 9.2), they are 'settled' (הושׁיב, lit. 'caused to dwell'),[261] and their expulsion is decided (**הוציא**, 10.3,18).[262] This terminology emphasizes the passivity of the peoples-of-the-lands which in turn contrasts with the active, and arguably more masculine role, granted *golah* men.

The accusation brought against the *golah* men has to do with their actions in relation to these daughters: they are accused of having taken 'daughters-of-

[258] They are designated נשׁים נכריות in 10.2,10,11,14,17,18,44.

[259] This representation of women's inferiority does not speak to the actual social power (or lack thereof) of women in the context of ancient Israel and Judah but references a cultural representation that responds to the interests of male scribes and readers. See Fuchs, "Reclaiming the Hebrew Bible for Women," 45-65; Carol L. Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[260] On the role of brothers as protectors of their sisters, see Johanna Stiebert, *Fathers and Daughters in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 50-64. Examples include Dinah's brothers in Gen 34 and Tamar's brother Absalom in 2 Sam 13.1-22.

[261] Ezra 10.2,10,14,17,18.

[262] Along with those 'born from them' (הנולד מהם, 10.3b).

them' for themselves and their sons (כי־נשׂאו מבנתיהם להם ולבניהם; 9.2). The taking of daughters, an arguably masculine performance in the Hebrew Bible, is an act that establishes ties between men. Men take the daughters of other men as wives (for themselves, for their sons); fathers, in turn, give their own daughters in marriage to other men.[263] In Ezra 9-10, *golah* fathers seek out daughters for themselves and their sons; the fathers of these daughters, however, do not 'give' them to *golah* men. These daughters are not 'taken' (לקח),[264] as might be expected. They are, rather, rather, 'lifted' (**נשׂא**), a verb associated with strength and political status in the Hebrew Bible, and thereby emphasizes the more active, even forceful, role of *golah* men in acquiring daughters as wives.[265]

The absence of a corresponding 'giving' of daughters by the male peoples-of-the-lands, renders these peoples passive: they neither 'give' their own daughters, nor do they 'take' *golah* daughters.[266] Intermarriage in Ezra 9 is rendered a one-way process in which the peoples-of-the-lands have no

[263] Gen 11.29; Gen 29.28; 34.16. See discussion of the alliances and negotiations between men that are played out through the giving and taking of daughters in Stiebert, *Fathers and Daughters in the Hebrew Bible*: 38-50.

[264] The most common verb used for marriage in the Hebrew Bible is 'to take a wife' (לקח אשׁה). See Gen. 24.3,4,7,37,38,40; Lev 21.14; Judg 14.3; 1 Kgs 16.31; among many others.

[265] The verb is used for marriage in Judg 21.21-23; 2 Chr 11.21; 13.21; 2 Chr 24.3; Ezra 9.2,12; 10.44; Neh 13.25. Southwood argues that the avoidance of more 'conventional' terminology alludes to the questionable nature of the marriages; Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis*: 166. Japhet, however, argues that **נשׂא** takes on the meaning and usage of לקח in the idiom 'to take a wife' in Late Biblical Hebrew; see also Sara Japhet, "Interchange of Verbal Roots in Parallel Texts in Chronicles," *Hebrew Studies* 28(1987): 22 n.51; Avi Hurvitz et al., *A Concise Lexicon of Late Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Innovations in the Writings of the Second Temple Period*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014). The social implications of this verb for marriage are disputed. Guenther suggests that the verb **נשׂא** indicates a union that takes place either through force or in conditions of poverty, while Eskenazi suggests that the marriages 'lift' the status of the women. See Allen Guenther, "A Typology of Israelite Marriage: Kinship, Socio-Economic, and Religious Factors," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29, no. 4 (2005): 399-401; Tamara C. Eskenazi, "The Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 509-529.

[266] See Deut 7.3-4, Judg 3.6; Neh 10.31; and Jer 29.6, where the exchange of daughters between Israel and other peoples or kinship groups is described as the 'taking' (לקח) and 'giving' (נתן) of daughters.

participation. Fathers and brothers are absent in the marriage negotiation, their daughters 'lifted' from them, a reference that evokes images of the Benjaminite abduction of the women of Shiloh who are 'lifted' (נשׂא) without the consent of their fathers and brothers (Judg 21.21-23).

The use of the term נשׂא for the 'taking' of daughters is all the more remarkable in Ezra 9.12, where it substitutes לקח in the standardized formula for intermarriage.[267] As Katherine Southwood explains, 'נשׂא + ל departs from the usual contractual language by shifting the emphasis from the third party's release of the female, to the male's seizure of her for marriage'.[268] The mutuality of these marriages, and more explicitly, the masculine role of the peoples-of-the-lands, is called into question.[269] By shifting the readerly gaze from the foreign women to the men in the text, not only is the 'feminized' passivity of the fathers and brothers of the 'foreign' daughters highlighted, so also is the gendering of the peoples-of-the-lands as daughters and women.

In Ezra 10, *golah* men once again act upon women from the peoples-of-the-lands, here described as 'foreign' women (נשׁים נכריות). The marriages are here described with the Hiphil form of ישׁב, a verb used for marriage only in Ezra 10 and Neh 13.[270] Literally translated, הושׁיב describes *golah* men causing the women to dwell or be settled by the men of the *golah*. Some scholars have suggested that this unusual terminology is intended to discredit the unions

[267] See Deut 7.3, Gen 34.9,16,21; Judg 3.6; 21.22
[268] Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis*: 165.
[269] See Gen 29.28; 34.8,9; 41.45; Deut 22.16; Josh 15.16; Judg 21.1. Marriage is a transaction between men, Stone notes, where men are the subjects and women the objects of the transaction; Ken Stone, "Marriage and Sexual Relations in the World of the Hebrew Bible," in *The Oxford Handbook of Theology, Sexuality, and Gender*, ed. Adrian Thatcher (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2015), 176-177. In Ezra 9.2, men from the peoples-of-the-lands do not participate as subjects in this transaction.
[270] Ezra 10.2,10,14,17,18 and Neh 13.23,27.

between the *golah* men and the 'foreign' women as illegitimate, thereby justifying their expulsion.[271] The spatial resonances of the term should be noted, however, as well as the frequent use of the Hiphil of ישב in the Hebrew Bible to describe the act 'settling' another in a place or territory.[272] The use of the Hiphil of ישב for marriage in Ezra 10 suggests that *golah* men *settle* women either in the land or in *golah* households. The causative verb form functions to configure gendered power relations as it highlights the active role of the *golah* men and the correspondingly passive stance of the women/peoples-of-the-lands. The implication is that they do not dwell in the land on their own initiative, but are rather 'settled', perhaps forcibly, by the men of the *golah*.

This representation attributes land possession to the *golah* who are thereby able to 'settle' another in the land. It is complicated, however, by the very designation peoples-of-the-lands, and characterizations that render them as indigenous inhabitants.[273] Thus, it appears at first glance rather non-sensical for these women/peoples-of-the-lands to require 'settling' in a land to which they belong and in which they already dwell. The logic of this terminology suggests that in order to be 'settled', the women must first be dis-located from the land. From this perspective, it may be argued that the verb הושיב serves to subtly

[271]Japhet argues that the 'unusual and rather bizarre terminology [for both marriage and childbirth]…conveys the impression of a conscious and systematic attempt to avoid the conventional terminology of marriage', that serves to annul them; Japhet, "The Expulsion of the Foreign Women," 153; Sérandour, "Les femmes étrangères," 155-157..

[272] Clauss emphasizes the spatial dimension in relation to the temple and the holiness that is required of the inhabitants of the land, arguing that 'unwanted foreign influence is brought into the holy sphere where its impact is fatal'; Jan Clauss, "Understanding the Mixed Marriages of Ezra-Nehemiah in the Light of Temple-Building and the Book's Concept of Jerusalem," in *Mixed Marriages: Intermarriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Christian Frevel (New York: T & T Clark International, 2011), 129. Eskenazi posits that the verb expresses 'a preoccupation with establishing foreigners on the land'; Eskenazi, "The Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah," 522. I will further discuss the spatial and gendered implications of the verb for the men who are the subjects of this action in Chapter 5.

[273] Ezra 9.1b.

transform the women into outsiders. This rhetorical move evokes, to my mind, the law of the 'foreign female captive' in Deuteronomy 21.10-14 that, M.I. Rey argues, 'makes the foreign female captive a trophy and symbol of the conquest of her ethnic group'.[274]

This very elusive characterization of the peoples-of-the-lands positions them as passive receptors of the act of 'settling' and renders them outsiders – even 'conquered' enemies – via the sexual possession of the women. Furthermore, they are in fact the women who are possessed and settled by *golah* men. Read as such, the 'lifting' and 'settling' of the women may be understood as strategically humiliating and de-masculinizing the peoples-of-the-lands: they are not only passive men, they are also portrayed as women taken by the victors.[275]

Somewhat contradictorily, the dominant masculine acts of 'lifting' daughters and 'settling' women are not viewed in a positive light in Ezra 9-10. Rather they are repeatedly described as an act of infidelity to Yhwh,[276] a great guilt that threatens the *golah* with the wrath of the deity.[277] The required response, therefore, is a third act to be carried out by the men of the *golah* upon the 'foreign' women/peoples-of-the-lands. The women and 'those born of them' (הנולד מהם,) are to be expelled (הוציא). This is not a reference to divorce, or to the breaking up of marriages. It is much more than this: it describes the forced removal of these women and their children. The same verb is used to describe the 'leading out' of the peoples of the Jerusalem by their Babylonian conquerors (Jer

[274] M. I. Rey, "Reexamination of the Foreign Female Captive: Deuteronomy 21: 10-14 as a Case of Genocidal Rape," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 32, no. 1 (2016): 39.
[275] Unlike the captive women of Deut 21.10-14, however, the 'foreign' women of Ezra 9-10 are disposed of at will.
[276] Ezra 9.2,4; 10.2,6,10.
[277] Ezra 9.6-15; 10.10,14. This is further discussed in Chapter 3.

38.23),[278] the Exodus from Egypt,[279] and the cleansing of 'foreign' cult icons from the Temple.[280] Common to these situations is the movement of peoples or deities from one space to another under the aegis of a more powerful social actor.

This image similarly evokes neo-Assyrian iconography showing captive foreign women and children being led away by victorious Assyrian armies.[281] Their presence in battle iconography, Zainab Bahrani observes, signifies the 'humiliation and destitution of the conquered land through the bodies of women'.[282] It is emblematic, Cynthia Chapman explains, of the failed masculinity of the conquered who are unable protect their families.[283] Likewise, the expulsion of the women and children called for in Ezra 10, I suggest, feminizes the peoples-of-the-lands who are portrayed not only as defeated enemies, but as conquered and deported women and children.[284]

In sum, the masculinity of the peoples-of-the-lands in Ezra 9-10 as explored thus far is undermined by representations of feminized passivity and submission. They are daughters taken in marriage, seemingly without culturally appropriate male/male negotiation; they are wives settled in a land that should belong to their fathers and brothers, and they are women and children who are to be expelled from the land. Amid the taking, settling, and un-settling to which these peoples are subjected, there is one act attributed to them that significantly

[278] כל־נשׁי ואת־בניך shall be led out (מוציאים) to the Chaldeans'.
[279] Deut 1.27; 4.20,37; 5.6.
[280] In 2 Kgs 23.4-6 vessels made for Baal and Asherah and the image of Asherah are removed by Josiah under Josiah. See also Hezekiah's temple cleansing in 2 Chr 29.5,16.
[281] Zainab Bahrani, *Women of Babylon: Gender and Representation in Mesopotamia* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 127-130. Chapman describes women in these reliefs 'neatly filing out of their city gate…clothed and unmolested…and their children accompany them'; Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 47.
[282] Bahrani, *Women of Babylon*: 130.
[283] Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 46-47.
[284] It also raises questions concerning the husbands of the women, the men of the *golah* who are unable or unwilling to protect them and the children. I return to this in Chapter 5.

complicates assumptions of passivity and weakness evoked by the feminized representation of the peoples-of-the-lands: the 'foreign' women give birth.

Twice in Ezra 10 the women are identified as having given birth. The clearest reference is found in 10.3, where Shecaniah calls for the expulsion not only of the women but also of 'the ones born from them' (הנולד מהם). In 10.44, as I discussed in the Introduction, the MT states that some of the foreign women married to *golah* men had 'put sons' (וישׂימו בנים).[285] The verbs that describe the birthing of these children are curious, to say the least.

Most references to giving birth in the Hebrew Bible use the verb ילד and describe those born as בנים;[286] most women in the Hebrew Bible give birth to a son 'for' a man.[287] Ezra 10.3 does not use a substantive to describe the children, however, but rather the participle of ילד, a verb that designates giving birth.[288] These children are 'the ones born', and they are born '*from* them' (הנולד מהם), where 'them' references the women themselves.[289] The formulation avoids referencing male participation in the engendering of these children, nor are they

[285] 1 Esd 9.36b also indicates that these women had children (σὺν τέκνοις).
[286] Gen 16.11,15,16; 22.20; 29.32; Judg 11.2.
[287] (-ילדה ל, Gen 4.18; 6.4; 16.1; 2 Sam 11.27)
[288] The participle form is used only 7 times in the Hebrew Bible to describe the act of giving birth. Elsewhere it usually references the birth of a son, as in 'the sons born -ל…': Isaac is the son born to Abraham by Sara (Gen 21.3); a prophet announces to Jeroboam that a 'son shall be born to the house of David' (1 Kgs 13.2); see also Gen 48.5; 1 Chr 7.21; 22.9; Ps 22.32. In Ezra 10.3, the participle functions as a substantive as it refers to those who were born to the women. On the uses of ילד see Ronald S. Hendel, '"Begetting' and 'Being Born' in the Pentateuch: Notes on Historical Linguistics and Source Criticism," *Vetus Testamentum* 50, no. 1 (2000): 41-45.
[289] Sarah Japhet comments that 'these offspring are not identified by what they are, neither in relation to their fathers, nor even as human beings. They are the product of their mothers'; Japhet, "The Expulsion of the Foreign Women," 152. On the merging of the feminine third person suffix into the masculine evidenced here (מהם), as a characteristic of Late Biblical Hebrew, see Mark F. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1990), 78-81; Robert Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose*, Hebrew Semitic Monographs (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976). It has the additional effect, I would argue, of enhancing the liminal status of the children.

born *to or for* any man (נולד ל-).[290] The children are tied unusually but exclusively to the women and thereby distanced from their fathers, obscuring their patrilineal descent and disguising male participation in procreation.[291]

The women not only give birth but they also 'place' (שׂים) their sons (בנים) – presumably in the land or in the households of the *golah* (10.44). This is another unusual verb, as noted in the introduction to this thesis, and is not used elsewhere for childbirth.[292] Its use here, however, contrasts the manipulation of the peoples-of-the-lands via the lifting, settling, expelling of the women, with the ability these women have to 'place' sons in this land. Thus, the women/peoples-of-the-lands are revealed not simply as objects, to be lifted, placed, and dis-placed. Their fertility and reproductive capacity undermine *golah* claims to masculine dominance over the peoples-of-the-lands: not only are the women and children not clearly expelled in 10.44, they place more sons – sons birthed by them – in the land. [293]

Sarah Japhet argues that the verbs used to describe the children as 'the product of their mothers' are pejorative.[294] I suggest, however, that what this terminology does is highlight the agency of the women/peoples-of-the-lands, and call into question *golah* participation in the very masculine performance of

[290] In the Hebrew Bible women give birth to sons 'for' a man (ילדה ל-, Gen 4.18; 6.4; 16.1; 2 Sam 11.27), whereas in Ezra 10.3, the children are born 'from', rather than 'for' (הנולד מהם).
[291] On the tension between descent from women and descent from men, and the uncertainty of biological paternity that must be ritually established, see Nancy B. Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion, and Paternity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 92-110. The uncertainty of patrilineage has implications for both the fathers and the sons.
[292] In a few texts, sons are 'placed' in positions of authority, although not by their mothers and the term is not associated with childbirth. See 1 Sam 8.1; 2 Kgs 10.3.
[293] A comparable image may be found in the multiplication of the Israelites' in Egypt, and the inability of the Pharaoh to keep women's reproductive capacity at bay (Exod 1.11-22).
[294] Japhet, "The Expulsion of the Foreign Women," 152. She alludes to well-known derogatory exclamations that reference the inferior status of 'bastard' children.

engendering descendants: women reproduce, it would seem, without the men.[295] The assumed binary that subordinates the 'feminin/ised', and the less-than-masculine peoples-of-the-lands to the superior masculine status of the *golah* is complicated and destabilized by the reproductive capacity of these women.

2.3 Daughters of Canaanites

The peoples-of-the-lands are not only represented as 'women' but characterized in ways that evoke ethnic and cultic foreignness. The ethnicity of these peoples is not specified; rather their 'foreignness' is constituted by the terminology, attributes, and practices assigned to them. In Ezra 9, they are associated with the abominations of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites (9.1), and in Ezra 10, the phrase נשׁים הנכריות references their 'outsider' status.[296]

As noted above, the peoples-of-the-lands are represented by their daughters who are designated the 'daughters-of-them' (בנתיהם), a form frequently used in the Hebrew Bible where the daughters to be taken are those of the inhabitants of Canaan who dispute land possession with Israel.[297] The lineage of the Patriarchs, for example, is determined by wives who descend from

[295] See Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever*: 30-40. See also Camp, who argues that the problem with strange women, and in fact with all women, is precisely the threat they present to male patrilineage by virtue of their active role in procreation; Camp, "Feminist- and Gender-Critical Perspectives," 308-309.

[296] Ezra 10.2,10,14,17,18,44. In the Hebrew Bible, the adjective נכרי qualifies something or someone as foreign in relation to that which is considered non-foreign. It is used to describe a foreign land (Exod 2.22; 18.3), a foreign people (Exod 21.8), non-Israelite who do business with Israelites (Deut 14.21; 23.21), or from a distant land (Deut 29.22), a person estranged from his or her family (Gen 31.15; Job 19.15). See Bernhard Lang, "nkr," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol IX*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 425-429; J.G. Snijders, "Zûr/Zār," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol IV*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975). In Ezra and Nehemiah, it describes women who are declared to be 'other' in relation to the community of 'returned' exiles. In Nehemiah the 'foreign' women are specifically described as belonging to neighbouring peoples, as they are in 1 Kgs 11.1,8.

[297] Gen 34.9,21; Exod 34.16; Deut 7.3; Judg 3:6.

Hamor, while other women, especially inhabitants of the land, are rejected.[298] In Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Judges, the 'daughters-of-them' belong to the indigenous inhabitants and are accused of leading Israel after other gods.[299] Marriage to these daughters, furthermore, establishes political ties with their peoples of origin.[300] Thus the rationale for the rejection of such marriages varies in different literary contexts, as do the problems associated with the 'otherness' of these women.[301]

In Ezra 9.2, the peoples-of-the-lands are identified with a list of nations that requires further examination, as does the syntax of the verse. The list comprises eight nations: Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites.[302] Four of the nations listed, the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, are present in most stereotypical lists of the enemies of

[298] Abraham sends his servant to find a wife for Isaac who is not מבנות הכנעני (Gen 24.3,37). Esau's wives are viewed with disfavour as they are בנות חת (Gen 27.46) and מבנות כנען (Gen 28.1,6; 36.2).

[299] Intermarriage within the indigenous inhabitants of the land of Canaan is often depicted as problematic as it tends to sway Israel to follow other gods (see Deut 7.3; Exod 34.16; and Judg 3.6). Furthermore, these marriages establish covenants between these peoples, as indicated in in Deut 7.3 and Exod 34.16. In Gen 34, the giving and taking of the daughters of the Shechemites is not associated with infidelity to Yhwh but does involve living together and sharing goods and territory.

[300] On intermarriage as a form of covenant making, see Cynthia Edenburg, "From Covenant to Connubium: Persian Period Developments in the Perception of Covenant in the Deuteronomistic History," in *Covenant in the Persian Period: From Genesis to Chronicles*, ed. Richard J. Bautch and Gary N. Knoppers (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 131-149.

[301]Christian Frevel and Benedikt Conczorowski trace the diachronic development of moral, religious, and cultic rationale against 'intermarriage' in the Hebrew Bible. Moral rationale is found primarily in patriarchal narratives, apostasy is a prevalent rationale in Deuteronomistic literature, and cultic rationale is referenced where priestly interests are in evidence. In Ezra 9-10, Neh 13 and Num 25.1-18, both Deuteronomistic and Priestly rationale are intertwined they argue; Christian Frevel and Benedikt J. Conczorowski, "Deepening the Water: First Steps to a Diachronic Approach on Intermarriage in the Hebrew Bible," in *Mixed Marriages: Intermarriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Christian Frevel (New York: T & T Clark International, 2011), 15-45. On the *topos* of intermarriage in the Deuteronomistic history, see Gary N. Knoppers, "Sex, Religion, and Politics: The Deuteronomist on Intermarriage," *Hebrew Annual Review* 14(1994): 121-141.

[302] Blenkinsopp substitutes Edomites for Amorites, in keeping with 1 Esd 8.69; cf. Deut 23.4-7; and 1 Kgs 11.1; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 174. Ishida, to the contrary, indicates that the designation 'Amorites' is a reference to the Arabs who, along with Ammonites, Moabites and Egyptians, were 'the real enemies of the Jews at that time' – i.e. the Persian Period; Tomoo Ishida, "The Structure and Historical Implications of the Lists of Pre-Israelite Nations," *Biblica* 60(1979): 488.

Israel who inhabit the land of Canaan before its purported 'conquest' by the sons of Israel (cf. Deut 7.1).[303] Their presence in the text seems to serve as an artistic anachronism, referencing the cultural memory of conquest as a framework for the rejection of these peoples.[304]

The rest of the nations in the list, the Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites, are contemporary to the historical context of the early Persian period,[305] although it is not evident that they are included for that reason. Michael Fishbane argues that these last four nations are drawn from the list of those forbidden from the assembly of Yhwh in Deuteronomy 23.4-8,[306] while Blenkinsopp observes that these nations are those of Solomon's foreign wives (1 Kgs 11.1).[307] Common to the representation of these nations in the Hebrew Bible is their status as enemies of Israel,[308] and warnings against imitating their practices and following their gods.[309] The list in Ezra 9.2, therefore, would seem to conflate different peoples to construct a homogenous image of a foreign other.[310]

[303] Also, Neh 9.6-8. Ishida finds 27 similar lists in the Hebrew Bible; "The Structure and Historical Implications," 461-490.
[304] These peoples, most scholars assume, were not present in fifth century Yehud. See, for example, Mario Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel* (London; Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2005), 276.
[305] Lisbeth Fried, *Ezra and the Law in History and Tradition* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2014), 52. Ammonites, Moabites and Amorites figure amongst the enemies of Nehemiah throughout much the book of Nehemiah (Ammonites: Neh 2.10,19; 3.35; 4.1; 13.1,23; Moabites: Neh 13.1,23; Amorites: Neh 3.2;9.8).
[306] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*: 116. Pakkala likewise indicates that 'there is an evident shift in attitude from Deut 23 to Ezra 9.1 towards the Egyptians and Edomites, because in Ezra 9.1 these nations are put on the same level with the Ammonites and Moabites'; Pakkala, "The Quotations and References of the Pentateuchal Laws," 207.
[307] Amending Amorites to Edomites; see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 175.
[308] Although such representations vary in different biblical texts.
[309] The Moabite women lead Israel astray in Num 25.1-2; Moabites and Ammonites are involved in continual territorial disputes with Israel throughout the book of Judges; and Lev 18.1-3 calls for avoiding the practices of both Canaanites and Egyptians.
[310] Southwood argues that Ezra 9-10 constitutes a 'binaristic world' composed of 'those internal to the ethnos and all "Others" outside this boundary who are ascribed titles which resemble the nations' traditional rivals'; Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis*: 141-142.

It is important to note that the list does not attempt to assign these ethnic identities to the peoples-of-the-lands. Rather, the peoples-of-the-lands are characterized by the abominations of these nations, as evidenced in the phrase that introduces the list (כתועבתיהם ל־, 9.1b).[311] The issue, therefore, is that the people of Israel have not separated from the peoples-of-the-lands, whose abominations are like those of these peoples.[312] The list functions, therefore, to 'other' the peoples-of-the-lands by pejoratively assimilating their practices to those of foreign, non-Yhwh worshipping, enemies of Israel.

The term 'Canaanites' is not by chance at the head of the list, I would argue, as it plays an important ideological role in the construction of Israelite identity throughout much of the Hebrew Bible. As Niels Peter Lemche notes:

> There was therefore no ethnic identity let alone a national one which could be called 'Canaanite'. There were no Canaanite people. The Canaan of the Old Testament, the archetypal enemy of ancient Israel, is therefore not an enigmatic old nation that once upon a time occupied Palestine. It is more of a literary device created in order to make a distinction between the heroes of the narrative, the biblical 'Israelites, and the villains, the Canaanites.[313]

In the Hebrew Bible 'Canaanites' tend to represent the quintessential enemies of Israel whose defeat, conquest, and expulsion seeks to ensure Israelite fidelity to

---

[311] On the syntax of this term, see Tamara C. Eskenazi and Eleanor P. Judd, "Marriage to a Stranger in Ezra 9-10," in *Second Temple Studies. 2: Temple and Community in the Persian Period*, ed. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Kent Harold Richards (Sheffield, England: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1994), 268. Pakkala argues that the list was awkwardly inserted after 'abominations' as a gloss. The intent of the earlier text, he suggests, was to accuse the *golah* of participating in the abominations of the peoples-of-the-lands. As it stands in the received text, however, the phrase does not characterize the practices of the *golah* but rather those of the peoples-of-the-lands; Pakkala, *Ezra the Scribe*: 90-91. All other instances in which the preposition כ is used with the term תועב in the Hebrew Bible, it designates actions associated with the indigenous inhabitants of Canaan (Deut 18.9; 2 Kgs 16.3;21.2; 2 Chr 28.3; 33.2).

[312] The JPS Tanakh (1985) translates: 'The people of Israel…have not separated themselves from the peoples of the land whose abhorrent practices *are like those* of the Canaanites' (emphasis added). See, however, Williamson, who finds that the term characterizes the *golah*, rather than the peoples-of-the-land: 'that people of Israel… have not kept themselves separate from the peoples of the lands but have acted in accordance to the abominations of the Canaanites…': Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 125.

[313] Niels Peter Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (London; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 128-129.

Yhwh, and possession of the land promised to Israel. The Canaanites, along with other inhabitants of Canaan, are characterized by their תועבות, often described as sexually, cultically, and ethically deviant practices that Israel is to avoid.[314] By 'stereotyping and demonizing' the Canaanites as 'other',[315] the identity and appropriate behaviour of Israel is defined.[316]

Not only are the peoples-of-the-lands in Ezra 9 accused of such practices, but they are furthermore accused of contaminating the land with their abominations (בתועבתיהם; 9.11). They are, in short, 'abominable peoples' (עמי התועבות, 9.14). Similar terminology is employed in Leviticus 18.24-25 where the abominations of the inhabitants of the land contaminate that land which in turn vomits them out.[317] It should be noted that while Leviticus enjoins Israel to avoid the practices associated with the inhabitants of the land, in Ezra 9 the inhabitants are rendered unacceptable by their practices. Eve Feinstein aptly highlights the different emphasis in Ezra 9.11 in relation to Leviticus 18:

---

[314] In Deuteronomy, Regev notes, the term תועבה is used for a wide variety of objects, practices, and persons that are declared to be abhorrent to Yhwh and forbidden to Israel, including idols, improper cultic practices of the inhabitants of Canaan, forbidden foods, blemished sacrificial animals, and some social practices (taking back a wife who has been sent away, wearing the apparel of the opposite gender, dishonest weights and measures), but these have no explicit effect on the holiness of the people (Deut 7. 25,26; 12.31;13.15; 14.3; 17.2,4;18.9,12;20.18; 22.5; 23.19; 24.4; 25.16; 27.15; 32.16). In Leviticus, however, abominations are identified above all with the sexual practices of the indigenous inhabitants of the land and are problematic because they are defiling, generate impurity, and threaten the sancta (Lev 18.22,26,29,30;20.13). See Eyal Regev, "Priestly Dynamic Holiness and Deuteronomic Static Holiness," *Vetus Testamentum* 51, no. 2 (2001): 249-250.

[315] Becking, "On the Identity of the Foreign Women," 42.

[316] Robert L. Cohn, "Before Israel: The Canaanites as Other in Biblical Tradition," in *The Other in Jewish Thought and History: Constructions of Jewish Culture and Identity*, ed. Laurence J. Silberstein and Robert L. Cohn (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 76-77. As Southwood notes, the exercise in categorization in relation to proximate others is especially pertinent to the process of self-definition: 'a define significant Other must be proximate in order to serve as an adequate foil for self-definition'; Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis*: 24. The ambiguity and slippage inherent in this 'othering' of the inhabitants of Canaan is evidenced however, in the presence of the daughters of these peoples in the lineage of Judah. Judah himself marries Bathshua, described as a Canaanite (Gen 38.2; 1Chr 2.3), and engenders sons with Tamar, presumably a Canaanite as well (Gen 38; Ruth 4.12; 1 Chr 2.4). One of these, Perez, is included in the lineage of David in Ruth 4.12.

[317] Lev 18.25.

> Whereas Leviticus 18 invoked foreign peoples in order to stigmatize particular behaviours, Ezra 9 invokes a general category of rejected behaviours in order to stigmatize particular people.[318]

The allusion to Leviticus 18, therefore, identifies these practices with those that, in the cultural memory of the Exodus and land conquest, result in the legitimate removal and destruction of the indigenous inhabitants.

Unlike references to intermarriage in other biblical texts, there is no indication in Ezra 9 that the *golah* is swayed to practice similar abominations, even though *golah* men establish marriage ties with these peoples. Rather, the characterization of the practices of the peoples-of-the-lands, as 'Canaanite' תועבות, functions to render these peoples subordinate and appropriately 'conquerable' by *golah* men. It rhetorically locates the *golah* in the realm of land conquest, where the peoples-of-the-lands (daughters and wives) are enemies to be defeated, dispossessed, and expelled.[319] These representations that de-masculinize a group and render it unfit for habitation of a territory are a common trope in ancient and modern contexts of conquest and colonialism.[320]

The gendered implications of land possession in Ezra 9.11 are suggested by the phrase הארץ אשר אתם בואם לרשתה that describes the intended possession of the *land* by the *golah*. The verb **בוא** (enter), that also describes

[318] Feinstein, *Sexual Pollution in the Hebrew Bible*: 132.
[319] Francesca Stavrakopoulou's characterization of the fate of these peoples is worth citing: 'the indigenous populations are othered as 'Canaanites' or other 'foreign' peoples, to be out-bred, marginalized, displaced or eradicated from the landscape'; Francesca Stavrakopoulou, *Land of our Fathers: The Roles of Ancestor Veneration in Biblical Land Claims*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies (New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 26.
[320] See for example, Richard C. Trexler, *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Political Order, and the European Conquest of the Americas* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995); Louise Montrose, "The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery," *Representations*, no. 33, Special Issue: The New World (1991): 1-41; Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995). A vivid example is van der Straet's ca. 1785 artistic rendering of Amerigo Vespucci's arrival in the 'New World'. Spain is an upright, clothed, 'civilized', male conqueror, who looks down on the reclining, nude, apparently vulnerable woman 'America'; Montrose, "The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery," 4-5.

Israel's 'entry' into the land of Canaan in the Torah,[321] is the same term used to describe a man's sexual 'entry' into a woman that establishes possession and produces descendants.[322] As Michelle Marcus observes, land conquest as sexual possession is a common trope in neo-Assyrian representations: the male act of conquest is 'related to the imagery of female as object of conquest'.[323] The imagery of territorial conquest, she argues, is one of 'penetration followed by possession', and is thereby rendered an activity 'bound to issues of male sexuality and the ideology of the virile king'.[324] This similar rhetorical move in Ezra 9 feminizes both the peoples-of-the-lands – already described as women and daughters – and the land they inhabit: they are subject to both sexual possession and military conquest.[325]

The daughters-of-them who are lifted and through which the land is claimed as a possession of the *golah* in Ezra 9, become the 'foreign' wives (נשׁים הנכריות) of *golah* men in chapter 10.[326] The designation is used in various biblical texts where it almost always characterizes 'outsider' women who threaten

[321] Israel is to enter (**בוא**) the land (Deut 26.1) or is made to enter (**הביא**) the land by Yhwh (Deut 26.2); also, Exod 6.8; 13.5; Lev 14.13; 22.22; Num 14.8; Deut 26.3. On this use of **בוא** see Hans Dietrich Preuss, "Bô'," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol II*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 27-30.

[322] See Josh 23.12 where the prohibition of intermarriage is a warning not to 'enter in them (ובאתם בהם והם בכם) nor they in you'.

[323] Michelle I. Marcus, "Geography as Visual Ideology: Landscape, Knowledge, and Power in Neo-Assyrian Art," in *Neo-Assyrian Geography*, ed. Mario Liverani (Rome: Universita di Roma, 1995), 202.

[324] "Geography as Visual Ideology," 201-202.

[325] See Montrose, who argues in her analysis of the Spanish colonial 'discourse of discovery' the 'conquest of men is naturalized by subsuming and effacing societies in the metaphorically feminine other of the land'; Montrose, "The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery," 12.

[326] Ezra 10 (vv. 2,10,11,14,17,18,44). Unlike the nominative form (נכר), the adjective נכרי used in Ezra 10, does not describe foreign gods in the Hebrew Bible, but in 1 Kgs 11.1,8 it designates women who worship gods other than Yhwh. The singular נכריה designates the 'strange' woman of Proverbs and Ruth. Neither the adjective נכרי nor the noun נכר are used in the book of Ezra outside of Ezra 10 where they reference only the 'foreign' women, while in Neh 9.2, נכר is used to designate all those who are foreign to those of Israelite seed and in Neh 13.30 the reference is to 'everything foreign'.

Israel. These include Solomon's foreign wives (נשׁים הנכריות), who lead him astray to worship other gods;[327] the נכריה of Proverbs, whose deviant sexuality entices Israelite men;[328] and the wives who teach their children languages other than Yehudit in Nehemiah 13.23-23. The threatening acts attributed to these 'foreign' women are not in evidence, however, in Ezra 10. Indeed, it is curious that the נשׁים נכריות in Ezra 9-10 are not described as doing anything to lead the *golah* astray, whether cultically, sexually, or culturally.[329] The redactor appears, on the contrary, to carefully avoid references to such actions.[330]

The transition from 'daughters-of-them' to foreign wives, however, complicates the status of these women: as daughters, they are tied to their fathers and male kin, but as wives of *golah* men they occupy a liminal place between these two peoples. They have been brought into the *golah*, but they continue to be both 'foreign' and attached to their group of origin.[331] Though acted upon by the *golah*, they are elusive and cannot be fully incorporated. Their identity is ambiguous, shifting and trapped on the boundary between Israel and the peoples-of-the-lands. The feminized, foreign, otherness of the peoples-of-the-

[327] An image taken up by Nehemiah in his vehement reprisal to the men who married Ammonite, Ashdodite, and Moabite women in Neh 13.23-27.
[328] Prov 2.16-19; 5.20; 6.24-25; 7.5,20; 23.27. The image throughout is that of a seductive woman who entraps men to follow their errant path, as noted in Washington, "The Strange Woman of Proverbs 1-9 and Post-Exilic Judaean Society," 217-242; Blenkinsopp, "The Social Context of the 'Outsider Woman' in Proverbs 1-9," 457-473; Claudia V. Camp, *Wise, Strange, and Holy: The Strange Woman and the Making of the Bible*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 40-71.
[329] Other women described as foreign, such as Jezebel, Delilah, and the Moabite women in Numbers 25, are portrayed as active in the biblical text. Torah exhortations against intermarriage evidence a concern with the active influence of the 'daughters-of-them'. In Exod 34.16 they 'will make your sons play the harlot (הזנו) to their gods', and in Deut 7. 4 they are able to 'turn aside (יסור) your sons from following me, to serve other gods'.
[330] Ezra 9.12 appears to draw on Deut 7.3-4 (or some form of this text) but does not use the rationale (apostasy) that is employed in the latter.
[331] The continued tie between daughters and fathers in the Hebrew Bible is noted by Stiebert who observes that 'while daughters are depicted as transferred into the sphere of authority of their husbands after marriage, some indications are that daughters maintain their association with their fathers…'; Stiebert, *Fathers and Daughters in the Hebrew Bible*: 69.

lands that constructs an idealized *golah* masculinity – one that which acts upon the women, taking them as wives – bears the seeds of its own undoing.

2.4 Peoples of Menstrual Impurity

The 'feminized' representation of the peoples-of-the-lands in Ezra 9-10 culminates with the reference to their impurity in 9.11, especially as it contrasts with the designation holy seed (זרע הקדש) ascribed to the *golah* in 9.2. It is important to note here that my interest lies less in what kind of impurity is referenced than in how this terminology is employed in ways that constitute the gendered 'otherness' of the peoples-of-the-lands. The abominations of these peoples, the text adduces, produce an impurity akin to the menstrual impurity of women (נדה). It is this impurity and its effects that I consider here.

Ezra 9.11 is the first of the two verses in Ezra's penitential prayer which cites as 'commandments given to the prophets' by Yhwh that forbid intermarriage with the peoples-of-the-lands (Ezra 9.10b-12). These verses have been widely analysed in terms of their relationship to texts of the Torah, and similarities between Ezra 9.12 and Deuteronomy 7.1-4, as well as Ezra 9.11 and Leviticus 18.24-30, are highlighted.[332] It is the latter I consider here, as it helpfully highlights

[332] There is general agreement that Ezra 9.11-12 is a reference to prohibitions similar to those found in these texts, although their authoritative status and the form in which they were known is debated. The differences between Torah legislation cited in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah and the Torah suggests that more important than the details of this legislation, is the fact that they are attributed to an authoritative text, the Torah of Moses. On the role of Torah in Ezra, Neh and later texts, see in Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*: 117-119; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 176-176; Becking, "The Idea of Thora in Ezra 7-10: A Functional Analysis."; Sara Japhet, "Law and 'the Law' in Ezra-Nehemiah," in *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006); John H. Choi, *Traditions at Odds: The Reception of the Pentateuch in Biblical and Second Temple Period Literature*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies (New York: T & T Clark, 2010); Pakkala, "The Quotations and References of the Pentateuchal Laws."

the particularities of Ezra 9.11 with respect to its characterization of the peoples-of-the-lands.

Leviticus 18 describes the practices (תועבות, v.26) by which the inhabitants of the land have defiled themselves (נטמאו, v.24). The result is the contamination (תטמא) of the land, for which the land vomits out its inhabitants (18.25). The logic of Ezra 9.11 is similar, but its effects are quite distinct. First, it is not concerned with warning Israel against these practices, as is the case in Leviticus 18. Rather Ezra 9.11 is an extended characterization of the problem these peoples generate for the land that the *golah* intends to inhabit:

> …it is a land impure (נדה) due to the impurities (נדה) of the peoples-of-the-lands, with their abominations (בתועבות); they have filled it from end to end with their impurity (טמאה) (Ezra 9.11).

At issue is the land that is contaminated by these peoples, rather than *golah* avoidance of similar abominable practices.

A second important difference between these texts is the terminology used to refer to the impurity of the peoples-of-the-lands. The more common term for impurity, טמא, which is used in Leviticus 18.24-25, is replaced in Ezra 9.11 with the designation נדה at two points in the text: the land is נדה and the impurity of the peoples is נדה.[333] Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible נדה is used primarily in ritual ordinances dealing with female bodily emissions generating impurity, specifically menstruation.[334] In ritual contexts, נדה impurity is reparable and does not

[333] 'The land that you are entering to possess is a land unclean (נדה) with the pollutions (נדה) of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations (תועבה). They have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness (טמאה)' (Ezra 9.11). The term טמאה is used only in the concluding phrase of 9.11: 'They have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness (טמאה)'.

[334] See Lev 12.2,5; 15.19,20,33; also, Ezek 18.6; 22.10; 36.17. Intercourse with a woman who is menstruating makes a man נדה (Lev 15.24; 18.19;20.18). The term is also used in the designation

permanently exclude a woman from the cult or morally degrade her.[335] In Ezra 9.11, however, the peoples-of-the-lands are characterized as being in a permanent state of נדה impurity, as it is produced by their abominations and not by bodily functions. Not only are the people of the land characterized as נדה, so too is the land. As Claudia Camp observes, 'Ezra's exegesis of Leviticus…specifies the land's uncleanness as female uncleanness in a way his source does not'.[336]

Scholars have widely debated the nature of the impurity referenced in 9.11, as I discussed in the Introduction. What is important here is not the systematization of biblical impurity, but how it characterizes the peoples-of-the-lands. The feminized terminology of impurity is not incidental to the text, nor can it be assumed to be a general reference to impurity with no gendered

'waters of impurity' (Num 19.9,13,20,21; 31.23), impure things that must be removed (2 Chr 29.5; Zac 13.1), something filthy or abhorrent (Lam 1.17; Ezek 7.20), and as a metaphorical depiction of Israel's sins (Ezek 36.17). The basic meaning of נדה, Greenberg notes, has to do with 'distancing, apartness, specifically the separation of women from certain social contacts during their menstrual "impurity"'; Moshe Greenberg, "The Etymology of Nidda "(Menstrual) Impurity"," in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honour of J.C. Greenfield*, ed. Ziony Zevit (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 75. Koehler divides the uses of נדה into two distinct categories: 1) bleeding, menstruation of a woman, and 2) separation, abomination, defilement; Köhler and Baumgartner, *HALOT Vol. I*: 643. On the development of the term and its gendered connotations in the Hebrew Bible, see Dorothea Erbele-Küster, "Gender and Cult: 'Pure' and 'Impure' as Gender-Relevant Categories," in *Torah*, ed. Irmtraud Fischer, Mercedes Navarro Puerto, and Andrea Taschl-Erber (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 379-407; Elizabeth W. Goldstein, *Impurity and Gender in the Hebrew Bible* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015).

[335] See Tarja Philip, "Gender Matters: Priestly Writing on Impurity," in *Embroidered Garments: Priests and Gender in Biblical Israel*, ed. Deborah W. Rooke (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 40-49. Klawans' typology that distinguishes moral and ritual impurity has been both widely influential and disputed. Ritual impurity, he argues, is that which is a product of natural life processes (birth, death, disease, discharges), unavoidable, contagious, and impermanent. Moral impurity, on the other hand, derives from defiling acts, such as sexual sin and idolatry. It is not contagious, but renders the person, sanctuary and the land morally impure, may be permanent and is punishable by exclusion and exile (Lev 18.24-30); Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*: 22-32. For a critique, see Thomas Kazen, "Dirt and Disgust: Body and Morality in Biblical Purity Laws," in *Perspectives on Purity and Purification in the Bible*, ed. David P. Wright, Jeffrey Stackert, and Naphtali S. Meshel (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 46.

[336] Camp, *Wise, Strange, and Holy*: 33-34 n.14.

connotations.[337] As Elizabeth Goldstein notes in her analysis of the term נדה, in Ezra 9.11 impurity and femaleness 'have coalesced to the degree that one cannot distinguish between them'.[338] The 'gender-bending image of "menstrual men"' that Feinstein rejects in her comments on this text, is precisely what I argue is at stake here.[339] This representation of the peoples-of-the-lands does not refer to 'menstrual men', however, it rather functions to feminize these peoples by rendering them akin to 'menstrual women'. The degradation of the female body in Ezra, as Goldstein aptly observes, is not violent, overt, or angry; [340] rather, it is assumed as the basis for the degradation of 'othered' men and male bodies.

The feminizing implications of the term נדה are even more clearly evidenced in the contrast Ezra 9 establishes between the 'holy seed' (זרע הקדש, 9.2) of the *golah* and the נדה of the peoples-of-the-lands. Harold Washington highlights this gendered vocabulary in his Kristevan reading of Ezra 9-10 where he finds, 'on the one hand, the community's holiness (זרע הקדש, 'the holy seed'; Ezra 9.2); and on the other, the threatening contaminant (נדה, '[menstrual] impurity'.[341] While Washington wrongly attributes 'menstrual impurity' to the foreign women rather than the peoples-of-the-lands as a whole, the contrast he

[337] Southwood argues that it references the ceremonial (but not feminine) nature of the impurity; Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis*: 137. Feinstein posits that it is preferable to view נדה as a general reference to impurity, as she cannot find support for a 'gender-bending image of "menstrual" men' in the Hebrew Bible; Feinstein, *Sexual Pollution in the Hebrew Bible*: 182. Hannah Harrington likewise argues that Ezra 9.11 uses נדה as a 'metaphor for sin' rather than a reference to the impurity of menstruation: 'The technical usage of *niddâ* in Leviticus contrasts sharply with the broader usage employed later by the author of Ezra-Nehemiah'; Harrington, "The Use of Leviticus in Ezra-Nehemiah."
[338] Goldstein, *Impurity and Gender in the Hebrew Bible*: 83.
[339] Feinstein, *Sexual Pollution in the Hebrew Bible*: 182.
[340] Goldstein, *Impurity and Gender in the Hebrew Bible*: 83.
[341] Washington, "Israel's Holy Seed," 431.

highlights is significant for the gendering of both peoples and calls for a closer look at the significance of the designation זרע הקדש.[342]

The designation has been widely discussed in scholarship in terms of its implications for the identity of the *golah*, but few scholars explore its gendered implications either for the *golah* or for the peoples-of-the-lands. For Bob Becking, the phrase references the Deuteronomistic notion of election (עם קדוש) and the seed promised to Abraham, so that 'the idea of divine election is thus reformulated in biological categories'.[343] For Williamson, the term points to the 'physical transmission of holiness',[344] while both Christine Hayes and Saul Olyan argue that it expresses concern with genealogical purity as intermarriage profanes the descendants (זרע) of the *golah*.[345] A similar argument is presented by Eve Feinstein, who briefly notes the gendered implications of this terminology as it relates to the prevalence of men in the book of Ezra: 'Ezra 9 reflects a fear that polluting women will contaminate a pure male Israelite body'.[346] Katherine

[342] A similar term is found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible only in Isaiah 6.13, '…like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains standing when it is felled. The holy seed (זרע קדש) is its stump'. These verses (Isa 6.12-13) are largely considered by scholars to be a late addition. Otto Kaiser explains that the decimation of the numbers of the survivors reminds them of a new judgement that awaits. The 'old seed of the evildoers' is replaced by the holy seed of the new Israel. See Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 133.

[343] Bob Becking, "Continuity and Community: The Belief System of the Book of Ezra," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic & Post-Exilic Texts*, ed. Bob Becking (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 270-271. The זרע are the descendants of Abraham in Gen 17.0; 21.12; 26.3,24;28.4,13; Exod 32.13; Deut 1.8; 34.4; Josh 24.3; 2 Chr 20.7; Ps 105.6; Isa 41.8; 33.26). Pakkala suggests that the movement from an abstract עם in Deuteronomy to a physical זרע in Ezra 9.2 reflects the priestly tendency 'to categorize and separate pure substances and objects from impure'; Pakkala, *Ezra the Scribe*: 109.

[344] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 132.

[345] Hayes, *Gentile Impurities*: 26-27; Olyan, "Purity Ideology in Ezra-Nehemiah," 3-4. Williamson, along similar lines, points to the 'physical transmission of holiness' implied by the term; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 132.

[346] Feinstein, *Sexual Pollution in the Hebrew Bible*: 154. Ezra 9, however, does not restrict impurity to the women. The peoples-of-the-lands, not the women, are impure. The binary between impure women and holy men should be addressed as an opposition between menstrually impure peoples-of-the-lands (feminized men) and the holy seed of the *golah*. Interestingly, while Feinstein identifies the gendered implications of the term holy seed, she does not mention נדה and its gendered implications in Ezra 9.11.

Southwood, on the other hand, finds that the designation זרע הקדש incorporates various identity mechanisms that function to define 'ethnic and religious boundaries'.[347]

In the Hebrew Bible, the term זרע references agricultural seeds,[348] male semen,[349] offspring, lineage, and descent.[350] These uses have in common the image of a seed planted to produce fruit, be it in the ground or in a womb.[351] Thus, the term 'holy seed' (or 'holy semen') in Ezra 9.2, arguably references male bodily functions and male participation in procreation.[352] Both זרע הקדש and נדה are associated with bodily processes – male semen and female menstruation. They appeal to a naturalized gender dichotomy that is called upon to legitimate the feminized otherness of the peoples-of-the-lands and to define a normative status for the *golah* (masculine, holy). At stake is not the ascription of impurity to women in general, nor to foreign women specifically, but rather the feminization of the peoples-of-the-lands who are rendered producers of menstrual blood.

Though both these bodily emissions generate temporary impurity in Levitical rulings,[353] in Ezra 9.2 the holy seed does not generate impurity; rather, it inhabits the realm of the holy where it must be kept separate from other peoples.

---

[347] Katherine E. Southwood, "The Holy Seed: The Significance of Endogamous Boundaries and Their Transgression in Ezra 9-10," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*, ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 199.

[348] Gen 1.11; Deut 22.9

[349] Lev 15.16,17,31; Jer 31.27

[350] Agricultural seeds: Gen 1.11; Deut 22.9; male semen: Gen 1.11; Deut 22.9; offspring/descendants: Gen 16.10; 17.8; Deut 1.8; Neh 9.8; Ezra 2.59. See the lexical analysis in Preuss, "zāraʿ," 146-162; and "Zera," in *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, ed. David J. A. Clines (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 141-144.

[351] In almost all its uses, זרע is associated either with men, male offspring, male groups or male bodily functions. Women in the Hebrew Bible, among them Eve, Hagar, and Rebecca, may produce זרע but are never designated as זרע themselves. Cf. Gen 3.15; 4.25;16.10; 24.60; Lev 12.2; 22.13; 1 Sam 1.11.

[352] Washington, "Israel's Holy Seed," 431.

[353] זבה דם: Lev 15.19,25; שכבת־זרע: Lev. 15.16,17,18,32.

Thus, the problem is not that the peoples-of-the-lands produce bodily emissions; it is that they produce *female* bodily emissions rather than male seed. This furthermore renders them incapable of engendering descendants of their own. In a cultural context in which the task of female wombs is to bear male seed and bring it to fruition, these feminized menstrual peoples are rendered passive receptacles for male seed.[354] In short, the peoples-of-the-lands are replete with vaginas; they lack male reproductive members and the seed that flows from them.[355] The abundance of menstrual blood they produce is such that it fills the land from end to end with impurity (מלאוה מפה אל־פה בטמאתם , 9.11b).

The representation of the peoples-of-the-lands as impure (menstruating) women, a people who lack male seed, people who are sexually possessed by the male *golah*, constructs an opposing image of *golah* superiority, dominance, holiness, and male procreative power. This opposition is assailed, however, by contradictory images of danger, threat, contamination, and female reproductive capacity that derive from this very representation. A first contradictory image evoked in Ezra 9.11 is the reference to the land that is 'filled from end to end with impurity (טמאה)'. The term נדה is used in Leviticus not only in the context of menstruation, a biological function that is indicative of reproductive capacity, it also describes the impurity of a woman after giving birth, where she becomes

[354]In the Hebrew Bible, Levine notes, the seed issues from the male body, as in Isaiah 48.19: 'Your offspring (זרע) would have been like the sand and the issue of your inward parts (מעה) like its grains'. In texts such as Gen 15.4; 2 Sam 16.11; 2 Sam 7.12, 'the child is being identified primarily as the product of the father's semen, not of the mother's womb'; Levine, "Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East," 187; see also Daniel Block, "Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel," in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*, ed. Ken M. Campbell (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 72; Stephanie Budin, "Fertility and Gender in the Ancient Near East," in *Sex in Antiquity: Exploring Gender and Sexuality in the Ancient World*, ed. Mark Masterson, Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz, and James Robson (London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 34-37. See however, the nuanced discussion of female contribution to conception in Johanna Stiebert, "Human Conception in Antiquity: The Hebrew Bible in Contexto," *Theology and Sexuality* 16, no. 3 (2010): 209-227.

[355] Attempts at depositing seed also generate impurity. These peoples are also excluded from circumcision, which is, however, not mentioned in the text.

טמא, 'as at the time of her נדה' (Lev 12.2). If, as suggested in Ezra 10.3,44, the 'foreign' women/peoples-of-the-lands have given birth (10.3,44), their state of impurity may be the result not only of menstruation but also of birth and procreation. The gendered ambiguity that assigns feminized imagery to the peoples-of-the-lands also constitutes them as possessors of the female capacity for the reproduction of sons who are 'placed' in the land and fill it.[356]

A second contradictory image implicated in *golah* claims to masculine superiority over the illegitimate, feminized peoples-of-the-lands concerns the menstrual impurity that fills the land in Ezra 9.11. If the *golah* enters this menstrually impure land to possess it, it places at risk the status of 'holy seed'. Furthermore, such an 'entry' into the land is a sexual offence as it involves relations with a menstruating woman.[357] The contamination of the land from menstruation makes this land – claimed by the *golah* – an inhospitable dwelling place for the *golah* and indeed for Yhwh. To take possession of the land, therefore, is at the same time to risk the loss of that land.

This analysis of the gendered representation of the peoples-of-the-lands suggests that while these peoples are 'feminized' in Ezra 9-10 in opposition to the more masculine *golah*, this 'feminization' is at the same time problematic for *golah* masculinity. *Golah* claims to dominance are inherently unstable and continually undermined. It is to this instability that I now turn.

[356] The last part of Ezra 9.11 reads: אשר מלאוה מפה אל־פה בטמאתם. The verb מלא, in association land and descent, is also found in the charge to 'be fruitful and multiply, and fill (מלא) the earth, and subdue it' (Gen 1.28; cf. Gen 9.1), and in Exod 1.1, where the land of Egypt is 'filled' (מלא) with the sons of the Israelites who were 'fruitful and multiplied, and grew exceedingly strong', despite hostile conditions

[357] In Lev 15.24 it generates impurity that may be cleansed, while in Lev 20.21 and Ezek 18.6; 22.10, it is a serious offense akin to incest, adultery, oppression, robbery, among others.

2.5 *Golah* Masculinity and its 'Discontents'

This reading of the gendered 'otherness' of the peoples-of-the-lands has offered insights into the ways in which the *golah* constitutes its masculinity, status, and dominance in the narrative world of Ezra 9-10. The issue, I have argued, is not primarily *golah* control over or expulsion of 'foreign' women, but the 'othering' of the male peoples-of-the-lands. The very attributes called upon to sustain *golah* masculinity, however, are revealed to be unstable and plagued by 'discontents'.

I noted at the beginning of this chapter that *golah* masculinity in Ezra 9-10 is closely tied to membership in a lineage group of fathers and sons that derives identity from the experience of exile. *Golah* men are to possess the land and give it to their sons as a possession (9.12). Thus, to have sons and to be a son are fundamental characteristics of *golah* men and their performance of masculinity. Legitimate descent and provision for descendants are likewise markers of dominant masculinity in neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid representations.[358]

In Ezra 9-10, however, the men of the *golah* are denied agency in the production of descendants. As noted above, the women of the peoples-of-the-lands have children, but the terminology employed excludes *golah* men whose role in the procreative process is invisible. The reproductive capacity of the men of the *golah* is challenged by that of the 'foreign women/peoples-of-the-lands. Furthermore, the menstrual status of the peoples-of-the-lands and the resulting contamination of the land that is filled with impurity impedes the 'holy seed' from entering and possessing it.

[358] See Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 29,41-44. In Achaemenid sources, royal lineage is emphasized as an 'exclusively male chain of father-son successions', DiPalma observes; DiPalma, *Masculinities in the Court Tales of Daniel*: 127-128. Sons, he comments, are to reflect positively on the father, as they perpetuate the father and his name.

The precarious nature of *golah* masculinity qua 'holy seed' is evoked by the ease with which the seed is prone to 'spoilage' and contamination. Its holiness is to be maintained through separation (הבדיל), but it is threatened by the intermingling (התערבו) that takes place when *golah* men perform the very quotidian masculine act of taking daughters as wives.[359] This superior masculinity is threatened by its very essence: to reproduce, the seed must intermingle, but this intermingling threatens the holiness of the seed.[360] To propagate the 'holy seed' is to risk the very quality of separation that renders it holy. On the other hand, the call to separate from the peoples-of-the-lands, a measure designed to restore the required distinction between these peoples, threatens the masculinity of the married *golah* men, who are to be deprived of their wives and sons. In Ezra 9-10, masculinity, in Roland Boer's words, is 'continually undermined from within and without'.[361]

Scholars have argued that the marriage restrictions placed on priests in Leviticus and Ezekiel to prevent the profanation of their seed are extended in Ezra 9-10 to the entire *golah*.[362] This 'democratization' of the priesthood, as some scholars describe it, elevates the status of the *golah* in relation to non-*golah*

[359] Ezra 9.1: 'For they have taken (נשׂאו) some the daughters-of-them for themselves and for their sons. Thereby the holy seed has intermingled with the peoples of the lands (התערבו זרע הקדשׁ בעמי הארצות), and in this infidelity, the officials and leaders have been first'.

[360] This 'intermingling' has a social dimension, however. In other texts, the Hithpael of ערב describes associations between groups of men, including the exchange of pledges. The Hithpael is used six times to describe the making of wagers or establishing communion, suggesting the idea of an exchange or commitment (2 Kgs 18.23; Isa 36.8; Prov 14.10; 20.19; 24.21 and Ps 106.45). The Qal refers to giving a pledge (Gen 43.9; 44.32; Isa 38.14; Ps 119.122, Prov 11.15; 20.16; Isa 38.14). See Ps 106.35; Prov 20.19; 24.21. The substantive form of term ערב, translated 'mixed' or 'intermingled', is used as a term mixed fabric (ערב; Lev 13.48,49) and a mixed company attached to a people as in Exod 12.38.

[361] 'Subversion lurks in every murky doorway and under every bed', he notes, and 'hegemony is continually undermined from within and without'; Boer, "Of Fine Wine, Incense and Spices," 21.

[362] While in Ezek 44.22, priests are required to marry a woman 'from the זרע of the house of Israel in order to prevent the 'the profanation (חלל) of his זרע' (Lev 21.15).

peoples.[363] It also has implications for the configuration of masculinity within the community. Saul Olyan argues that 'distinctions of status are evident and are often expressed through the idiom of holiness' in the Hebrew Bible.[364] Ascriptions of holiness and degrees of holiness distinguish priests from other cultic servants, and from lay Israelites, as he notes:

> …the holy/common polarity is a powerful tool that generates distinction among groups, conferring on the possessor of holiness a status superior to that of those lacking it. Among the holy, the contrast most holy/holy functions similarly.[365]

In Ezra 9.2, however, the distinction between priests, Levites, and lay 'Israelites' is blurred by the designation 'holy seed', and by the extension of identical marriage restrictions to all *golah* men. The priests are not separated to be 'holy', as they are in Ezra 8.28; rather, the entire *golah* is rendered holy. But the elevated cultic status awarded to the *golah* carries with it an implied shift in the status of the priests in this text. Notably, where intermingling is at stake, it is not the priests who 'separate the holy and the profane, the unclean and the clean',[366] rather they are among the guilty. Power relations within the community and related performances of masculinity are challenged as the privileged status of the priests in relation to the holy comes into question.

The extension of priestly holiness to the *golah* may elevate the status of this group, but it also heightens its vulnerability. Jacob Milgrom explains that the holy status of the priests, and especially the high priest, renders them 'most

---

[363] For Hayes, the requirement placed upon the entire *golah* democratizes the holiness when it 'extends the requirement of genealogical purity to lay Israelites'; Hayes, *Gentile Impurities*: 13. See also Frevel and Conczorowski, "Deepening the Water," 43-44; Naomi Koltun-Fromm, *Hermeneutics of Holiness: Ancient Jewish and Christian Notions of Sexuality and Religious Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 45.
[364] Saul M. Olyan, *Rites and Rank: Hierarchy in Biblical Representations of Cult* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 35-36.
[365] *Rites and Rank*: 36.
[366] Lev 10.10; cf. Lev 11.47; 14.57; 20.56. Ezek 22.26; 44.23.

vulnerable of all', as their 'sensitivity to impurity is greater than the layman's'.[367] The holiness of the *golah* makes it susceptible to impurity which it must avoid at all costs or risk becoming polluted. This makes entry into and possession of the land a risky endeavour. The *golah* is not only precariously located amid peoples and practices that are 'abominable' and 'impure'; its masculine performance is hampered, contradictorily, by its elevated cultic status.

The instability of *golah* masculinity is further emphasized by the very designation *golah* – a designation that speaks to the liminal place occupied by this group. While claiming rightful possession of the land and the heritage of Israel, this group nonetheless continues to identify itself with the Exile, with life outside the land.[368] This liminal identity is further evoked in Ezra's prayer, where the *golah* is described as a remnant (9.8-9;14), rescued by Yhwh from captivity, sword, and pestilence at the hands of the kings of the nations (9.6), and by its current status of slavery to Persia (9.8b-9). These images of political and military decimation, defeat, and subordinate social status are not readily associated with dominant social performances of masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and in ancient West Asian representations.[369] While the feminized representation of the peoples-of-the-lands seeks to affirm the superior masculinity of the *golah*, that masculinity is subverted by the very attributes and performances by which it is constructed.

[367] Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 979.
[368] See Knoppers, "Ethnicity, Genealogy, Geography and Change," 168. On the relationship between the *golah* and the Babylonian exiles, see discussions in Bedford, "Diaspora: Homeland Relations in Ezra-Nehemiah," 147-165; Knoppers, "The Construction of Judean Diasporic Identity."; Kessler, "Persia's Loyal Yahwists," 91-122.
[369] I discuss these images further in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

Conclusion

The gendering of 'otherness' analysed in this chapter reveals the instability and ambiguity inherent in the binary categories that structure the world of Ezra 9-10. The strategies of gendered otherness that 'feminize the peoples-of-the-lands and legitimate their expulsion, build on a naturalized, socially constructed and 'divinely sanctioned' hierarchical difference between male and female, and its intersectional ethnicity, religious practice, and cultic status. This is the ground on which the *golah* builds its claim to superior masculinity: it is male, it is Israelite, it is the holy seed, it will possess the land and give it as a possession to its sons.

The *golah* cannot, however, perform the masculinity invoked by the feminization of the peoples-of-the-lands, the masculinity of conquest, land settlement, and biological reproduction. The men of the *golah* are survivors of foreign captivity and servants of a foreign empire. They are reproductively challenged, and the land they seek to possess threatens them with its impurity. In this precarious location, the priest-scribe Ezra introduces a distinct performance of masculinity, one that is enacted through mourning, lament, and penitence. Ezra's penitential masculinity materially modifies *golah* bodies and appropriates liminality as a place of power.

Chapter 3 Mourning and Masculinity

When confronted with the news that a group of *golah* men, including priests and Levites, had taken daughters from the peoples-of-the-lands as wives, Ezra's response is to engage in rituals of mourning, lament, and penitence (Ezra 9.3-5; 10.1). He tears his garments, pulls his hair and beard, falls to the ground, prays, confesses, weeps, throws himself down repeatedly, and fasts. It is a performance that has been perceived by scholars and readers as problematically emotional and unseemly for a man of Ezra's status. This 'un-masculine' performance must be analysed in terms of the social location of the *golah* as portrayed in the narrative world of Ezra 9-10.

While the *golah* is defined by male kinship and the production of descendants, the 'holy seed' is threatened, as discussed in the previous chapter, by marriage and procreation. The status of this group is derived from the Exile, but the *golah* is neither in exile nor fully in possession of the land. The land the *golah* is to possess is filled with impurity that threatens the very essence of the 'holy seed'. As a remnant rescued by Yhwh, the *golah* is subject to the Persian empire; and while favoured by Yhwh, it is vulnerable to his wrath (9.14-15). This state of 'dislocation', that Gary Knoppers describes as a 'cardinal feature in shaping the group's self-definition,'[370] is the context in which *golah* masculinities are enacted in Ezra 9-10.

In this state of dislocation, Ezra's performance of mourning and lament introduces an alternative model of masculinity; it is not the masculine performance of warriors or kings or even the masculinity of virile producers of

[370] Knoppers, "Ethnicity, Genealogy, Geography and Change," 163.

progeny. Instead, Ezra's masculinity is constituted by self-debasement and subordination to Yhwh. As they gather around Ezra, the *golah* likewise incorporates and embodies mourning and penitence as a performance of masculinity, thereby reconfiguring power relations and the gendered, social, and cultic roles of *golah* men in the text.

3.1 Stand Up and Be a Man

Ezra has come under scrutiny due in part to the diverse and even divergent roles, attributes and actions that render a contradictory image of this biblical character.[371] His priestly lineage is emphasized in a 'dramatically extended patronym' (7.1-5), that connects him to both the foundation of the cult (Aaron) and the monarchy (Zadok). [372] It also links him to Phineas, whose zeal for Yhwh is awarded by a 'covenant of eternal priesthood' (Num 25.13), and to the pre-exilic priestly lineage (Seraiah) (7.1-7).[373] His expressed interest in the Temple and cult in chapters 7 and 8,[374] is complemented by Artarxerxes's charge that he transport gold, silver, and treasures for the Temple (7.16-19), and provide for the needs of the Temple out of royal and regional imperial treasuries (7.21-23).

Ezra is also scribe (סֹפֵר), but his scribal expertise is not that of a secretary or record keeper;[375] rather, he is a scholar of the 'law of Moses (תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה) that

[371] See Leuchter, who observes that the text 'seem[s] to deliberately obscure any clear view of Ezra at every turn'; Mark Leuchter, "Coming to Terms with Ezra's Many Identities in Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Historiography and Identity (Re)Formulation in Second Temple Historiographical Literature*, ed. Louis C. Jonker (New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 42.
[372] "Coming to Terms," 47.
[373] See "Coming to Terms," 44-45. The identification of Ezra with the line of both Zadok and Seraiah, Leuchter states, 'makes abundantly clear that he is not simply a Zadokite, but of the very family that could lay claim to the chief priesthood in the Jerusalem temple' (47). On literary critical issues concerning the genealogy, see Knoppers, "Ethnicity, Genealogy, Geography and Change," 151.
[374] Ezra 7.27-28; 8.15-36.
[375] Shimshai the scribe, for example, is involved in the official correspondence sent to the Persian kings (Ezra 4.8,9,17,23). Grabbe argues that Ezra's designation as a scribe of the Torah, 'in some ways gives a new meaning to the word "scribe" in Israel since there is no suggestion up until now

Yhwh the God of Israel had given' (7.6).[376] He is a seeker, doer, and teacher of the תורה, its statutes (חק) and ordinances (משפט; 7.10).[377] The mission that is given to Ezra by Artaxerxes also includes matters of the 'law (דת) of your God which is in your hand' (7.14),[378] concerning which he is charged to 'make inquiries' (לבקרא), in Judah and Jerusalem.[379] He is ordered to 'appoint magistrates and judges who may judge all the people in the province...', and to teach those who don't know the law (7.25).[380] He is even given authority to punish those who disobey (7.26). Ezra is thus presented as a priest of the highest pedigree who is to provide for the Temple; an expert scribe who is to oversee the region concerning the law; and a Persian emissary, tasked with various activities pertaining to the legal administration of the province of Abar-Nahar.

---

that the scribe had any special connection with the law or teaching of Yhwh'; Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 25.

[376]The designation ספר מהיר – ready or skilled scribe – is also used in connection with skilled scribal activity in Ps 45.1 and in the 'The Parables of Ahiqar'. Like Ezra, Ahiqar is both a court administrator and a teacher; see Fried, *Ezra and the Law*: 35-36.

[377]Ezra 9.9b: 'For Ezra had set his heart to seek the Torah of Yhwh (הכין לבבו לדרוש את־תורת יהוה), and to do it (ולעשת), and to teach the statues and ordinances in Israel' (וללמד בישראל חק ומשפט).

[378] Most scholars identify the Persian דת in Ezra 7.12-25 with the תורה, although the term most often refers to the king's decrees, rather than a law code. See Pakkala, *Ezra the Scribe*: 33; Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism Vol I*: 333. Lisbeth Fried argues that the 'dātā of the god refers to that god's decrees…the justice, the right order, and the right action that the god establishes on the king's behalf'; Fried, *Ezra and the Law*: 32.

[379] The phrase לבקרא אל in 7.14 is often understood to reference the task of investigating, researching, or inquiring; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 101. Drawing on Qumranic parallels and corresponding Greek terminology, Steiner argues that it describes a supervisory role which may have involved setting up 'governmental, and especially judicial, institutions in subject states on behalf of the imperial power'; Richard C. Steiner, "The Mbqr at Qumran, the Episkopos in the Athenian Empire, and the Meaning of Lbqr' in Ezra 7: 14 on the Relation of Ezra's Mission to the Persian Legal Project," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 120(2001): 627.

[380] Some scholars argue that the intent of the decree is to make the Torah binding for all the Jews in Yehud (or perhaps the entire satrapy); see Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 103-105; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 152-157; Peter Frei, "Persia and the Torah: A Summary," in *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch*, ed. James W. Watts (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 11. Fried argues, however, that Ezra's primary task is 'to appoint the royal judges for the satrapy of Ebar Nahara' who will carry out Ebar Nahara's justice system, which is, in her view, common to the Achaemenid Empire. See Lisbeth Fried, '"You Shall Appoint Judges': Ezra's Mission and the Rescript of Artaxerxes," in *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch*, ed. James W. Watts (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 64-89, esp 83.

Irrespective of how contradictory, confusing, or unrealistic the image of Ezra in chapters 7-8 may appear to be,[381] it functions in the narrative world of the text to establish Ezra as a man who has authority over other men in matters of the cult, as well as civil and judicial management and administration.[382] His legal and administrative authority positions him over political elites in the region and in Jerusalem itself.[383] Furthermore, Ezra enjoys favour before Yhwh, as indicated by the repeated phrase 'for the hand of Yhwh was upon him' (7.6,9,28).[384]

One might indeed wonder why the redactor bothered to include such a grandiose presentation of Ezra, only to have him fall to the ground with weeping when a problem requires his attention. Ezra does not read or teach the Torah in chapters 9-10, he does not initiate judicial proceedings,[385] he does not offer sacrifices, nor does he employ the authority of his position to punish the guilty men.[386] In the text, Ezra's response to the report of intermarriage is to engage in a series of rituals consistent with biblical and ancient West Asian mourning rites.[387] These rituals purposefully and radically transform his body, as described in the character's first-person account: 'I tore my garment and my mantle (קרעתי את־בגדי ומעילי), and I made bare the hair from my head and my beard

[381] Ezra's characterization, Leuchter notes, is that of an 'elusive shapeshifter who alternately seems to champion disparate agendas and typologies…'; Leuchter, "Coming to Terms," 43. Blenkinsopp has problems reconciling Ezra's character in chapter 7 with his actions in chapter 8, where he finds functions incompatible with the person of Ezra. He comments that 'the mission to see to the administration and enforcement of the laws is a kind assigned to a person of high rank, not to the leader of a miscellaneous group of emigrants'; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 156-157; "The Mission of Udjahorresnet and Those of Ezra and Nehemiah," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106(1987): 409-421.

[382] This authority is evident in the leadership he exercises over other men in chapter 8 but is not overtly exercised in most of Ezra 9-10.

[383] See Fried, "Persia and the Torah," 63-89.

[384] יד־יהוה אלהיו עליו and variations in 8.18,22,31.

[385] As appears to be the case in Neh 13.25: אריב עמם; cf. Fried, "Persia and the Torah," 86.

[386] Contrary to what Nehemiah does in a similar situation (Neh 13.25).

[387] Olyan argues that in the Hebrew Bible the vocabulary and practices for mourning the dead are employed indistinctly by 'penitents, humiliated individuals, and persons seeking a divine revelation, among others'; Saul M. Olyan, *Biblical Mourning: Ritual and Social Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 19.

(ואמרטה משׂער ראשׁי וזפני), and I sat appalled (ואשׁבה משׁומם)' (9.3). This intense sequence of actions accompanied, presumably, by sounds,[388] ends with a man lowered in desolation (אשׁבה משׁומם, 9.3b,4a),[389] perhaps finally silent,[390] dishevelled, plucked or shaved, bareheaded and, at least partially, unclothed. Around him gathers a group of men, described as 'tremblers' (הרד), who remain with him as he awaits the time of the evening sacrifice when he rises from his self-imposed humiliation (תענית), and prepares for prayer (9.5a).

Dispelling any notion that his mourning is over, in 9.5 Ezra reminds readers and hearers that his clothing is still torn as he stands (קמתי מתעניתי ובקרעי בגדי ומעילי), bows to his knees (ואכרעה על־ברכי), and lifts his hands to Yhwh in prayer (ואפרשׂה כפי אל־יהוה אלהי). He begins his prayer declaring his shame and humiliation (בשׁתי ונכלמתי) that render him unable to lift his face to Yhwh (להרים אלהי פני אליך, 9.6). He concludes with a first-person plural affirmation of the inability of the *golah* 'to stand before you [Yhwh]' (אין לעמוד לפניך; 9.15b) as a result of the community's collective guilt (באשׁמתינו).

The first-person narrative voice in chapter 9 shifts to the third person in 10.1, offering an external observer's perspective of Ezra's mourning and weeping (10.1a): 'Ezra prayed and made confession (וכהתפלל עזרא וכהתודתו), weeping

[388] In the Hebrew Bible mourning is frequently accompanied by moaning, keening, and vocal weeping. See *Biblical Mourning*: 30-31; Baruch Levine, "Silence, Sound, and the Phenomenology of Mourning in Biblical Israel," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 22(1993): 89-106.

[389] The participle of שׁמם, translated 'desolation' in Ezra 9.3-4, is used to describe places and persons affected by military defeat and other forms of destruction (Amos 9.14; Isa 49.8,19; 61.4; Jer 33.10; Ezek 29.12), and the response of dismay and hopelessness in such conditions (Lam 1.13,16; Jer 4.9; Ezek 3.15; 2 Sam 13.20).

[390] On silence as a mourning rite, see Xuan Huong Thi Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 29-30. Cf. Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*: 30, n.10.

and throwing himself down before the house of Yhwh (בכה ומתנפל לפני בית אלהים)'. In 10.1b, a 'very great assembly (קהל) of men, women, and children' gathers toward Ezra (נקבצו אליו) from 'out of Israel' (מישׂראל), and joins in his weeping (כי־בכו העם הרבה־בכה). A third and final act of mourning takes place a few verses later, no longer in public space but within the more exclusive terrain of a priestly chamber, where Ezra abstains from food and drink (לא־אכל ומים לא־שׁתה) as he mourns the unfaithfulness (מתאבל אל־מעל) of the *golah* (10.6b).

Ezra interacts directly with the *golah* only three times – very briefly, and at the instigation of others.[391] Throughout the text, his primary characterization derives from ritual acts of mourning and penitence directed upon his own body and to Yhwh.[392] These acts appear to do little to directly address or remedy the situation at hand and they contrast starkly with his decisive action in Ezra 8.15-17, where he identifies the lack of Levites in the company that travels with him to Jerusalem and swiftly acts to solve the problem. Neither is the authoritative Torah reader and teacher of Nehemiah 8 to be found in Ezra 9-10,[393] where Ezra appears to depend on others to push him into action.[394] Scholars and readers who seek a more active and authoritative role for Ezra are indeed left wanting.

[391] Urged into action by *Shecaniah* ('stand up, it is your duty'; 10.4), Ezra interrupts his mourning to make the chief priests, Levites, and all Israel swear to make the covenant proposed by Shecaniah to expel the women and their children (10.3). After the *elders and officials* convene the 'men of the Judah and Benjamin' to Jerusalem, (10.7-10), Ezra exhorts them concerning their infidelity and guilt, and urges them to 'separate from the peoples of the land and the foreign women' (10.11). Finally, after the *assembly* decides on a course of action, Ezra selects the heads of the בית אבות who are to lead the investigation concerning the cases of intermarriage (10.16).

[392] Ezra 9.3-15;10.1,6.

[393] On redaction critical issues concerning Neh 8 and its relationship to Ezra 7-10, see Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*: 319-330; Pakkala, *Ezra the Scribe*: 136-179.

[394] Ezra 9.1-2;10.2-4,7-9,14-15. Even the issue of intermarriage must be brought to his attention, in contrast with Nehemiah who sees the issue himself and acts to resolve it (Neh 13.23-27).

Lester Grabbe's evaluation of Ezra's performance is illustrative of the expectations placed upon this character:

> He has been given the power and authority to teach and enforce the law over the entire satrapy…Yet when confronted with an actual situation, there is only stupefaction instead of decisive action. Ezra tears his garment and hair and sits on the ground in the square (Nehemiah on the contrary, tears the hair of his opponents [Neh 13.25])…Perhaps mourning and prayer might be what we expect of a pious priest, but we should also expect action…[395] …Yet with all that religious and imperial authority behind him, he has trouble dealing with a relatively minor problem in Jerusalem. He can only pray and sit in the street; others make the decisions and give the orders…'.[396]

Blenkinsopp is similarly unimpressed with Ezra, whose actions he describes as 'almost absurdly intemperate',[397] while Charles Fensham accuses him of engaging in insincere dramatism.[398]

Ezra's inadequacy as a man is seen to be even more pronounced when viewed in tandem with Nehemiah's retort against the Yehudite men married to Ashdodite, Moabite and Ammonite women (13.23).[399] While similar in various ways, these texts present very distinct performances of masculinity. In both texts, marriage to 'foreign' women is labelled a מעל, an act of infidelity to Yhwh, and accusations of intermarriage receive emotively charged and very physical responses from the respective authority figures (Ezra 9.3-5; Neh 13.23-24). Both texts include hair pulling (מרט), and other acts of humiliation and debasement. The second person suffixed verbal forms used by Nehemiah to describe his response to intermarriage contrast, however, with those of Ezra, whose actions are directed toward himself (first-person singular) and position him before Yhwh:

[395] Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism Vol I*: 314.
[396] *A History of the Jews and Judaism Vol I*: 330.
[397] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 177.
[398] Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*: 124.
[399] Unlike Ezra 9-10, where the identity and provenance of the women is ambiguous.

> Neh 13.25: 'I contended *with them* (ואריב עמם) and cursed *them* (ואפלם) and beat some of *them* (ואכם מהם ואכה) and pulled out *their* hair (ואמרטם); and I made *them* take an oath (ואשביעם) in the name of God'.[400]
>
> Ezra 9.3: 'I tore *my* garment and *my* mantle (קרעתי את־בגדי ומעילי), I pulled *my* hair and my beard (ואמרטה משער ראשי וזקני), I sat appalled (ואשבה משומם)'.
>
> Ezra 9.5: 'at the evening sacrifice, I rose from *my* humiliation (קמתי מתעניתי)…I fell on *my* knees (ואכרעה על־ברכי) and spread *my* hands (ואפרשה כפי) to Yhwh *my* God'.

While viewed critically by some scholars,[401] Nehemiah's actions are, at the very least, culturally appropriate for a leader who enacts and asserts his authority by punishing the guilty,[402] and they are broadly in keeping with his character throughout the book. He is a man whose masculinity is performed through the overt exercise of power over other men, enemies, interlopers, and other Yehudites. Nehemiah diminishes and infantilizes the guilty, rather than debasing himself.[403] By contrast, self-debasement is precisely what Ezra does; he exercises no overt power over the guilty men but rather renders himself physically helpless, his body modified and placed in submission to Yhwh.

Evaluations of Ezra's ritual acts as ineffective and unbecoming of his status and office are tied, I suggest, to the scholarly devaluation of embodied

---

[400] In Neh 13.25 the third person plural object suffix of the verbs indicates that it is the accused men who are on the receiving end of Nehemiah's actions. Ezra also causes leading men to make an oath (10.5), but not as a punishment but rather to commit to a proposed solution to the dilemma faced by the entire community. Furthermore, he does so only after being prompted by Shecaniah (10.4).

[401] Eskenazi is critical of what she views as Nehemiah's lack of self-restraint, and Williamson describes his response as a 'violent outburst' coherent with his personality; Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose*: 70, 139-141; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 398-399.

[402] Fried argues that 'plucking hair from the head and beard was an official punishment in the Achaemenid Empire;' Fried, "Persia and the Torah," 86-87; citing Michael Heltzer, "The Flogging and Plucking of Beards in the Achaemenid Empire and the Chronology of Nehemiah," *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 28(1995-1996): 305-307.

[403] Lipka notes that the removal of a man's beard is an 'effective means of undermining masculine performance in biblical texts'; Lipka, "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks," 289. On the construction of masculinity in relation to boyhood, see Wilson, *Making Men*.

ritual action, along with associated assumptions concerning appropriate masculine behaviour. His rituals of mourning and lament exhibit few of the characteristic traits associated with superior or dominant constructs of masculinity in biblical and ancient West Asian texts and iconography.[404] Idealized performances and attributes of masculinity, such as dominance over inferior men and women, physical strength, forceful speech, erect bodies, full beards, emotional self-control, and rational thought, are lacking in Ezra 9-10.[405]

Ezra is problematic because his ritual acts are 'ineffective'; he is distinctly 'un-masculine': his body is prone, soft, and 'leaky'. He is exposed, he weeps, his head and chin are bare. He is passive and does not act 'like a man', much less like a man of high-priestly lineage, a Persian emissary, a scribe charged with implementing the 'law of your God and of the king' (7.26). His performance, however, echoes that of key authoritative biblical figures in the Hebrew Bible, such as Moses, Solomon, and Josiah, who in the face of the consequences of transgression, physically diminish their bodies in subordination to Yhwh.[406] It would appear, therefore, that Ezra's ritual performance and our assumptions concerning his masculinity merit a closer look.

3.2 Ezra the Mourner

Some scholars have attempted to salvage Ezra's reputation. Williamson, for example, uncomfortable with Ezra's emotional display, argues that it should

[404] See Hoffner, "Symbols for Masculinity and Femininity," 326-334; Lipka, "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks," 271-304; Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 26-28; Winter, "Sex, Rhetoric and the Public Monument."

[405] Dominance over other men is highlighted as a key aspect of dominant masculinity. Assante notes that 'images of men from no matter what period of Mesopotamia…consistently share one rule of difference: there are men who dominate and men who submit'; Assante, "Men Looking at Men," 78. Irene Madreiter and Kordula Schnegg point out that in Achaemenid representations the king is portrayed as larger, more upright, and therefore superior to all other men; Madreiter and Schnegg, "Gender and Sex."

[406] See Deut 9.9,18; 2 Chr 6.12-13 (1 Kgs 8.54); 2 Chr 34.19,27 (2 Kgs 22.11,19).

not be viewed as an 'expression of personal grief', but rather as 'an attempt to act representatively on behalf of all the people'.[407] Eskenazi describes Ezra's mourning and prayer as part of an innovative leadership model, a 'subtle, nonautocratic manner of operation', that intentionally diminishes Ezra's role and transfers responsibility to the community.[408] Dale Launderville notes that while Ezra is 'inactive' when compared to the more conventional images of the ancient West Asian hero, and argues that he is, in fact, modelling an 'antiheroic way of behaving' that seeks drastic changes.[409] In these interpretations, Ezra's acts, while unacceptable on their face, have a hidden purpose and meaning that is not evident to all. Such attempts at salvaging Ezra's reputation are in fact, I suggest, attempts at salvaging his masculinity.

Donald Moffatt offers a more nuanced approach in which he takes issue with negative evaluations of Ezra's ritual performance, arguing that it is not a sign of weakness, but rather plays a powerful role in the text.[410] Drawing on Victor Turner's social drama model for his reading of Ezra 9-10, Moffatt identifies Ezra as the key player in this drama.[411] Ezra's ritual acts, he argues, function to transform the breach of social norms (the first stage of the social drama), into a crisis that requires resolution.[412] Moffatt notes that for a 'person of Ezra's status to mourn publicly, as he did, was a powerful message that the community faced

[407] Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 132.
[408] They do not render him inept, she posits, but rather evidence a positive 'shift from the image of a fearless hero…to a guide who places responsibility in the hands of others'; Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose*: 141. She concludes that Ezra's role is strategically diminished so that leadership may be transferred to the community.
[409] Dale Launderville, *Celibacy in the Ancient World: Its Ideal and Practice in Pre-Hellenistic Israel, Mesopotamia, and Greece* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010), 77.
[410] Moffatt, *Ezra's Social Drama*: 86,157.
[411] *Ezra's Social Drama*: 7-17, 157-160. Turner's social drama theory offers a model of how societies deal with social upheaval that encompasses four stages: breach or separation, mounting crisis, redress or reconciliation, and reintegration or schism. Rituals play an important role in the second and third stages of the drama. See Victor Turner, "Social Dramas and the Stories About Them," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 On Narrative (1980): 141-168.
[412] Moffatt, *Ezra's Social Drama*: 156-157.

the gravest of crisis'.[413] Thus, for Moffatt, there is no contradiction between the social roles granted Ezra in previous chapters, and his actions in Ezra 9-10. He acts as a religious intermediary and 'utilizes the power of ritual to compel the community to act on these marriages'.[414]

Moffatt's study rightly highlights Ezra's ritual performance as a key element in the text. The power he associates with these ritual acts, however, omits consideration of their embodied and material dimensions.[415] In keeping with a prevalent tendency in Western biblical studies to relegate ritual acts to a solely communicative role, Moffatt finds that Ezra's ritual performance functions to transmit and even impose social norms.

He is not alone in his emphasis on the symbolic and communicative function of ritual in Ezra 9-10. Southwood likewise argues that 'Ezra's reaction *dramatizes on a symbolic level* the ethnic and religious tensions which those responsible for the text perceive'.[416] Mark Throntveit finds that 'Ezra's public and private mourning *testify* to the seriousness of the problem in his eyes',[417] and Williamson observes that Ezra's acts '*give expression*' to the repentance that is verbally communicated elsewhere.[418] These evaluations of Ezra's ritual performance evidence the priority awarded to meaning and belief in many studies of ritual in biblical texts, that relegates the body and embodied action to a

[413] *Ezra's Social Drama*: 158.
[414] *Ezra's Social Drama*: 157.
[415] His study does not explore the gendered dimensions of this status and his 'ritual humiliation'. Of greater interest to Moffatt is the symbolic role the foreign women play in the text. *Ezra's Social Drama*: 159.
[416] Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis*: 149. Emphasis mine.
[417] Mark A. Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1992), 49. Emphasis mine.
[418]Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 133. Emphasis mine. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Ezra's prayer is less problematic for scholars than his ritual performance of mourning and self-debasement. David Janzen, for example, briefly mentions Ezra's mourning and quickly turns to the words of his prayer; Janzen, *Witch-Hunts*: 38.

secondary status. But, as Jacob Wright rightly argues, rituals do not merely reflect or communicate; 'ritual does not simply *mean;* it *does*'.[419]

The devaluation of the body evidenced in the above interpretations of Ezra's performance is prevalent in biblical studies. Frank Gorman explains that this 'suspicion of the body' can be traced to Reformation theologies and Enlightenment philosophies, and before them, to Cartesian theory and Hellenistic philosophies.

> Suspicion of the body, like the duality of which it is an expression, has a long history in Western culture, and this suspicion is inscribed into the discourse on religion through an emphasis on the mind as the 'place' of truth and the 'spirit' as the place of true religious experience. Ritual represented entanglement with the body and so merited suspicion and mistrust.[420]

For Reformation theologians, true religion, Manuel Vázquez observes, was derived from the Scriptures and rational thought, while ritual was catalogued as superstitious, magical, irrational behaviour.[421] Julius Wellhausen's negative evaluation of Judaic religion after the Exile is an example of the impact this dichotomy has had on biblical studies. Where the religion of ancient Israel is characterized by Wellhausen as 'worship that springs from an inner impulse', Judaism had become, in his view, an 'exercise in religiosity' focused on ritualistic obedience of the law.[422]

---

[419] David P. Wright, *Ritual in Narrative: The Dynamics of Feasting, Mourning, and Retaliation Rites in the Ugaritic Tale of Aqhat* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 46. Emphasis in the original.

[420] Frank Gorman, "Ritual Studies and Biblical Studies: Assesment of the Past, Prospects for the Future," *Semeia* 67(1994): 18. On the body in Cartesian philosophies and their appropriation in Reformation theologies, see Vásquez, *More Than Belief*: 22-18, 31-33; Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 15-34; Gorman, "Ritual Studies and Biblical Studies," 13-37.

[421] Vazquez argues that this 'flight from the body' in Reformation theologies responds, at least in part, to the monopoly over ritual power held by the priests; Vásquez, *More Than Belief*: 31-32.

[422] Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, trans. W. Robertson Smith (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 424. On Wellhausen's bias against ritual and Second Temple Judaism, see James W. Watts, *Ritual and Rhetoric in Leviticus: From Sacrifice to Scripture* (Cambridge;

This devaluation of the body and bodily action is a characteristic of many Western ritual theories that, Catherine Bell argues, view ritual as 'action' and 'automatically distinguish it from the conceptual aspects of religion, such as beliefs, symbols and myths'.[423] This is itself a 'powerful act of subordination' that renders ritual 'thoughtless' and the body an empty 'acting object' whose role is merely to communicate, transmit, or represent externally constituted meanings.[424]

This antagonism between religion and things or bodies, Dick Houtman and Brigit Meyer note,

> resonates with a set of related oppositions that privilege spirit above matter, belief above ritual, content above form, mind above body, and inward contemplation above 'mere' outward action, producing an understanding of religion in terms, basically, of an interior spiritual experience.[425]

The gendered implications of this hierarchical dichotomization of the mind over the body are evidenced in the host of homologous gendered dichotomies that derive from it, including the subordination of the material, felt, and sensory world to rational thought and belief, and femininity and non-hegemonic models of masculinity to those which are culturally dominant.[426] The body, and in particular the feminine/feminized body, is perceived as open and leaky;[427] it is messy, unpredictable, ambiguous; it is 'matter out of place', to appropriate Mary

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 157-158. Wellhausen's evaluations transpired in prejudicial views of Judaism and what was claimed to be its excessive orthopraxy.

[423] Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 19.

[424] *Ritual Theory*: 47-49.

[425] Dick Houtman and Birgit Meyer, "Introduction: Material Religion – How Things Matter," in *Things: Religion and the Question of Materiality* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 1.

[426] Elizabeth Grosz argues that these dualisms are implicated in the construction of sexual difference and the subordination of the feminine; Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*: 3-4.

[427] Leaky bodies bleed not only physically, but also by crossing boundaries; they are uncontained and uncontrolled. On the leaky bodies of biblical prophets, see Graybill, *Are We Not Men?*: 21-25.

Douglas's terminology, whereby place is defined by culturally dominant models of masculinity and associated social status and power.[428]

Increasingly, however, religious studies specialists and biblical scholars are addressing ritual and embodied practice by taking account of the centrality of the body and embodied action in the material world as productive – not merely reflective – of meaning and belief.[429] Studies of ritual in biblical texts increasingly focus on the performative and social dimensions of ritual, rather than solely the symbolic systems reflected thereby.[430] As David Morgan advocates, analyses of religious phenomena require not only the study of ideas or beliefs, but a privileged focus on the 'embodied, physical and felt forms of social and historical phenomena', including the 'images, emotions, sensations, spaces, food, dress or the material practices of putting the body to work'.[431] This approach is more in keeping with the way in which people in biblical and ancient West Asian contexts understood society, culture, and religion where 'religion was what people did rather than what they believed'.[432]

---

[428] For Mary Douglas, impurity, therefore is 'matter out of place' that must be addressed by re-establishing the correct distinctions and discriminations; Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, Pelican Books (Harmondworth: Penguin, 1970), 41. The very determination that something is 'in place' as opposed to 'out of place', is an act of power, however, and does not correspond to a natural or pre-existing essence. This 'reality' Bourdieu argues, is brought into being through the naturalization of classifications that reflect a 'struggle over legitimate delimitation'; Pierre Bourdieu, "Identity and Representation: Elements for a Critical Reflection on the Idea of Region," in *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 224.

[429] For studies that address materiality and religious material culture see David Morgan, "Introduction," in *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), 1-17; Houtman and Meyer, *Things: Religion and the Question of Materiality*; Vásquez, *More Than Belief*.

[430] T.M. Lemos laments the pervasiveness of the belief-action dichotomy in biblical scholarship and points to the lack of engagement with more recent developments in ritual studies, such as Catherine Bell's social practice theory; Lemos, "Where There Is Dirt, Is There System?," 265-294.

[431] David Morgan, "Material Analysis and the Study of Religion," in *Materiality and the Study of Religion: The Stuff of the Sacred*, ed. Tim Hutchings and Joanne McKenzi (London; New York: Routledge, 2017), 33-34.

[432] Carol L. Meyers, "Women's Religious Life in Ancient Israel," in *Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 354.

Catherine Bell's theory of ritualization emphasizes the centrality of the body in ritual practice.[433] Ritual, she explains, is itself the negotiation and the very configuration of power relations and social ties.[434] It does so by restructuring bodies 'in the very doing of the act itself'.[435] Kneeling, she argues, is not solely an *expression* of subordination, but rather the production of 'a subordinated kneeler in and through the act itself'.[436] This approach to ritual envisions a body that is continually under construction; the body, as Francesca Stavrakopoulou argues, is a 'recursively engaged social project' that is brought into being through 'practices, social relations, and cultural performances'.[437]

This view of the body as situated, practised, performed, culturally constructed, and culturally productive, has implications for our understanding of the construction of gendered identities and embodiment.[438] As posited by feminist scholars and critical studies of masculinities, gender is not attached to specific bodies as an essential identity tied to biological traits. Masculinity, Nissinen emphasizes, is not 'essential but relational',[439] and is therefore contingent and in flux. Masculinity, masculine bodies and embodied performances, cannot be understood as solely discursive or social constructs,[440] but more broadly as socially engaged, practised, embodied productions that are constituted,

---

[433] Bell, *Ritual Theory*: 7-8.
[434] On ritualization as the configuration of power relations, see *Ritual Theory*: 169-181.
[435] *Ritual Theory*: 100. Bell explains that the strategies that distinguish and privilege – ritualize – certain actions, organize an environment structured by 'schemes of privileged oppositions' that are 'impressed on the bodies of participants.' In this way, ritual produces ritualized persons that can generate these schemes in new contexts (98-99).
[436] *Ritual Theory*: 99. Bell cites Rappaport, who describes that act of kneeling as that which generates a 'body identified with subordination'; Roy A. Rappaport, *Ecology, Meaning, and Religion* (Richmond, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1979), 200.
[437] Stavrakopoulou, "Making Bodies," 532,535.
[438] See Morgan, "Materiality, Social Analysis," 60-61.
[439] 'The absolute binary', Nissinen notes, 'turns into a spectrum of masculinities that can be monitored from the perspectives of body, social hierarchy, and performance'; Nissinen, "Relative Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible," 344.
[440] See critique of social constructionist approaches to masculinity in Wallace Jr, "Mapping Men: Towards a Theory of Material Masculinities," 20-32.

inevitably, within the constraints, as well as the possibilities, of the material, cultural and social contexts in which they are performed.[441]

Biblical texts and ancient West Asian texts and iconography identify politically dominant masculinities with upright hard bodies, that are covered, and sport full beards and thick heads of hair.[442] This would appear to preclude mourning rituals as appropriate performances of superior, much less dominant, masculinity. Indeed, most scholarly 'catalogues' of Hebrew Biblical masculinity do not include mourning and weeping.[443] These bodily acts deemed inappropriate for 'Ezra the man' by many modern scholars are, however, very often ascribed to individual men – including heroes and kings – in the Hebrew Bible.[444] Men mourn for the dead, express anguish and sorrow, and enact penitence. 'Manly' men like Moses, David, Hezekiah, and Josiah weep, fast, tear their garments, and fall to the ground.[445]

These are precisely the ways in which Ezra enacts his masculinity in Ezra 9-10; he modifies his body in ways that evoke the less-than-masculine, even feminized, images of enemies, foreigners, subject peoples, and fallen soldiers in political and military contexts. I argue that these body modifications, the

[441] See critique of social constructionist approaches to embodiment and materiality in Vásquez, *More Than Belief*: 150-208.
[442] As described in Cifarelli, "Gesture and Alterity," 210-228; Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 26-27; Lipka, "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks," 271-304.
[443] See however, Kirova's analysis of biblical weeping, mentioned previously; Kirova, "When Real Men Cry," 35-50.
[444] The only individual women for whom mourning rites are attested in the Hebrew Bible are Rachel (Jer 31.15-16), Athaliah (2 Kgs 11.14; 2 Chr 23.13), and Tamar (2 Sam 13.9), all of whom are implicated in political disputes. Rachel's weeping and mourning for her children references the deportation of Judah under Babylon (Jer 31.15-16). The term for lamentation here is נהי, one that often refers to collective, sometimes professional lamentation in the face of destruction (e.g. Amos 5.16; Jer 9.9,19; Ezek 2.10; Mi 2.4). Tamar is caught in between her brothers as they vie for the throne of David, and Athaliah the queen mourns her political betrayal. See Macwilliam's insightful analysis of Athaliah as a woman who is punished for refusing to perform her gender correctly; Stuart Macwilliam, "Athaliah: A Case of Illicit Masculinity," in *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, ed. Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 69-85.
[445] See Deut 9.18; 2 Sam 1.11; 3.31; 13.31; 2 Kgs 19.1; 22.11.

manipulation of postures and gestures, the denial of food and drink, all practices common to mourning contexts in the Hebrew Bible, not only deconstruct normative performances of masculinity, they also produce alternative constellations of masculinity. Ezra's mourning body is a 'social project'; his highly physical, sensory, emotive, ritualized acts materially and socially modify his body in ways that appropriate and inhabit the *golah*'s liminal location as a place of identity and socio-religious power.

3.3 Modifying 'Manly' Bodies

Body modification practices are widely attested in ancient and modern cultures; they are ways in which embodied identities are materially and physically produced, configured, and marked.[446] Common body modification practices in the Hebrew Bible include circumcision, marking, cutting, and adorning the body in different ways. Also attested are various mourning rites that perform modifications on the head and beard, clothing, skin, and alter body postures. Mourning rites, whether in the context of mourning the dead, penitence, or petition in the face of distress,[447] include temporary modifications that are easily reversible such as the removal or tearing of clothes, placing ashes on the head, wearing sackcloth, and temporary but not immediately reversible modifications of the head and beard.[448] Long-lasting or permanent forms of body modification include circumcision and body cutting, the latter of which is endorsed or acknowledged as a mourning practice in some texts,[449] but forbidden in others.[450]

[446]As noted by Stavrakopoulou, "Making Bodies."; and Saul M. Olyan, "What Do Shaving Rites Accomplish?," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117, no. 4 (1998): 611-622.
[447] *Biblical Mourning*: 19.
[448] *Biblical Mourning*: 114-116.
[449] See Jer 16.6; 41.5.
[450] See Lev 19.27-28; 21.5; Deut 14.1, and discussion in Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*: 118-122.

These bodily practices function not only to communicate, but also to produce status, identity or affiliation. Circumcision, for example, is a physical marker that privileges some male bodies in relation to others and in relation to all female bodies. It is the production of a particular male body, one that is 'fit for the 'male' performativity of religious activity', as Stavrakopoulou observes.[451] Thus, mourning rituals do something, Olyan argues, they produce a mourner, a 'distinct ritual status' that separates the mourner from non-mourners.[452] They also produce a particular configuration of the body, a mourning body.

For the purposes of this analysis, I distinguish two forms of mourning practices that modify Ezra's body. Firstly, I consider the practices that modify physical and material aspects of Ezra's body: tearing garments, shaving and cutting hair, and fasting. The second group of practices are those that embody submission to the deity through postures, gestures, and emotive expressions of mourning. I consider the ways in which Ezra's mourning practices evoke the body modifications inflicted on enemies and performed as punishment for political infidelity.

Olyan suggests that such ritual acts, in particular those that act violently upon another man, such as tearing garments and forced depilation, emulate the practices of mourning: they transition the victim to the 'ritual stance of penitential mourner'.[453] Opponents are forced into a 'penitential mourning posture' that effects a change in ritual status and socio-political affiliations.[454] Ezra 9-10 presents a distinct scenario, however. Ezra voluntarily modifies his body,

[451] Stavrakopoulou, "Making Bodies," 535.
[452] Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*: 59.
[453] "Theorizing Violence in Biblical Ritual Contexts: The Case of Mourning Rites," in *Social Theory and the Study of Israelite Religion: Essays in Retrospect and Prospect* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 170.
[454] Olyan analyses 2 Sam 10.1-5; 16.5-13; Neh 13.25; and Isa 50.4-11.

subordinating it to Yhwh, as do those who gather around him. In what follows, I consider the material and embodied effects of Ezra's mourning rites as they configure Ezra's masculinity and that of the *golah*.

The Materiality of Mourning

The actions that introduce Ezra's performance of mourning – tearing his garment and mantle (קרעתי את־בגדי ומעילי), making his head and chin bare (ואמרטה משׂער ראשׁי וזקני) – materially and physically transform his body in very evident and visible ways.[455] Numerous biblical characters, primarily men, rend their garments and/or shave their beards in contexts of mourning. Job shaves his head (ויגז את־ראשׁו) and tears his robe (יקרע את־מעילו), before falling on the ground at the news of the death of his children (1.20). Also in the face of distress, pilgrims from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria travel toward Jerusalem after the destruction of the Temple 'with their beards shaved and their clothes torn, and their bodies gashed' (Jer 41.5).[456] These ritual acts are often described by commentators as 'symbolic' expressions of grief or loss.[457] But they are so much more: they modify the mourner's body and social position by acting upon and diminishing or transforming culturally privileged markers of masculinity.

[455] The verb מרט describes the act of making something smooth, bare or bald (Ezek 21.14; 29.18). It refers to the head and beard in Ezra 9.3; Neh 13.25; Isa 50.6; Lev 13.40,41.6.

[456] Olyan discusses the uncommon combination of rejoicing behaviours (pilgrimage) and mourning in this text (also Amos 8.3). He concludes that in the wake of the destruction of the temple, ritual distinctions have broken down and the 'ritual order has collapsed'; Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*: 126-131.

[457] Janzen, for example, mentions Ezra's hair pulling and garment rending only once: 'Ezra's response to the message is to tear his clothes and pull out some of the hair of his head and beard, the symbols of mourning'; Janzen, *Witch-Hunts*: 62. Likewise, despite her provocative analysis of the imposed and self-imposed physical alterations that undermine masculinity in biblical and ancient West Asian contexts, Lipka nevertheless argues that in the context of mourning cutting one's beard 'is a symbolic act of humiliation…that is still very different from the psychological impact of someone else forcibly removing your beard'; Lipka, "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks," 295.

Indeed, the social and gendered effects of these self-inflicted rites on the bodies of mourners are more clearly evidenced where they are imposed on unwilling others. Such is the case in 1 Chronicles 19.1-4 (2 Sam 10.1-5), where David sends envoys to Hanun, the King of Ammon, to deliver condolences upon the death of his father. Convinced that David has ulterior motives, Hanun sends the envoys away, but not before shaving their beards and cutting their garments to the buttocks (2 Sam 10.4; 1 Chr 19.4).[458] The extent to which these acts undermine their masculinity (and by necessary implication, David's own) is evidenced not only in their own humiliation (נכלמים), but also in David's instruction that they remain in Jericho until their beards had grown out and, presumably, their masculinity and status had been regained.

The removal of beards and the rending of garments in this text do not merely signal or symbolize humiliation, ritual or otherwise. These acts produce humiliated, 'less-than-masculine' bodies; they alter and deconstruct culturally constructed physical and material markers of masculinity. They render the men exposed and vulnerable, their bodies open. The 'sexual and gender nuances are clear', Susan Niditch observes, as the Israelites are forced into a feminizing position of submission:

> To have the beard or half the beard removed against one's wishes by foreign enemies, together with the symbolic ripping of the clothes up to an erogenous zone, betokens exposure, vulnerability, and being turned into a womanlike figure who is sexually used by male enemies. [459]

This gendered offence against David's envoys is a challenge to his own masculinity; it humiliates his representatives and casts doubt upon his ability to protect those under him. David addresses this offence by going to war, where the

[458] Reading with 1Chr 19.4. In 2 Sam 10.4, half the beard is shaved as well as half the robe.
[459] Niditch, *My Brother Esau Is a Hairy Man*: 96.

Israelites 'reclaim' their masculinity: they display appropriate masculine bravery and might in battle, while the Ammonites flee in defeat and submit to David (2 Sam 10.12-19).[460] This text is a potent example of the ways in which body modification practices are implicated in the construction of gendered identities and the negotiation of power relations.[461]

In the Hebrew Bible, the expression 'to tear the garment' in the face of death or a tragic circumstance,[462] generally involves partial or full nakedness that renders the mourner or afflicted party socially and physically exposed and sexually vulnerable.[463] The male genitalia are to be covered and protected, especially in ritual contexts,[464] thus, the forceful exposure of a man's nakedness is a serious offence. To see or reveal someone's nakedness has explicit sexual meanings, Nissinen comments.[465] When Ham views his father's nakedness (Gen 9.20-27),[466] for example, he commits an offence that positions Noah in the sexual role of a woman.[467] Noah is exposed and vulnerable, his genitals unprotected, as he sleeps.

---

[460] On the motif of the feminized fleeing king, see Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 33-39.

[461] See Lemos, "Shame and the Mutilation of Enemies," 232-236.

[462] See for example, Reuben when he finds that Joseph is no longer in the pit (Gen 37.29); Jephthah when he realizes what his oath means for his daughter (Judg 11.35); David upon hearing of Absalom's death (2 Sam 13.31); Hezekiah after hearing of the words of Rabshakeh (2 Kgs 18.37; Isa 37.1); Mordecai after learning of Haman's decree against the Jews (Esth 3.15).

[463] Clothing is sometimes fully removed in order to don sackcloth. Ahab, for example, tears his clothes (יקרע בגדיו) in order to put sackcloth on 'his flesh' (בשׂרו; 1 Kgs 21.27); also Mic 1.8; Isa 20.2-4. See Lipka, "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks," 280-281.

[464] Priests are prescribed special linen undergarments 'to cover their naked flesh' (Exod 28.42). See Deborah W. Rooke, "Breeches of the Covenant: Gender, Garments and the Priesthood," in *Embroidered Garments: Priests and Gender in Biblical Israel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 19-37. See also Michal's condemnation of David's nakedness as he dances before the ark (2 Sam 6.20).

[465] Martti Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World: A Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 52. In the Hebrew Bible, seeing nudity and revealing it, he notes, are references to sexual intercourse.

[466] Shem and Japhet go to great pains to cover Noah's body without viewing his nakedness. Gen 9.23: 'Then Shem and Japhet took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness'.

[467] Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World*: 53.

Clothing is a significant material marker of social, cultic, and gender status in the Hebrew Bible and ancient West Asian representations; so also, as a material object, the manipulation of clothing has performative effects.[468] Its forced removal renders men sexually vulnerable to other men; they become 'like women', whose bodies are viewed, acted upon, and penetrated. This gendered dynamic is evident in prophetic texts that portray Jerusalem as a woman who is punished for her infidelity to Yhwh. Jeremiah announces: 'It is for the greatness of your iniquity that your skirts are lifted up and you are violated' (Jer 13.22, cf. 13.23; also Ezek 16.39).[469] Similar threats are levelled against Nineveh and Babylon whose nakedness (i.e. genitalia) is exposed for all to see (Nah 3.5; Isa 47.3).[470] The exposure and rape of the cities represented as 'women' in these texts, is, in fact, the violation of their male leaders. Not only are these men rendered in feminized terms, but they are also depicted as sexually abused women.[471]

In military contexts, the naked bodies of enemies and captives announce not only defeat but also their 'un-manning'. Egyptian and Ethiopian captives are taken, 'both the young and the old, naked and barefoot, with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt' (Isa 20.4). Such exposure of male genitalia, in Tamar

[468] See Alicia J. Batten, "Clothing and Adornment," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 40, no. 3 (2010): 148-159; Bethany Wagstaff, "Redressing Clothing in the Hebrew Bible: Material-Cultural Approaches" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Exeter, 2017), 17-23.

[469] See also Ezek 16.39: 'I will deliver you into their hands…they shall strip you of your clothes and take your beautiful objects and leave you naked and bare'. Marsman graphically describes this motif: 'objects of military attack (cities and land) are depicted as feminine, the attack itself is figured as sexual assault, and the soldiers…(in some cases along with God…) are portrayed as rapists; Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel*: 198. See also Brad Kelle, "Wartime Rhetoric: Prophetic Metaphorization of Cities as Female," in *Writing and Reading War: Rhetoric, Gender, and Ethics in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, ed. Brad E. Kelle and Frank Ritchel Ames (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 98-99.

[470] Having one's nakedness viewed or exposed implies the exposure of genitals and alludes to sexual intercourse. See S. Tamar Kamionkowski, *Gender Reversal and Cosmic Chaos: A Study on the Book of Ezekiel*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 50; Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World*: 52.

[471] See Kamionkowski, *Gender Reversal and Cosmic Chaos*: 58-59.

Kamionkowski's analysis, 'does not simply shame, but exposes a man's weakness, his vulnerability'.[472] The 'sexual exposure, penetration and bodily mutilation of enemy men', acts of femininization, is a repeated motif in neo-Assyrian reliefs, Chapman emphasises.[473] Defeat in battle is not only a military or political issue, it is also a matter of gender and sexuality.

Ezra tears his garment and cloak as he begins his mourning rituals. In doing so, he voluntarily alters an important marker of dominant masculinity; he is rendered open, vulnerable, and exposed. This marks an immediate change in his bodily appearance, social status, and relationship to those around him. In contrast to the priest, scribe, and emissary of the previous chapters who, presumably, would always have been appropriately clothed, the mourning Ezra denudes himself of a prominent element tied to his masculine performance.[474] As he sits on the ground appalled, and is surrounded by 'tremblers', and even as he prays and confesses before Yhwh, Ezra's body is exposed, open for all to see (9.3-4).

A second important bodily marker of masculinity in the Hebrew Bible that Ezra modifies is the hair on his head and face. In biblical texts, ancient West Asian and Achaemenid iconography, hair and beards index gender identity and social status.[475] The head and face are easily modified and thus function as privileged sites for the negotiation and contestation of masculinity.[476] Victorious male Assyrians are distinguished from enemies and subordinate men by their

[472] *Gender Reversal and Cosmic Chaos*: 64.
[473] Lemos points to the association between nakedness, shame and physical vulnerability, including the threat of emasculation; Lemos, "Shame and the Mutilation of Enemies," 233-234.
[474] As a priest, furthermore, Ezra would always have been required to maintain his genitals under cover (Exod 28.42).
[475] See Niditch, *My Brother Esau Is a Hairy Man*; Lipka, "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks," 271-304. On hair and beards as markers of status and identity in Achaemenid reliefs, see some examples in Root, *The King and Kingship*, 19: 48,60,70,97,102,112,114-115,135,185,197,219.
[476] Olyan, "What Do Shaving Rites Accomplish?," 613; Stavrakopoulou, "Making Bodies," 539-540. Shaving the head and pubic hair is also attested for women in the Hebrew Bible and speaks to forced submission of the female body (Deut 21.12).

well-kept beards, Lipka notes.[477] Samson's uncut hair evidences the cultural value placed on hair as a marker of masculinity. While his hair is long, he is undefeated; but once his hair is cut, he is weak and easily captured (Judg 16.16-21).[478] The loss of hair, Niditch explains, is a loss of power.[479]

Shaving is performed as punitive action in various texts, as already noted with respect to the depilation of David's envoys in 2 Samuel 10.1-5. An even more dramatic image is the announcement of Israel's destruction at the hands of Assyria in Isaiah 7.20: 'Yhwh will shave with a razor hired beyond the river – with the king of Assyria – the head and the hair of the feet [genitals], and it will take off the beard as well'.[480] Body hair was seen to be a potent gender signifier in biblical and ancient West Asian contexts, one that marked culturally constructed distinctions between men and women, adult men and boys.[481] Its removal was a gendered affront, as it removed the 'natural marks of masculinity from one's body'.[482]

Nehemiah's excoriation of the men guilty of taking foreign women as wives includes hair pulling (Neh 13.25). For Olyan, these actions impose a 'penitential ritual stance' that forces the men to 'communicate regret for their past

[477] Lipka, "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks," 109.
[478] Similarly, Winter notes, in texts and iconography, to cut off the beard of an enemy is to cut off his vitality, which, in turn, is 'conflated with manliness, and is articulated visually by facial hair, along with breadth of chest and virile stance'; Winter, "Sex, Rhetoric and the Public Monument," 13.
[479] Niditch, *My Brother Esau Is a Hairy Man*: 99. An interesting example is that of Absalom, whose long hair is tied to his virility and fertility (2 Sam 14.27), as Niditch notes (p.79), but is also his undoing as it catches in a tree and hangs him (2 Sam 18.9).
[480] See also Jer 47.5; Isa 3.24.
[481] It is important to note here that the effect of such body modifications is not a universal phenomenon but depends on culturally specific gendered constructs. Egyptian reliefs evidence a preference for beardless men and shaven heads. Mourners, therefore, have long, dishevelled, unkept hair. See Niditch, *My Brother Esau Is a Hairy Man*: 33-34.
[482] Ken Stone, *Sex, Honor, and Power in the Deuteronomistic History*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 122. See also Lipka, "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks," 275; Niditch, *My Brother Esau Is a Hairy Man*.

behaviour'.[483] Viewed in its narrative context and in relation to other punitive acts of hair cutting in the Hebrew Bible,[484] I would argue, rather, that the more specific effect is similar to that produced in the case of David's envoys: it humiliates by undermining the masculinity and status of the men, and positions them in subordination to Nehemiah, the 'hair puller'. Furthermore, there is no indication that the men become repentant; rather, they are 'un-maned' and unmanned. In this light, Ezra's own hair and beard pulling may be viewed as a voluntary deconstruction of his own body and masculinity. He displaces himself from those masculinities defined by male beards (and clothes). He is unmanned, but not by the actions of other men; rather, he exposes his body and bares his head to Yhwh.

A third, more subtle form of body modification performed by Ezra is fasting, his final mourning rite in the text. In 10.6, Ezra withdraws from before the house of God into the priestly chamber of 'Jehohanan son of Eliashib', where he 'does not eat bread and does not drink water' (לא־אכל לחם ומים לא־שתה) as he mourns the infidelity of the *golah* (מתאבל על־מעל הגולה).[485] The context of his fasting is

[483] Olyan, "Theorizing Violence in Biblical Ritual Contexts," 177; "Ritual Inversion in Biblical Representations of Punitive Rites," in *Worship, Women, and War: Essays in Honor of Susan Niditch*, ed. John J. Collins, T.M. Lemos, and Saul M. Olyan (Providence: Brown University, 2015), 135-143.

[484] Nehemiah's response to the breach of various norms in Nehemiah 13 is to act upon the guilty: 13.8: 'and I was very angry, and I threw all the household furniture of Tobiah out of the room…'; 13.11: 'I remonstrated with the officials…'; 10.15, 'I warned them against selling food..', 'I remonstrated with the nobles…' (v.17), 'I commanded that the doors should be shut' (v.19), 13.28: 'I chased him away from me…'.

[485] There are two problematic issues in this text. One is the identity of Jehohanan and whether he is related to the high priesthood. He evidently had a role in the temple that required him to have a chamber in its precincts. Eliashib, Jehohanan's father, is named as high priest in Neh 3.1, but the name is also mentioned elsewhere for different men in both Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 10.24, 25,36) various times in the list of guilty men in Ezra 10 where it is given to a singer (10.24) and a lay Israelite (10.25,36). In Neh 13.4, an Eliashib is an overseer of the 'chamber of the house of our God'. Williamson concludes that the latter is the most likely candidate for the Eliashib of Ezra 10.6. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 151-154. Pakkala, on the other hand, finds that 'it is difficult to deny that a high priest called Jehohanan was meant'; Pakkala, *Ezra the Scribe*: 129. A second issue in the text is whether or not Ezra spent the night in the chamber. This is not indicated in the Hebrew, while the addition of the term αὐλίζομαι in 1 Esd 9.2 lends the text the aura of an incubation, in which there is the expectation of receiving a dream from a deity by performing ritual

similar to that of other mourners and penitents in the Hebrew Bible who fast to mourn the dead,[486] seek divine intervention;[487] enact penitence,[488] and lament in the face of calamity.[489] These mourners withdraw from a critical physical, social and cultural activity of daily life: eating and drinking. They transform their bodies by inflicting hunger and thirst, the effects of which are vividly described in Psalm 109.24: 'my knees are weak through fasting; my body has become gaunt'.[490] To abstain from food is to provoke changes in the body so that it is a form of body modification that is physically and socially restrictive and restricting.

Ezra places his body in a state of hunger a thirst, much as that which is experienced in times of drought and famine, siege, and conquest.[491] Hunger evokes affliction, suffering, and war. While it is inherently anti-social, the implications go beyond hunger and social isolation. As Michael Dietler argues, eating and drinking are not 'simply biological acts', but 'culturally patterned techniques of bodily comportment that are expressive in a fundamental way of identity and difference'.[492]

Ezra's refusal to eat and drink is particularly significant given the space in which it takes place. He is in the Temple chamber, a place where sacrificial meals were prepared and consumed; but he does not participate in sacrificial service.

---

acts and sleeping in the temple. Instead of a dream, however, Ezra will receive his guidance from the Torah. See Chapter 4.

[486] 1 Sam 31.13; 2 Sam 1.12.

[487] 2 Sam 12.21; Esth 4.16; Isa 58.3; Jer 14.12; Ezra 8.21.

[488] Joel 2.12; Jonah 3.5.

[489] 1 Kgs 21.27; Esth 4.3; Neh 1.4.

[490] In Ps 109.24, the faster exclaims that he has become weak and emaciated, suggestingsome ways in which the act modifies the body of those who refrain from food and drink.

[491] On hunger due to drought see Gen 12.10; 26.1; 41.27; Ruth 1.1; 2 Sam 21.1, 2 Kgs 4.38, and many others. On hunger due to military siege, see Deut 28, that declares that Israel will serve its enemies, 'in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and lack of everything' (28.48). See also the siege of Samaria that causes such great hunger that the people are eating each other's children (2 Kgs 6.28-29).

[492] Michael Dietler, "Feasting and Fasting," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*, ed. Timothy Insoll (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 181.

Rather, he mourns. It is a performance that distances him not only from the superior masculinity of warriors and kings but also from that of the priests. In 9.4-5, the evening sacrifice (מנחה הערב) marks the propitious time for Ezra's penitential prayer and evidences the regular cultic service that is carried out by priests in the Temple.[493] While Ezra is a priest, and his physical movement into the precincts of the Temple locates him directly in the realm of priestly and Levitical privilege and sacrificial functions, he does not prepare the evening sacrifice or participate in it.[494] Ezra's denial of food and drink is disruptive of the Temple economy and the status of the priests who serve in it; it configures a distinct performance of masculinity, one that draws power from the liminality that is embodied by Ezra's 'deconstructed' masculine body and performance.

The description of his fast, however, does not use the more common term צום. The narrator chooses to vividly describe the material implications of Ezra's fasting: 'bread he did not eat and water he did not drink' (לחם לא־אכל ומים לא־שתה;10.6). Significantly, this phrase is used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible only for Moses, who prostrates himself (התנפל) – as does Ezra in 10.1 -, and refrains from food and drink (לא־אכל ומים לא־שתה) in the wake of the matter of the golden calf (Deut 18.9,25).[495] Moses, like Ezra, is a man whose bodily traits and performances are unconventional in relation to those culturally

[493] See Ps 141.2; 1 Kgs 18.29; Dan 9.21; and Jud 9.1. On the evening sacrifice, see Moshe Weinfeld, "Minhah," in *Normative and Sectarian Judaism in the Second Temple Period* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 122-136.

[494] In the Hebrew Bible, temple chambers are liminal, transitional spaces between the profane and the most holy. Many of the temple chambers functioned as storehouses for temple treasures and offerings, a place to prepare the burnt offering for sacrifice, to partake in the offerings, or for the priests to change their vestments before exiting to the outer court. See Ezek 40.38,45-46; 42.13.

[495] Abstinence from food and drink is designated here not by the root צום, but with the longer descriptive phrase לא־אכל ומים לא־שתה, used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible only to refer to Moses's forty days and nights on Mount Sinai (Exod 34.28; Horeb, Deut 9.9). The hithpael of נפל is also used in Gen 43.18 where Joseph's brothers fall down before him, but in participle form.

associated with superior masculinities. Not only does he fast and prostrate himself, his body is defective and at times weak (Exod 4.6,10;17.11-18), he is characterized with maternal imagery in Numbers 11.11-15, and is praised in Numbers 12.3 as a man who 'more humble more (ענו מאד) than all on the face of the earth'.[496]

Not insignificantly, Ezra's mourning rituals liken him to this key biblical figure of 'questionable masculinity' to whom the biblical text attributes the Exodus from Egypt, the giving of the Torah, the organization of the Israelite community, and the establishment of the Tabernacle. Above all, Moses is the authorized mediator *par excellence* of Yhwh's words and will for his people. Ezra, like Moses, I suggest, derives an authoritative status from his subordination to Yhwh. Ezra's mourning locates him, like Moses, as the mediator of Yhwh's words and will for Israel.

The nuanced gendered and political effects of body modification and self-debasement that deconstruct masculine attributes are also evidenced in the social effects of mourning rituals enacted by Judean kings Hezekiah and Josiah. In the face of the military defeat and divine punishment, their subordination to Yhwh affirms their legitimate and divinely sanctioned, royal status. When faced with the imminent destruction of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, Hezekiah tears his clothes, covers himself in sackcloth, and goes to the house of Yhwh (2 Kgs 19.1; Isa 3 7.1). He uses feminine imagery in his admission of weakness and lack of strength: 'children have come to the birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth' (2 Kgs 19.3; Isa 37.3). Having undermined his own masculinity before

[496] On the unstable masculinity of Moses, see Graybill, *Are We Not Men?*: 23-48; DiPalma, "De/Constructing Masculinity in Exodus 1-4," 36-51.

Yhwh, Hezekiah receives a response through the prophet Isaiah, ensuring him that Yhwh will deliver of the city (2 Kgs 6-7; Isa 37.5-6). Thus, Hezekiah's masculinity, his ability to protect and provide for his subjects, is made possible by this voluntary deconstruction of his own masculinity and subjection to Yhwh's superior might.[497]

Josiah also tears his garments upon hearing the words of the scroll of the Torah 'found' during temple restoration by which he is made aware of Yhwh's imminent punishment (2 Kgs 22.11; 2 Chr 34.19). His physical act of debasement does not lower his status before another man or ruler, but before Yhwh, as evidenced in the words of the prophetess Huldah:

> …Regarding the words that you have heard, because *your heart was penitent*, and *you humbled yourself before Yhwh*, when you heard how I spoke against this place, and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and because *you have torn your clothes and wept before me,* I also have heard you, says Yhwh (2 Kgs 22.18-19).[498]

Not only has Josiah torn his clothes, like Ezra, he also weeps. This presumed less-than-masculine behaviour derives, however, in a privileged position before, and relationship to, the deity.[499] Self-abasement before Yhwh empowers these men over others.[500]

Similar gendered nuances and social complexity are present in Ezra 9-10 as well. Ezra's modified body renders him sexually exposed and vulnerable; his

---

[497] Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 83-84.
[498] Emphasis mine.
[499] His actions in the face of the reading of an authoritative, divinely given text, contrast with those of his son Jehoiakim who refuses to tear his clothes upon hearing the words of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 36.24), and receives a very different word from the prophet: '...his dead body shall be cast out…I will punish him and his offspring… (Jer 36.30-31).
[500] A contrast worth noting is the different ways in which gender is configured where mourning rites, such as garment tearing, are performed by women - even women of status such as Queen Athaliah, and Tamar the daughter of David. Upon discovering that she has been betrayed, Athaliah rends her garment, shouting 'treason'. She is not, however, positioned before Yhwh in the doing of this act; it prepares her death at the hands of the priest Jehoiada (2 Kgs 11.13-16). Neither do Tamar's mourning rites after being raped by her half-brother Amnon position her before Yhwh. She remains 'desolate' in the house of Absalom and the narrative continues without her.

shaved face is that of a child, slave or eunuch; he feels the hunger and thirst of a people under siege. But Ezra's embodiment of these inferior social and gendered positions is not the result of the power of other men over him, nor does it derive from his subordination to other men. Rather it locates him in a privileged relationship with the deity, a position in which he is rendered an authorized mediator of the words and commands of Yhwh (cf. Ezra 9.10-12).

Ezra is not a military hero nor a mighty statesman; his performance of masculinity removes him from the referential political context of Persian imperialism, and into the cultic realm of the deity Yhwh. He chooses subordination to Yhwh over his Persian emissarial role. Ezra's masculinity is transformed, relocated, and effects a distinct configuration of power relations in the narrative world of the text. This social and gendered location is further constituted by the manipulation of his bodily postures, as he mourns before the house of Yhwh (Ezra 9.4-5; 10.1).

Embodying Subordination

Having materially modified his body, Ezra manipulates his postures, gestures and bodily position. His garment still torn, he sits appalled (אֹשֵׁבָה מְשׁוֹמֵם), 'reduced to shuddering' (9.3b). The root שׁמם used in 9.3b and 4a to describe Ezra's state as he sits in mourning, references abandonment, devastation, and desolation, often in the face of the destruction of a city, temple, or conquest of the land; it is also the emotive and physical response such tragic events.[501] Becking's translation highlights the silence of Ezra who, he suggests,

[501] See Lev 26.43; Num 21.30; 2 Sam 13.20; Ps 69.25. The Polel form is found only in Ezra 9.3-4 and Daniel 9.27; 11.31.

'has lost his ability to speak'.[502] His silence contrasts with the vocal invocations and petitions offered daily in the Temple and noisy slaughter of the sacrificial animals.[503] Devastated, sitting on the ground, Ezra's position is consistent with that of a mourner.[504] His posture evokes images of the military defeat of enemy cities and Jerusalem herself bowed under Yhwh's judgement.[505]

It is in Ezra's state of desolation and 'shuddering' that 'all who tremble at the words of the God of Israel' (כל חרד בדברי אלהי־ישׂראל) gather around him.[506] The designation חרד, given to this group, places emphasis on the physical embodiment of fear, awe, reverence, and zealous obedience to the 'words of the God of Israel' (בדברי אלהי־ישׂראל).[507] The root הרד references the act of physical trembling and shaking, and is often associated in the Hebrew Bible with intense emotions of fear, terror, surprise, anxiety, panic, or foreboding.[508] The emotional

[502] The term משׂומם, Becking notes, is the Polel participle of the verb שׂמם, and may therefore be translated 'reduced to shuddering', which suggests that Ezra has lost his ability to speak in the face of the transgression of the people. See Bob Becking, "Temple Vessels Speaking for a Silent God: Notes on the Divine Presence in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah," in *Reflections on the Silence of God: A Discussion with Marjo Korpel and Johannes de Moor* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 14. On silence as a mourning rite, see Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient near East*: 29-30.

[503] The evening offering (מנחה הערב), a grain offering mixed with oil or incense, that often accompanied animal sacrifice, is the backdrop to Ezra's mourning and penitential prayer in 9.3.4-5 (cf. Exod 29.39-4; Nm 28.4-5; 2 Chr 2.4; 7.7; Judg 13.19). See Weinfeld, "Normative and Sectarian Judaism," 123.

[504] Pham indicates that the 'ritual mourning seat is the ground', citing Job 1.20; 2.11 and the Ugaritic Baal cycle where El prepares to mourn the death of Baal by descending to the ground; Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient near East*: 19-20. Postures of physical diminishment are mentioned in various mourning contexts. See Josh 7.6-7; Isa 47.1; Jon 3.6; Ezek 26.15-17; Lam 2.10; Psalm 44.25; 1 Mac 4.36-40.

[505] In Isaiah 3.26, 'Daughter Zion' will sit on the ground (לארץ תשׁב), as will Babylon in Isa 47.1 (שׁבי־לארץ); see also Ps 18.45; 66.3; 81.16.

[506] The adjective הרד is used in substantive form only in Ezra 9.3; 10.3 and Isa 66.2,5 (Ezra 9.3 and Isa 66.2: הרד; Ezra 10.3: הרדים; Isa 66.5: הרדים). Blenkinsop identifies this designation with a prophetic-eschatological group ostracized by fellow Jews in post-exilic Judah; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 178-179; "A Jewish Sect of the Persian Period," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52(1990). The 'tremblers' in Ezra 9-10 do nof appear to be an ostracized or rejected group, however, but rather one that empowers Ezra's performance and is empowered by the Torah.

[507] In 10.3 the same group is characterized as 'all who tremble at the commandment of our God' (החרדים במצות אלהינו).

[508] See Lev 26.6; Job 11.19; Jer 30.10; 46.27; Ezek 34.28; 39.26; Mic 4.4; Zeph 3.13.

dimensions of the term are often highlighted in readings of this text,[509] but associated bodily movements should not be minimized.[510]

In various texts, the absence of trembling is presented as a sign of well-being associated with peace, rest, safety and a lack of threat.[511] Trembling, therefore, may be understood as a physical response to the opposite: conflict, threat, unease, fear. In Judges 7.3, Gideon announces to the troops preparing for battle: 'whoever is fearful and trembling (חרד), let him return home'. Trembling accompanies mourning in Ezekiel's lament over the destruction of Tyre in Ezekiel 26.16, where the princes who witness the devastation, tremble, strip off their clothes and sit on the ground appalled.[512] The verbs in this verse indicate the gradual but progressive lowering of the princes to the point of abasement and trembling. Their actions are not unlike those of Ezra and the 'tremblers' in Ezra 9.3-4.

> Then all the princes of the sea shall step down from their thrones; they shall remove their robes (מעיל) and strip off their embroidered garments (בגד). They shall clothe themselves with trembling (חרדה), and shall sit (ישׁב) on the ground, they shall tremble (חרד) every moment, and be appalled (שׁמם) at you (Ezek 26.16; cf. Ezek 32.10).[513]

Thus, the trembling bodies of the men who gather around Ezra may be likened with the bodily response of those who tremble with fear. Their bodies are not firm, but 'wobbly', disarmed, and weak, traits that are in no way associated

[509] I. Meyer, "Samam," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol Xv*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Heinz-Josef Fabry (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 166-170.
[510] The allies of Egypt and Tyre tremble upon seeing the destruction of these nations at the hand of Yhwh (Isa 19.16; Ezek 30.9; 32.10); warriors tremble at the prospect of defeat in battle mount Sinai (Exod 19.18) and the earth (Isa 41.5) tremble at the presence of Yhwh.
[511] Images of well-being often include the phrase אין חרד (there will be no trembling). See Lev 26.6; Job 11.19; Jer 30.10; 46.27; Ezek 34.28; 39.26; Mic 4.4; Zeph 3.13.
[512] In several texts, שׁמם describes the shocked reaction of onlookers in response to the judgment levelled on others. See Lev 26.32; Isa 52.14; Jer 2.12; Ezek 27.35; 28.19.
[513] Ezra likewise removes his robes (מעיל) and garments (בגד), sits (ישׁב) on the ground appalled (שׁמם), and is surrounded by tremblers (חרד).

with dominant masculinity. Ezra's mourning is not cited as the reason why these men tremble, however; rather they are already 'tremblers' who join in Ezra's mourning, lending their zealousness for the words of God to Ezra's mournful response to the report of intermarriage. The effect of their 'trembling' in Ezra 9.4 and 10.3 is to elevate Yhwh – the words of Yhwh – as fear-inducing, requiring obedience. It is Ezra and the 'tremblers', and not the priests and Levites, who are presented as authorized figures for determining correct practice as prescribed by the Torah (10.3b).

At the time of the evening sacrifice, in preparation for penitential prayer, Ezra stands from his posture of humiliation, bows to his knees (ואכרעה על־ברכי), and stretches out his hands to Yhwh (ואפרשׂה כפי אל־יהוה אלהי, 9.5). Kneeling is an act of submission and entreaty that may be performed before Yhwh or a superior political figure (Ps 94.6).[514] In the Hebrew Bible, however, the spreading of hands (פרשׂ כף) is reserved for prayer directed to the deity.[515] Notably, Ezra's bodily position as he prays is identical to that of Solomon at the momentous occasion of the Temple dedication ceremony (1 Kgs 8.54). On their knees, hands spread out before the Temple, Ezra and Solomon direct prayers of penitence to Yhwh. This parallel, that may well have been recognized by readers of the text, highlights Ezra's role as the mediator not only of the words of Yhwh *for* Israel but also of penitent Israel's petitions *to* Yhwh.

Similar postures of obeisance as those enacted by Ezra are evidenced in Meagan Cifarelli's description of neo-Assyrian iconography. Inferior non-Assyrian tributaries 'formally submitted and perhaps pledged fealty to the Assyrian king',

[514] Before Yhwh in Ps 95.6; Isa 45.23; Gen 24.48; and Neh 8.6, and before kings or men of status in 2 Kgs 1.13; Gen 27.29; 48.12; and 2 Sam 14.22; 18.28.
[515] See Exod 9.33; 1 Kgs 8.22,38; 2 Chr 6.12,13,29; Ps 44.21; Isa 1.15; Jer 4.31.

while surrendering combatants kneel and stretch out their hands in supplication.[516] These gestures, she observes, are similar to those assumed by Assyrians during prayer to the gods.[517] Raising the hands, albeit without crouching, is the 'very act by which the king would beseech the gods', and one that 'affirms the nearly divine powers of the king'.[518] These gestures configure status relationally: the king is dominant in relation to tributaries and subject peoples, but that dominance is sustained and legitimated by his own submission to the gods.[519]

Ezra's prayer is itself framed by physical postures that locate him – and the *golah* – in a subordinated position in relation to Yhwh. He declares himself unable to raise his face to God due to his shame and humiliation (בשׁתי ונכלמתי להרים אלהי פני אליך; 9.6), and ends the prayer affirming the collective inability of the *golah* to stand before God (אין לעמוד לפניך; 9.15b). Lifting the face and standing before a superior denotes a position of relative honour and status. Select servants stand before their masters, as do the priests and others who serve Yhwh.[520] The body is upright and straight, in contrast with the crouching, bent bodies of those who are unable to stand in the face of powerful enemies or the wrath of Yhwh.[521] Just as lowered heads and bent necks reference humiliation, inferior status, and 'moral wretchedness' in Mesopotamian

[516] Cifarelli, "Gesture and Alterity," 217.
[517] Tributaries are often represented with arms outstretched and fists closed, a position employed by Assyrians before the gods, while non-Assyrian combatants are portrayed with arms raised, and palms turned outward in a gesture of supplication. The lower the bodily position, the more intense and urgent the submission enacted; "Gesture and Alterity," 218.
[518] "Gesture and Alterity," 216. Contrary to representations of foreigners who are rendered crouching and low, Assyrians enact 'obedience without abasement' before the king and the gods by folding their hands while maintaining an upright position.
[519] On the Behistun inscription, Darius towers over numerous subjects, while stretching his arms to Ahuramazda. See Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (Winona Lake: Eisenbraun, 2002), 126.
[520] Deut 10.8; 2 Chr 29.11; 1 Kgs 17.1; 2 Kgs 3.14; Jer 15.19; Ezek 44.15;
[521] Judg 2.14; 2 Kgs 10.4; Ester 9.2; Dan 8.4;), or before Yhwh's wrath (Ps 76.7; Jer 49.19;50.44; Nah 1.6).

texts,[522] guilt and shame are performatively enacted in Ezra's affirmations of his inability to face and stand before the deity.

The third-person account of Ezra's mourning and penitence that follows the prayer in 10.1 more vividly describes his physical movements and bodily positioning: as he prays and confesses, Ezra throws himself (מתנפל) before the house of Yhwh (10.1). The verb נפל that describes Ezra's bodily movement toward the ground, is also evidenced in other contexts of mourning in the Hebrew Bible:[523] Job falls to the ground in mourning (1.20); Ezekiel falls upon his face before Yhwh in lament for the declared destruction of Israel (ואפלה על־פני; 9.8); Joshua tears his clothes and falls to his face (ויפל על־פניו; Josh 7.6) before the ark after defeat at the battle of Ai.[524] The term likewise describes the bodily posture of those defeated in battle: 'how the mighty have fallen', David cries at the death of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam 1.19); Isaiah announces 'fallen is Babylon' (Isa 21.92); while Amos wails 'fallen, no more to rise is maiden Israel (Am 5.2)'. It is also an act performed by an inferior party before one that is superior: Ruth falls before Boaz (2.10); Joseph's brothers fall before him (Gen 44.14); the king's subjects fall before him (2 Sam 1.2; 19.18).

In Assyrian iconography, as Assante observes, the image of the upright victor towering over the defeated enemy who 'lies helpless at his feet, literally fallen…stripped of his weapons and often his clothing', is a privileged portrayal of masculinity.[525] Ezra's prostration as he falls before the Temple similarly positions

[522] Cifarelli, "Gesture and Alterity," 215.
[523] The hithpael of נפל , however, is found only in Deut 9.18, 25; Gen 43.18, and Ezra 10.1. GenMayer I. Gruber, *Aspects of Nonverbal Communication in the Ancient Near East*, 2 vols., Studia Pohl (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980), 473-479.
[524] See also Num 20.6; Deut 9.25; Josh 7.6; Judg 13.20.
[525] Assante, "Men Looking at Men," 78-79.

him in helpless submission before Yhwh. The intensity of Ezra's actions is emphasized by the Hithpael participle of נפל: Ezra 'was throwing himself' before the house of Yhwh. Furthermore, the Hithpael form of the verb נפל is used in a ritual context only for Ezra and Moses. As does Ezra, so Moses prostrates himself before the deity in the face of the transgression of the Israelites (Deut 9.18,25): 'Then I lay threw myself down before Yhwh (ואתנפל לפני יהוה נפל)…because of the sin you had committed'.

A final aspect of Ezra's bodily postures and physical gestures to be considered in this chapter is his weeping, the vocalization of grief and mourning that accompanies his prayer, confession, and prostration (בכה; 10.1a). More than half the uses of בכה in the Hebrew Bible are found in contexts of mourning,[526] where it is often a public and vocal expression of emotion.[527] Its frequent association with קול – as in 'lifting the voice and weeping' – suggests that the vocal expression is a primary component of ritual weeping.[528] Ezra's mourning is not only a visual scenario for those around him, it also involves sound. [529]

Weeping is not typically associated with superior masculinity in modern Western contexts, as it evokes the image of a soft, open, unstable, 'leaky'

---

[526] Gruber, *Aspects of Nonverbal Communication*: 402-403. Mourners weep for the dead (Gen 23.2; 37.35; Deut 34.8; 2 Sam 1.12; 13.36; in sorrow or anguish (See Gen 21.16; Job 16.16; Isa 15.3,5; 16.9;22.4; Jer 9.10), and in petition and penitence (1 Sam 1.10; Neh 1.4; Ps 6.9; Esth 4.3; 8.3; Isa 38.3; Jer 50.4 Joel 2.12).

[527] See Gen 45.2; Num 11.10; Deut 1.45; 2 Kgs 22.19; 2 Chr 34.27; Ezra 3.13; Ps 6.8; Isa 65.19; Jer 3.21; 31.15. Private mourning is indicated in Gen 42.24; 43.30.

[528] As attested in the Hebrew Bible and in various Semitic languages, the root בכה does not describe the shedding of tears, but rather the vocal expression of intense emotion. See Vinzenz Hamp, "Bakkah," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol II*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Heinz-Josef Fabry (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 116-120. Gruber distinguishes the use of בכה to denote wailing where the raising of the voice is indicate; Gruber, *Aspects of Nonverbal Communication*: 8-9. Tears (דמעה) and weeping (בכה) are found together only five times in the Hebrew Bible, in Isa 16.9; Jer 8.23; 13.17; Lam 1.2; and Ezek 24.16.

[529] The term is often found in conjunction with קֵוֹל (Ezra 3.12; Ruth 1.9,14). See the phrase נשׂא קול ויבכה in Gen 21.16; 27.38; 29.11; Judg 21.2; Ruth 1.9,14; 2 Sam 13.36; Job 2.12.

feminine body. In the Hebrew Bible, however, weeping is a more nuanced and powerful act attributed to a range of gendered groups. Professional mourners called to weeping and lamentation, especially in the context of military defeat or national crisis, are often women,[530] but the term also describes used male weeping,[531] even the weeping of Yhwh.[532] Kirova argues that David's weeping in the book of Samuel does not evidence weakness or feminization, but rather functions as 'a powerful tool for moral and political influence over others'.[533] Thus, as Gary Ebersole rightly cautions, ritual weeping should be analysed in terms of the way in which it performs 'cultural work' and the way in which it marks out 'social and hierarchical relationships'.[534]

The 'cultural work' of Ezra's weeping, the ways in which it marks and constitutes social ties, are evidenced in the gathering of people reported in 10.1b. As Ezra weeps, mourns and confesses, a 'very great assembly of men, women, and children' (רב־מאד אנשים ונשים וילדים) gathers around him and weeps

[530] Scholars tend to attribute the role of professional mourning to women, as they are often referenced as such in biblical and extra-biblical texts. In his lamentation over the death of Saul and Jonathan, for instance, David calls on the 'daughters of Israel' to 'weep over Saul' (2 Sam 1.24). Women are ordered to teach other women to lament in Jer 9.19-20, while Ugaritic and Egyptian texts cast women as professional mourners. Marsden concludes that '…although both men and women mourned the dead, women were more prominent in the performance of wailing rites, often in a professional capacity': Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel*: 520-525. On the differences between male and female participation in Egyptian funeral laments, see Deborah Sweeney, "Walking Alone Forever, Following You: Gender and Mourners' Laments from Ancient Egypt," *NIN: Journal of Gender Studies in Antiquity* 2(2002): 27-48. Men are represented more frequently, while women are depicted as more emotional and vocal, she notes.

[531] Of the 115 uses of the root בכה, in only 16 cases is the subject of the verb a woman (Gen. 21.16; Deut 21.13; Judg 11.37-38;14.16-17; Ruth 1.9,14; 1 Sam 1.7-8,10; 2 Sam 1.24; Esth 8.3; Job 27.15; Jer 31.15; Ezek 8.14.

[532] Jer 9.1,9,18. On Yhwh's weeping, see David A. Bosworth, "The Tears of God in the Book of Jeremiah," *Biblica* 94(2013): 26-46.

[533] Kirova, "When Real Men Cry," 41.

[534] Gary L. Ebersole, "The Function of Ritual Weeping Revisited: Affective Expression and Moral Discourse," *History of Religions* 39, no. 3 (2000): 213-214. He cautions that occasions of ritual weeping must be studied in the context of 'the broader social discourses in which they participate as affective display, including discourses of social hierarchy, power, gender, class, race, and morality'. While Ebersole references tears specifically, his observations are pertinent to weeping in the Ezra text as they highlight the important social role of weeping.

intensely with him.[535] This group is incorporated into Ezra's weeping and into the gendered identities and power relations established in the doing of mourning. It separates itself from regular cultic activities that are carried out at the Temple (Ezra 9.4b-5a), joins Ezra in his mourning rites, and thereby distinguishes itself from the rest of the *golah*. Those who gather are marked not by cultic status or gender, but by their performance of mourning that locates them in a position of submission and self-debasement before the deity.

The subordination of these mourners is enacted by and on their bodies. They separate from and displace those that have heretofore been key players in the book of Ezra: the priests and the Levites. The sacrificial role, so important in the rest of the book, is marginal in relation to the performance of mourning in Ezra 9-10. Mourners stand before the Temple, but they do not sacrifice; their embodied humiliation, sorrow, and debasement are rendered in stark contrast to the daily sacrificial rituals going on within. Erect, dominant, contained priestly, political, and military bodies are displaced in favour of the community of tremblers, weepers, and exposed, prostrate, bare-faced men. This group of tremblers who stand in the rain (10.9,13), not only determines the fate of the foreign women and their children, it also exerts control over the masculinity of the women's *golah* husbands.

[535] The last phrase of 10.1b, כי־בכו העם הרבה־בכה, is somewhat ambiguous. Are the עם a group distinct from the 'men, women, and children' who gather around Ezra? Williamson and Clines suggest that the עם are already weeping with Ezra, and that it is the noise of their weeping that draws the men, women, and children to gather around Ezra; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 149; David J. A. Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 126. Olyan, however, reads with the Vulgate in which the group that gathers and the one that weeps are one and the same, an interpretation I am inclined to agree with; Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*: 68. In either case, the effect of Ezra's mourning is the incorporation of mourners around him who participate in his rituals of lament and self-debasement.

3.4 The Power of Mourning

I began this chapter by identifying the liminal position the *golah* inhabits in the book of Ezra, and especially in Ezra 9-10, as a context in which Ezra's embodied performance of mourning and lament should be located and signified. The community exists between a past of exile and a promised future possession of the land which is, in turn, threatened by the infidelity of the *golah*. Ezra's prayer announces, 'we have forsaken your commandments' (עזבנו מצותיך, 9.10), given by God to the prophets (9.11a). At risk, Ezra's prayer suggests, is not merely the possession of the land, but the very existence of the *golah*: 'shall we break your commandments again…? Would you not be angry with us until you destroy us without remnant or survivor?' (9.15).

The performance with which Ezra inhabits this ambiguous and liminal place deconstructs culturally dominant embodiments of masculine power and status. He materially modifies bodily markers of masculinity and subordinates his body to the deity. Furthermore, Ezra locates himself in a liminal place, by performing acts associated with mourning the dead.[536] The association with the dead, the deliberate reversal or rejection of ordinary behaviours, and the separation these behaviours effect from daily activities and celebrations, all mark mourning as a liminal state, that is, a marginal social and ritual location. Ezra's mourning rituals displace him from the social locations, roles and bodily traits that are expected of him as a priest, Torah scribe, and Persian emissary. Similarly, *golah* mourners are displaced from their roles within the social structure, which,

[536] Olyan observes that in the Hebrew Bible mourning is viewed 'as a phenomenon intimately linked to mourning the dead'; *Biblical Mourning*: 22. The same terminology is used for non-death and death related mourning behaviours (see Joel 1.8; Ps 34.13-14; Jer 6.26). Ezra's mourning, however, takes place in a sanctuary setting, where the dead may not be mourned.

as Susan Ackermann explains, involves displacement from the normative behaviours and markers of status.[537]

Becoming Mourners

It is important to emphasize that not only does Ezra mourn, he *becomes* a mourner, a distinct ritual status that separates him from the community of non-mourners and from the Temple and temple ritual. His embodied acts reconfigure the political and cultic performances and attributes associated with dominant masculinity. They transform what might have been a punitive performance of Ezra's authority and the corresponding humiliation of the guilty, into a process that effectively incorporates the *golah* into an alternative performance of masculinity. Catherine Bell's theory of ritualization is helpful for envisioning the power of Ezra's distinct performance of 'deconstructed' masculinity.[538]

Bell seeks to overcome the binary dualisms plaguing many ritual theories by exploring ritual as a particular form of bodily practice that is distinguished and privileged from other activities through 'strategies of ritualization'.[539] The characteristics often included in definitions of ritual, such as formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism, and performance, are in fact, she argues, some of the ways in which social practices are strategically distinguished, ritualized, in relation to the activities of daily life.[540]

---

[537] Susan Ackerman, *When Heroes Love: The Ambiguity of Eros in the Stories of Gilgamesh and David* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 216. See also Kruger who argues that mourning is itself 'inverted behaviour', that is contrary to 'commonly held cultural codes, values, and norms'; Paul Kruger, "The Inverse World of Mourning in the Hebrew Bible," *Biblische Notizen* 124(2005): 42. The properties of the liminal state of mourning Kruger describes include pain and suffering caused by such acts as pulling the beard and hair, tearing garments, and abstaining from food and drink; disregard for personal appearance, as when wearing torn clothes and mourning apparel; humility of position, enacted by sitting or lying on the ground; and the absence of rank.

[538] Bell, *Ritual Theory*.

[539] *Ritual Theory*: 74, 90.

[540] This involves, Bell explains, generating oppositions between ritualized activities and quotidian acts, a dynamic that involves the construction of 'schemes of binary oppositions' that are then

Kneeling is a common practice, for example, that is necessary for activities such as harvesting vegetables or digging a hole. Ezra's kneeling, however, is strategically ritualized: it takes place before the Temple, at the time of the evening sacrifice, and involves postures and gestures identified with obeisance and petition before the deity in similar contexts.[541]

Ritualization is most fundamentally about the production of a ritualized body, a body marked by its 'interaction with the structured and structuring environment', that is produced in the doing of ritual.[542] More specifically, ritualization, the strategies that distinguish specific social acts, is a 'specific embodiment and exercise of power' that configures power relations in culturally specific contexts and social situations.[543] This embodiment of power is often assumed, by virtue of its ritualization, to pertain to a higher, even divine, order.[544] Thus, contrary to some scholars who view Ezra's ritual performance as a means for compelling or obligating the community to act, Bell argues that ritualization does not exert social control, but is itself the 'production and negotiation of power relations.'[545] Ezra's ritualized embodied performance of mourning and penitence,

impressed on the bodies of participants. See Bell's discussion of ritualization and its effects in *Ritual Theory*: 90-106.

[541] Bell provides the example of the Eucharist as a ritualized meal; *Ritual Theory*: 90.

[542] *Ritual Theory*: 98-99.

[543] *Ritual Theory*: 182,110. 'Ritualization', Bell argues, 'is the way to construct power relations when the power is claimed to be from God…it is also the way for people to experience a vision of a community order that is personally empowering' (116). While Bell's analysis of ritual and ritualization is increasingly referenced by biblical scholars, her approach is not without critique. The dualisms she seeks to overcome are to a certain extent reproduced in her definition of ritualization as the drawing of hierarchical oppositions. Some scholars question her privileging of practice theory over performance studies, and her distinction between 'ritual' and 'ritualization'. Of significance for this study is an important shift away from viewing rituals as symbolic acts, and her rejection of symbols, beliefs and ideologies as universal, coherent systems. Bell's understanding of ritual as a 'strategic mode of practice' that is situational, dynamic, in continual tension as a 'strategic play of power, of domination and resistance, within the arena of the social body' is an important contribution to ritual studies (203). For an extensive critique of Bell's theory, see Ronald L. Grimes, "Performance Theory and the Study of Ritual," in *New Approaches to the Study of Religion. Volume 2: Textual, Comparative, Sociological, and Cognitive Approaches*, ed. Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz, and R. R. Warne (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 121-136.

[544] Bell, *Ritual Theory*: 110.

[545] *Ritual Theory*: 196.

reconfigures *golah* identity, power relations, masculine performance, and even male bodies.

Ezra's central role in the ritualization of the *golah* as a community of mourners is indicated by the narrator's privileged focus on his actions and prayer. The first-person narration in chapter 9 aligns readers and hearers with Ezra's viewpoint, his emotions, and his embodied response to the report of intermarriage. Throughout the text, moreover, different groups within the *golah* are drawn toward Ezra. The שׂרים draw near to Ezra (נגשׁו אלי) in 9.1 to report the infidelity of the *golah*, its priests, Levites, and laymen. The 'tremblers' gather toward him (אלי יאספו) in 9.4 and accompany – perhaps comfort him – in his mourning.[546] In 10.1b a larger group 'from out of Israel, a great assembly of men, women, and children', gathers toward Ezra (נקבצו אליו),

The listing of women and children as part of this last group is surprising in view of the debate that is waged in the text over the presence of specific women, designated as foreign, and their children, in the community. The ritual incorporation into Ezra's performance of mourning crosses gender boundaries. A distinction is not drawn between men and women, adults and children, priests or laypersons, or even between guilty and innocent, or pure and impure. The embodied movements of separation, aggregation, and incorporation that are

[546] Petitionary mourners often have comforters, Olyan notes; Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*: 73. Not unlike Job's comforters, those who gather around Ezra present an interpretation of the issue at hand. Unlike Job, Ezra appears to coincide with their position on the marriages. This group is distinguished from others that gather around Ezra by the suffixed preposition at the beginning of the clause, where a verb is expected (אלי יאספו; 9.4). The syntax contrasts with Ezra 9.1a, where the verb indicating movement toward Ezra is at the beginning of the clause (נגשׁו אלי) as in 10.1 (נקבצו אלו).

enacted as different groups participate in Ezra's mourning produce difference between mourners and non-mourners.

An even larger group gathers while Ezra mourns in the Temple chamber (10.6). A summons is made, presumably by the officials and elders,[547] for the *golah* to gather in Jerusalem within three days or risk expropriation of property (יחרם כל־רכושׁו) and separation (יבדל) from the assembly (10.7-8).[548] The gathering is not convened around Ezra's mourning – as he is in the priestly chamber when the order is issued – but by community leaders, and lack of compliance has severe consequences. Notably, while the married men are not threatened with expulsion from the *golah*, those who do not obey a direct order are thus threatened.

Three days later 'all the men of Judah and Benjamin' gather (קבצ) in the square before the Temple where they tremble (רעד) 'because of this matter and because of the heavy rain (מהגשׁמים)' (10.9).[549] Ezra, referred to here as 'the priest' for the first time in these chapters,[550] stands to address those gathered in the square before the Temple (10.10-11). Each of these gatherings takes place

[547] The penalty for not responding to the summons is attributed to counsel of the officials and elders (כעצת השׂרם והזקנים; 10.8).

[548] The term חרם is used within the 'conquest tradition' to refer to that which was to be 'devoted' to destruction/to Yhwh (Deut 7.2; Josh 6.17; 7.1,11). Williamson notes that it is also used for property that is devoted to the temple (Lev 27.21,28; Num 18.14; Ezek 44.29). He argues, thus, that in Ezra 10.7, the intent is that confiscated property is dedicated to the temple; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 154. The use of a term so prevalent where the 'conquest' of Canaan and destruction of its peoples is involved – it is used 22 times in the book of Joshua alone -, is suggestive in light of the various allusions to these cultural memories in Ezra 9-10.

[549] Also 10.13. The term is used in the Hebrew Bible for both rains of blessing (Ezek 34.26) and destruction (Ezek 13.11). Thus, while the rain may be reference to judgement as some scholars suggest, its more immediate function in the text is to produce a scenario in which the gathering takes place, one that is not only less than joyful, but also physically uncomfortable. This, in turn, explains the need to delay proceedings (10.13-14).

[550] In Ezra 9-10 the designation כהן is used for Ezra only in 10.10 where he addresses the people directly, and in 10.16 where he chooses men to carry out the investigation concerning the marriages. Significantly, Ezra the priest-scribe takes over the role of the priests, enacting separation and address the ritual crisis in which the community finds itself.

around, toward, or before Ezra, who is positioned between the people and the Temple of God (10.1; 19). As they gather around Ezra, they gather before Yhwh. The repetitive nature of these gatherings, addressed in literary critical studies as evidence of distinct sources, is seen in this analysis to perform a social function: the ritualization of the *golah* who become mourners with Ezra.

The final gathering, where all the men of Judah and Benjamin (כל־אנשׁי־יהודה ובנימן) stand 'trembling' in the square before the Temple, evokes the 'tremblers' who had previously gathered around Ezra (9.4). The participle מרעדים used in 10.9 portrays the people as fearful and physically trembling in the face of Yhwh or the expectation of imminent death.[551] Thus, not only has the physical state of 'trembling' spread to a larger group, it has grown in intensity. Interestingly it is only here, in a scene where the assembly is reduced to fear and trembling, that it is explicitly described as a male group (אנשׁים, 10.9). The men of the *golah*, all the men, are reduced to a state of fearful trembling as they stand before the house of Yhwh. The rain under which they stand adds an even more sombre note to the gathering; and evokes their vulnerability, exposure, and liminality.

The ritual incorporation of the *golah* around Ezra constitutes a new community, one marked by the performance of mourning, lament, and subordination to Yhwh. Olyan describes this social dynamic as one of group affiliation:

> Their acts of entering Ezra's physical proximity and embracing his ritual stance realize and signal an affiliation between Ezra and his supporters and between the individual members of the newly formed group. The group itself is created in the context of penitential petition by the very behaviour

[551] See Exod 15.15; Ps 55.6; 104.32; Dan 10.11. The Hiphil of רעד is used elsewhere only in Dan 10.11.

> of the individuals who choose to rally to Ezra and embrace mourning rites, thereby declaring their affiliation with him and his cause. The mourning and petition of Ezra and his followers separate them ritually from all others who are worshipping in the sanctuary and communicate to others their distinct political stance.[552]

While affiliation is indeed declared and communicated, I would argue that the semiotic quality that Olyan emphasizes (realize, signal, declare, communicate), is secondary to the embodied transformation of the participants into mourners. In Bell's terms, they are ritualized, their bodies are constituted, produced, in the doing of ritual. Their gendered identities and social status are performatively enacted by bowed, weeping, trembling bodies that stand in submission, vulnerability, and fear, before Yhwh. Mourning in Ezra 9-10, thus, 'constitute(s) a specific embodiment and exercise of power', one in which all the *golah* men are implicated.[553]

In the verses that follow, however, distinctions are made among the mourners. In 10.10-11, Ezra declares the entire *golah* have 'trespassed and married foreign women, and so increased the guilt of Israel' and must, therefore, separate from the peoples-of-the-land and the women. Despite the resounding response he receives from 'all the assembly': 'it is so we must do as you have said' (10.12), the very next verse makes a distinction between those who have transgressed and those who have not. The guilty are not 'all the *golah*' or the collective 'we' that responded to Ezra, but rather the 'many of us that have transgressed (הרבינו לפשׁעה, 10.13). This distinction prepares the way for the process proposed by the assembly to identify the guilty men from among the entire *golah* (10.14). The rain that in 10.9 materialized the dire situation of the

[552] Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*: 90.
[553] Bell, *Ritual Theory*: 170.

golah, becomes here part of the excuse to delay the proceedings and ensure that those who have married foreign women are properly identified.

> Let our officials (שׂרים) represent the who assembly, and let all in our towns who have taken foreign women come at appointed times, and with them the elders (זקנים) and judges (שׁפטים) of every town, until the fierce wrath of our God is averted from us (Ezra 10.14)

Significantly, there are no priests among the men who are to carry out this process. Neither do the men chosen by Ezra for this investigation include the priests.[554]

Problematizing Priestly Performance

Throughout Ezra 9-10, Ezra and the members of the *golah* who join in his mourning rites are spatially located in relation to the Temple, but never as participants in cultic activities.[555] While Ezra mourns and confesses before the Temple,[556] and while he addresses the trembling men of Judah and Benjamin in the square before the Temple (ברחוב בית האלהים; 10.9-11), sacrificial service continues in the Temple. This is suggested by the reference to the מנחה הערב in 9.4-5, the time of the evening sacrifice, at which Ezra begins his penitential prayer. The scene locates regular temple activity as a backdrop to Ezra's mourning and that of the community gathered toward him (9.4-5). Although Ezra

[554] While theoretically, priests may also be officials, elders, and heads of families, the fact that they are not mentioned, when their presence is prevalently noted in Ezra 1-6, is notable.

[555] The temple is the primary spatial marker for Ezra's performance (9.4,5;10.1,17). Ezra is positioned 'before the house of God' (לפני בית האלהים; 10.1), he withdraws from 'before the house of God' (מלפני בית האלהים) to mourn and fast in the priestly chamber (לשׁכת יהוחנן; 10,6); and, the *golah* gathers in the 'square of the house of God' (ברחוב בית האלהים;10.17).

[556] The temple is the primary spatial marker for Ezra's performance (9.4,5;10.1,17). Ezra is positioned 'before the house of God' (לפני בית האלהים; 10.1), he withdraws from 'before the house of God' (מלפני בית האלהים) to mourn and fast in the priestly chamber (לשׁכת יהוחנן; 10,6); and, the *golah* gathers in the 'square of the house of God' (ברחוב בית האלהים;10.17).

is a priest, he separates himself from the priests who sacrifice in the Temple, stands outside of it, and mourns.

Ezra's mourning is incompatible with regular temple service. As Olyan notes: 'one does not fast or wail when one rejoices in the sanctuary...one does not anoint oneself or sing joyous songs praising the deity when one sits on the ground to mourn'.[557] The staging of Ezra's mourning in the context of daily regular sacrificial activities and his mourning in the Temple chamber establishes a distinct contrast and separation between Ezra's ritual performance and that of the priests. It furthermore evokes a 'very present danger' to the divine presence that is enacted in the daily sacrificial ritual: grave transgression, Klawans observes, 'undoes what the daily sacrifice produces'.[558]

It is Ezra, not the priests (or even the prophets), who stands לִפְנֵי יהוה, where he laments, weeps and confesses, rather than offering sacrifices. The displacement of sacrifice in favour of mourning is even more explicit in 10.6 when Ezra moves into the priestly chamber – a sacred place – and fills it with mourning. In distinct contrast with the privileged participation granted priests, and in some cases other Israelites, in sacrificial meals, Ezra refrains from drinking and eating, while mourning in the Temple chamber.

Ezra is a priest, but he engages in no priestly activities. He refrains from offering sacrifices or even engaging in a sacrificial meal in the Temple chambers. He remains outside the Temple, apart from his incursion into the chamber by which he displaces sacrifice with mourning and guilt. He bares his body and

[557] Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*: 14.
[558] Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 71.

shaves his head, practices forbidden to priests in Ezekiel 44.18,20.[559] Moreover, his bodily postures and gestures render him an imperfect specimen of a man; he is bent and fallen, unable to stand.[560] He carries the guilt of the *golah* into the Temple precincts, much as the priests carry the iniquity of the people away from the Temple.[561]

Ezra addresses this guilt, however, not by offering sacrifices of reparation (as the priests do in 10.19) or atonement, but by acts of self-affliction and mourning. In this privileged space, one reserved for priests and temple servants, Ezra displaces fully clothed, bearded, 'whole', priestly masculine bodies, with his own razed head, bare chin, exposed, and weakened body. The masculinity embodied by Ezra is not the priestly masculinity protected by breeches, well-groomed beards, hair, and garments. It is not the masculinity of the holy officiants of the cult, who enter the sanctuary for celebration and commensality. Neither is it the upright, erect, masculinity of warriors, governors, emissaries and the kings of the empire, of edicts, emissaries, and royal scribes.

There is no specific indication that priests and Levites are present in the groups that gather toward Ezra in 9.4 and 10.1,[562] although the reference to 'all the men of Benjamin and Judah' in 10.9 would seem to include them. They are specifically indicated, however, at the head of the list of the men guilty of intermarriage; it is only they who offer a sacrifice for their guilt (10.19). This

[559] See also Lev 21.5 and Deut 14.1 where shaving and laceration is prohibited for all Israelites; Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*: 118-122.
[560] Lev 21.16-23.
[561] Lev 10.17; Exod 28.38
[562] They may be present but are not singled out.

sacrificial offering, viewed by some as a sign of their repentance, highlights the severity of their transgression.[563]

Intermarriage, and the 'intermingling' of the holy seed that results from these marriages, is a particularly grievous fault for priests, who are to ensure not only the integrity of their lineage but also the holiness of their bodies (9.2). While the restrictions prescribed in Leviticus 21.14-15 that preclude marriage to a non-Israelite woman are applicable only to the high priest, Ezekiel 44.22 broadens this restriction to all the descendants of Zadok (Ezek 44.15). This marriage restriction is tied directly to the function of the priests as those who enter the sanctuary and approach Yhwh (44.16). It is a ritual status that bears with it a responsibility, to 'teach my people the difference between the holy and the common…the unclean and the clean' (44.23).

When judged from the perspective of Ezekiel 44 and the implications of intermarriage for the ritual status of the seed of the *golah* (and the land; 9.2,11) – intermingling (התערב), contamination (נדה, טמאה) – the priests stand out as having committed a particularly grievous fault. Their participation in intermarriage not only transgresses the Torah commands that prohibit intermarriage with local nations but it also threatens to blur the boundaries between holy and common, pure and impure that are indispensable for ensuring the presence of Yhwh in the Temple and amid the people (cf. Ezek 22.26).[564]

[563] Moffatt argues that all the men offered similar sacrifices, but the text only mentions the אשם in the case of the high priestly family of Joshua (10.18-19); Cf. Moffatt, *Ezra's Social Drama*: 130.

[564] Ezekiel accuses the priests of neglecting their responsibilities, they have profaned 'my holy things' and have not maintained appropriate ritual distinctions nor taught them to the people (Ezek 22.26). Along with the prophets, officials, and peoples of the land, the priests are held responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem (22.30-31). On the relationship between Ezra and Ezekiel, see Blenkinsopp who argues that 'Ezra's agenda corresponded closely to the theology of the school of Ezekiel and was probably influenced by it'; Blenkinsopp, *Judaism, the First Phase*: 133,125-128.

In a move evocative of the prophetic critique of cultic ritual, Ezra 9-10 calls for a new way of being (male) Israel, one that begins to displace the Temple cult as the sole locus of fidelity to Yhwh by privileging obedience to commandments concerned with the social and kinship ties of the community (9.11). The covenant with Yhwh and the call to expel the women and children as part of this covenant is attributed in 10.3b to the counsel of Ezra and of those who 'tremble at the commandments of God'; it is furthermore to be carried out 'according to the Torah' (כתורה).[565]

The centrality of the priesthood is called into question, therefore, not only by their participation in intermarriage, but also by the fact that they were unwilling or unable to identify the problem by which impurity had entered the realm of the holy, and deal with it. Their competence in matters of Torah cultic prescriptions, evident in Ezra 3, does not extend, it would seem, to other issues. Furthermore, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, the status of holy seed ascribed to the entire *golah* – the 'democratization' of holiness – deprives them of this privileged cultic status.

Thus, in contrast to Ezra 1-6 that is focused on the restoration of the altar and sacrificial service (3.1-11), the building of the Temple (chapters 5-6) and the establishment of priests and Levites in their appropriate positions (6.18b), ritual performance in Ezra 9-10 takes place outside the Temple. It is in the background, rather than the foreground of the narrative. A new kind of priesthood is being articulated here, I would suggest, one that reconfigures the relationship between the sacrificial cult and the scribal Torah.

[565] A phrase that alludes to the setting up of the altar by Joshua the priest and Zerubabel, to sacrifice on it 'as written in the Torah (ככתוב בתורה) of Moses the man of God' (Ezra 3.2)

Ezra's 'inverse world of mourning' is made powerful by his transfer of absolute fealty to the god Yhwh. In his submission to Yhwh, Ezra is set above all other men, even, as I argue in the next chapter, the kings of Persia. The 'non-masculine' markers and postures of Ezra's body that locate him as subject to Yhwh, authorize him as the mediator of Yhwh's words and will for the *golah*. Ezra embodies and models a distinct configuration of masculinity for the *golah* that inhabits the liminal status of foreign domination by claiming a privileged position before Yhwh – one that requires subordination and self-affliction, even to the extent of agreeing to give up their families. The subordination of the *golah* likewise has implications for the masculinity of Yhwh; to these I turn in the next chapter.

Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that Ezra's performance of masculinity modifies his body and reconfigures the bodies, social roles, and performances of *golah* men. Like Moses and kings David, Hezekiah, and Josiah, mourning and humiliation locate Ezra in a privileged position before Yhwh, a position that has social, religious and political implications. As a mourner, Ezra the scribe and priest steers power away from the priestly class and temple sacrifice as the means of approaching Yhwh, toward his own scribal mediation of the Torah. The deconstructed bodies of the men of the *golah* are reconfigured into a distinct relationship of power by which they embody a privileged relationship to the deity. In the aftermath of exile and the destruction of the Temple, however, the masculinity of Yhwh – his ability to provide and protect his people – is in question and requires rehabilitation.

Chapter 4 The Masculinization of Yhwh

Ezra is a priest, scribe, and imperial emissary, but he is depicted as subordinating himself to Yhwh, not to Persia, and to mediate the commands of Yhwh, not the דת of the Persian king. Ezra positions the *golah*, similarly, before Yhwh, the mover of kings, and it is in the hands of Yhwh, Ezra affirms, that the future of the *golah* resides (9.14-15). Yhwh's supreme masculine status, evidenced in his control over the events that led to exile and 'return', is crucial to *golah* identity, therefore, and its claims to priority over the indigenous inhabitants of Yehud and other peoples in the region (Ezra 4.1-4).

Claims to Yhwh's dominant masculinity sit uncomfortably, however, amid the backstory of exile that runs throughout the book and introduces Ezra's prayer (9.7). A deity unable to protect and provide for the *golah* and ensure its possession of the land, or not strong enough to prevail over the kings of the nations, would render the *golah* vulnerable and insignificant in the midst of the peoples-of-the-lands and other claimants to the identity and heritage of Israel. As Ilona Zsolnay argues, a patriarch or ruler, 'can only maintain his authority if he has convinced his family as well as his society that he is worthy/able to embody, maintain, and sustain that power'.[566] Thus, Yhwh must be proven to be good at 'being a male god'.[567] The ongoing condition of imperial domination in which the *golah* resides, however, calls into question Yhwh's ability to rescue, provide, and protect his people.

Yhwh's dominant status and his superior masculine performance are assumed by most readers of the biblical text. Dominant masculinity however, as

[566] Zsolnay, "Introduction," 19.
[567] See Stone, *Lovers and Raisin Cakes*: 125.

discussed throughout this thesis, is not an accomplished state, but rather a relational performance that is negotiated, contested, and in need of continual affirmation. Furthermore, claims to masculinity, and to the honour inherent in hierarchically dominant masculine status and performance, requires, as Johanna Stiebert explains, 'acknowledgement of the claim', and continual reassertion and contestation in 'zero sum competitions'.[568] Lipka notes that

> Once a man did succeed in achieving hegemonic masculinity, there was always the fear that something or someone could come along and undermine his masculine performance…those who don't perform the hegemonic masculine ideal satisfactorily are viewed as being associated with lesser, sometimes subordinate masculinities on the spectrum, which means in practical terms a loss in social power and prestige.[569]

Problematically, Yhwh's actions are not in evidence in Ezra 9-10; he does not speak, he does not intervene in the affairs of the *golah*. Neither are there battlefields – either mythic or 'worldly' – in which Yhwh may display warrior skills, no sponsored dynasty through which to order the world, execute justice and provide for his people. A distinct performance of masculinity is required, one that secures the position of this god and assures his subject people of his presence and ability to provide and protect them.[570]

4.1 The Silent God of Ezra 9-10

In the book of Ezra, neither speech nor actions are attributed to Yhwh directly by the narrator and there are no direct interventions by this deity. While Ezra 1.1 announces that temple building is a fulfilment of the 'word of Yhwh by

[568] That is, masculine honour is gained only by depriving that of another man. Stiebert, *Fathers and Daughters in the Hebrew Bible*: 215-216.
[569] Lipka, "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks," 276.
[570] Unlike Deut-Isa, where Yhwh is depicted as a warrior (Isa 42.13), and where Cyrus is engaged to wage a battle against the nations and restore Jerusalem (45.1).

the mouth of Jeremiah' (1.1),[571] a word announced in the past, words from Yhwh announced in the present of the text are sorely lacking. He is never the subject of the verbs אמר or דבר, Becking observes, and seldom is he the subject of a verbal clause.[572] Furthermore, Yhwh's actions in the book of Ezra are indirect and limited to the realm of temple building: he 'stirs up the spirit' (העיר את־רוח) of Cyrus to build his temple (1.1), and 'stirs up the spirit' (העיר את־רוח) of the *golah* to go up to Jerusalem to participate in this task (1.5). In 6.22, Yhwh gladdens (שׂמחם) the *golah* by turning the heart (הסב לב) of the king of Assyria. But throughout most of the book, Yhwh's involvement is indirect and instrumental; he works through others – Persian kings, prophets, the scribe Ezra – to carry out that which is, presumably, his intent.[573]

While Yhwh is the (alleged) aggrieved party in Ezra 9-10, no actions or speech are attributed to him. There is no indication that he is aware of, much less affected by, the marriages that have taken place. The first-person point of view in Ezra 9 contributes to the elusiveness of the deity; the narrator's voice is taken over by Ezra himself. Yhwh is present only as Ezra presents and represents him. But narratorial silence concerning Yhwh's acts and speech continues in chapter 10, where it is up to the characters in the text to ascertain the appropriate response that is expected by the deity.

[571] On the reference to Jer rather than Deut-Isa who uses similar terminology to refer to Cyrus (Isa 41.2,25; 45.13), see Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 9-10.
[572] Becking, "Reflections on the Silence of God," 15.
[573] Indirectly Yhwh is described as being 'over' Haggai and Zechariah as they work to get temple building started up again in 5.1-2 and watching over the elders of the Jews when questioned by regional authorities in 5.5. Likewise, Ezra's favour before the king (7.6), and his successful journey to Jerusalem (7.9), are attributed to the 'gracious hand of Yhwh' that was upon him. There is no direct involvement, however, in the matters at hand.

Yhwh's lack of response to Ezra's prayer and ritual performance before the house of Yhwh renders this silence even more noticeable. Ezra prays at the 'time of the evening sacrifice (ערב מנחה)' (9.5), and before the Temple – privileged temporal and spatial markers of divine presence.[574] The gestures that introduce his prayer, kneeling with hands outstretched, are also consistent with direct address to the deity.[575] The repeated use of the intimate vocative form 'My God', 'Our God',[576] further orients readers and hearers to Ezra's intent that Yhwh hear and respond to the prayer.[577] These gestures evoke those of Solomon's temple dedication prayer that requests Yhwh's presence and response to the penitential prayers and self-affliction of his people in times of distress: '…hear (שׁמע) the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place; may you hear (שׁמע) from heaven your dwelling place; hear (שׁמע) and forgive' (2 Chr 6.21; cf. 1 Kgs 8.52). Clearly, a response is expected when prayers of penitence are directed to Yhwh.

As is often commented by scholars, Ezra's prayer is more akin to a sermon directed at the community than an address to Yhwh.[578] It makes no explicit

---

[574] Elijah's prayer on Mount Carmel, also at the time of the מנחה, and the response that he receives, suggest that this was a particularly efficacious time for prayer (1 Kgs 18.36-38; see also Dan 9.21; Jdt 9.1). On daily sacrifice and prayer in the Hebrew Bible and early Jewish texts, see Jeremy Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer in Second Temple Period Judaism*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 35-70. He argues that before daily prayer became established, 'prayer was coordinated to coincide with the timing of the cultic service' (70).

[575] Raising the hands is a frequent gesture when addressing the deity, both in praise and supplication. See David Calabro, "Gestures of Praise: Lifting and Spreading the Hands in Biblical Prayer," in *Ascending the Mountain of the Lord: Temple, Praise, and Worship in the Old Testament*, ed. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Matthew J. Grey, and David Rolph Seely (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013), 106-116.

[576] 9.6a,b: אלהי; 9.10: אלהנו; 9.13: אלהנו; 9.13: יהוה אלהי ישׂראל

[577] Bautch notes that the emphasis on guilt and sin confront the sinner with the deity; Richard J. Bautch, *Developments in Genre between Post-Exilic Penitential Prayers and the Psalms of Communal Lament*, Academia Biblica (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 75.

[578] As noted in *Developments in Genre*: 84; Harm van Grol, "Exegesis of Exile – Exegesis of Scripture? Ezra 9: 6-9," in *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel*, ed. Johannes C. de Moor (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1998), 33-36; "'Indeed, Servants We Are': Ezra 9, Nehemiah 9 and 2 Chronicles 12 Compared," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times*, ed. Bob Becking and Marjo C. A. Korpel (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999), 210;

request of Yhwh,[579] and while it speaks to Yhwh, it also informs listeners about Yhwh. Such shifting address is not unusual in biblical prayers and psalms, Derek Suderman observes, as he challenges scholars to adjust their 'definition' of prayer.[580] Not only does the community 'overhear' what is said to the deity, the deity 'overhears' what is said to the community.[581] Often, however, 'the implied human observers…do not just overhear, but hear; not only does the psalmist address God, but people are addressed directly'.[582] Ezra's prayer is clearly public and intends to be heard by those around him, but the social dimension of the prayer does not exclude Yhwh as one of its intended hearers. A response is expected not only from the community but from Yhwh as well.[583]

The social dimension of Ezra's ritual performance is inextricably tied to the fact that it is before the deity that he performs self-abasement, and it is from the deity that a response is expected. Olyan observes that the 'instrumental purpose' of rites of self-affliction is, precisely, 'to get noticed and elicit a positive, active response from Yhwh or human authority.'[584] Numerous biblical texts offer

---

Mark J. Boda, *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 37.

[579] Unlike penitential prayers in Nehemiah 9 and Daniel 9, Ezra makes no explicit request of Yhwh. This does not mean that Yhwh is omitted from the intended 'audience' of the prayer, however. Olyan describes Ezra's mourning as petitionary mourning, which has various purposes, all of which involve a response from the deity: 'to reverse the deity's decision to punish the people, or to seek Yhwh's guidance by means of an oracle or revelation, or to solicit the deity's help in a situation of personal difficulty'; Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*: 73.

[580] W. Derek Suderman, "Prayers Heard and Overheard: Shifting Address and Methodological Matrices in Psalms Scholarship" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of St. Michael's College, 2007), 209-210.

[581] "Prayers Heard and Overheard," 209. Suderman focuses on psalms of individual complaint, but the argument is apropos here as well. While the prayer is directed to Yhwh, Ezra also speaks to the community in the prayer, the shifting address does not interrupt speech to Yhwh, but rather broadens the dialogue with Yhwh to include the community.

[582] "Prayers Heard and Overheard," 212.

[583] Olyan describes Ezra's mourning as petitionary mourning, which has various purposes, all of which involve a response from the deity: 'to reverse the deity's decision to punish the people, or to seek Yhwh's guidance by means of an oracle or revelation, or to solicit the deity's help in a situation of personal difficulty'; Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*: 73. See also Grol, "Exegesis of Exile," 32-33.

[584] Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*: 75.

examples of just such an expectation.[585] In Joel 2.12, Yhwh encourages his people to 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning', in order that he might 'relent from sending calamity' (2.14). Ahab's mourning and fasting, tearing of garments and laying in sackcloth (1 Kgs 21.27), and Josiah's penitence, humiliation, weeping and tearing of garments (2 Kgs 22.19-20), are noticed by Yhwh, who offers a reprieve from disaster.[586] Ezra 8.23 recalls Yhwh's response to fasting and prayer before Ezra's journey to Jerusalem: 'we fasted and petitioned our God about this, *and he answered* (ויעתר לנו) our prayer*'* (Ezra 8.23).[587]

Once in Jerusalem, confronted with a crisis, there is no similar response to Ezra's prayer and fasting, however. The self-afflicted, humiliated, and deconstructed bodies of Ezra and the *golah* do not merit a response from the deity.[588] Such unresponsiveness stands in stark contrast to the divine spectacle prompted by Solomon's prayer, which is acknowledged by fire from heaven (2 Chr 7.1).[589] The situation is all the more in evidence when the response to Ezra's prayer comes not from Yhwh, but from a member of the *golah:* it is Shecaniah who is the subject of the verb ענה, and not Yhwh (10.2). He calls for a 'covenant

[585] Olyan cites various texts in which petitionary mourners, both penitential and non-penitential, seek and generally receive, a response from Yhwh. Among these, 2 Chr 20.1-19; 1 Sam 1; and Jonah 3.7-8; *Biblical Mourning*: 70-75.
[586] Yhwh says to Elijah, 'have you not seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? (1 Kgs 21.29a), and through Huldah, Yhwh assures Josiah, 'I also have heard you' (2 Kgs 22.19b).
[587] Emphasis added; cf. Gen 25.21; 1 Chr 5.20; Isa 19.22.
[588] Yhwh's lack of response is evidenced in various other texts as well. In 2 Sam 12.22-23, David mourns, fasts, and weeps for his son, but receives no answer from Yhwh. In Isa 58.3, the people complain that Yhwh does not see or hear their fasting and affliction. Saul seeks Yhwh when faced by the Philistines in 1 Sam 28.6-7, receives no response, and goes to the woman of Endor to seek advice from Samuel's spirit.
[589] Confession of sin in the face of various tragic circumstances (1 Kgs 8.33,35,37,41-42,44,46) is to receive a response from Yhwh when confessed (vv.34,36,38-39,43,45,49-50). In the Chronicler's account (2 Chr 6.12-42), Yhwh responds dramatically to Solomon's prayer: 'fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices and the glory of Yhwh filled the temple' (2 Chr 7.1). Similarly, the prayers of Moses and Daniel receive a response from Yhwh. Moses' prayer engages Yhwh in dialogue (Deut 9.19; 10.1); Daniel receives a visit from Gabriel, who brings him special knowledge and understanding (Dan 10.20-27).

with our God to expel the women and those born from them' (10.3), and for Ezra to 'take action' (10.4).

A renewed attempt at evoking a response from the deity is suggested by Ezra's movement into the priestly chamber in 10.6. In the relative privacy of this chamber, Ezra mourns and fasts throughout the night.[590] This sojourn in the Temple chamber evidences many of the elements Juliette Harrison includes in her definition of an incubation ritual: 'a practice in which a person performs a ritual act and then sleeps in a sacred place, with the deliberate intention of receiving a divine dream.'[591] Ezra's movement into this space is quite intentional (he moves from before the Temple, to the priestly chamber in 10.6a). In this sacred place, he refuses food and drink as he mourns for an extended period of time, perhaps spending the night.[592] What is absent in the text is a response from the deity: there is no dream, no revelation for Ezra as he mourns in the Temple.

The presence of incubation rituals in the Hebrew Bible is disputed by scholars, but various texts narrate what may be described as 'incubation-like' events, all of which seek, and many of which receive, a message from the deity.[593] Jacob and Solomon receive visions from Yhwh in the night with

[590] Scholars have attempted to explain the continued mourning on Ezra's part after an oath has been made to expel the women (10.3-5). My focus on Yhwh and his silence in the text, suggests that Ezra continues to seek acknowledgement from his god.

[591] Juliette Harrisson, "The Development of the Practice of Incubation in the Ancient World," in *Medicine and Healing in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, ed. Dēmētrēs Michaēlidēs (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), 286. She emphasizes the importance of the intentionality of the act (285).

[592] The phrase 'spent the night' is not in the MT. As noted above, 1 Esdras 9.2 adds that Ezra spent the night (αὐλίζομαι) in the temple chamber. The emphasis on his abstinence from food and drink also suggests that a significant amount of time goes by. This sojourn in the temple chamber includes many of the characteristics identified by Koowon Kim in West Asian, Hellenistic and biblical incubation accounts. Among these are the preparatory rituals, including 'prayers, weeping, fasting, feasting, libation, incense, animal sacrifice, silence, putting on a special garment, going naked, suspension of daily routine...'. Koowon Kim, *Incubation as a Type-Scene in the Aqhatu, Kirta, and Hannah Stories: A Form-Critical and Narratological Study of Ktu 1.14 I-1.15 III, 1.17 I-II, and 1 Samuel 1: 1-2: 11*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum (Boston; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 27-60.

[593] Bar identifies incubation dreams in 1 Kgs 3.4-15; Gen 46.1-5; and argues that 'traces of incubation' may be found in Num 22-24; Isa 65.4; Gen 15 and 1 Sam 3. See Shaul Bar,

messages of guidance and assurance (Gen 46.1-4; 2 Chr 1.1-13). Balaam similarly receives guidance from Yhwh after seeking him out at night (Num. 22.20), and in 1 Samuel 1.9-18, Yhwh responds to Hannah's request for a son after her sojourn before the sanctuary.[594] The elements Ezra 10 shares with 'incubation-like' rituals where Yhwh *does* respond, more pointedly highlight Yhwh's silence in Ezra 9-10.[595]

A response to Ezra's mourning in the Temple chamber comes not from Yhwh, but from the officials and elders who take matters into their own hands as they order the בני הגולה to gather in Jerusalem. (Ezra 10.7-8). In the square before the Temple, standing in the rain, uncertainty, mourning, and trembling continue, as does Yhwh's silence (10.9). This silence does not necessarily mean Yhwh is absent, but it does raise doubts concerning his interest, involvement, and commitment, and even, perhaps, his ability to respond to the cries of this community. His silence is especially problematic for those of the *golah* who claim privilege based on Yhwh's presence in the Temple and in Jerusalem. Disputed claims to temple building were settled previously by imperial edicts (Ezra 4-6), but if Yhwh makes no appearance and offers no response, on what basis are *golah* claims to land and temple to be affirmed?

"Incubation and Traces of Incubation in the Biblical Narrative," *Old Testament Essays* 28, no. 2 (2015): 244-256. Ackerman finds incubation rituals in several other texts, including Gen 28.10-22; 1 Sam 28.6; and 2 Sam 12.15-23, which she analyses in light of Ugaritic and Greek incubation accounts. See Susan Ackerman, "The Deception of Isaac, Jacob's Dream at Bethel, and Incubation on an Animal Skin," in *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel*, ed. Gary A. Anderson and Saul M. Olyan (Sheffield, England: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1991), 108-120.

[594] Several ritual acts in this narrative – weeping, refusing to eat, standing before the temple, oath making, and praying – are also present in Ezra's appeal to Yhwh in Ezra 10.1-6.

[595] Saul suffers a similar fate in 1 Sam 28.6. He seeks Yhwh through incubation-like rituals and receives no response: 'Yhwh did not answer him, not by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets.' Saul must resort to inquiring of Samuel through a medium (1 Sam 28.16).

The silence and absence of Yhwh trigger great concern throughout the Hebrew Bible and is a particularly prominent motif in exilic and post-exilic literature. The psalmist cries to Yhwh 'why do you sleep…why do you hide your face...' (Ps 44.24-5). Zion cries out 'Why have you forgotten us completely? Why have you forsaken us these many days?' (Lam 5.20); 'Yhwh has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me' (Isa 49.14). The lack of response from the deity to rites of self-affliction and entreaty generates anguish, 'why do we fast, when you do not see? Afflict ourselves, when you do not hear?' (Isa 58.3).[596] Accusers suggest that Yhwh is 'deliberately absent or voluntarily uninvolved', Dalit Rom-Shiloni comments, and is intentionally 'ignoring our affliction and distress' (Ps 44.25).[597] Yhwh's admission in Isaiah 54.8 that he had abandoned Israel, hiding his face 'for a brief moment' (ברגע קטן), leaves open the problematic notion that Yhwh may have abandoned his people intentionally.[598] Or was he forced to do so?

While it might be assumed that at the conclusion of the Temple building account in Ezra 6, Yhwh took up residence in the house built for him, this is not stated in the text. Unlike other biblical and ancient West Asian temple building accounts, with which Ezra 1-6 has been compared by various scholars,[599] there

[596] The Babylonian writer of the 'Poem of the righteous sufferer' expresses a similar concern: 'I called to my god, he did not show his face, I prayed to my goddess, she did not raise her head'. The sufferer seeks out various intermediaries to enlighten him concerning his situation, to no avail. See Benjamin R. Foster, "The Poem of the Righteous Sufferer," in *Context of Scripture*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), 1.153:488.

[597] Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Socio-Ideological *Setting* or *Settings* for Penitential Prayers?," in *Seeking the Favor of God Vol. 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney Alan Werline (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 59.

[598] Yhwh's salvation in Ezra 9.8 is likewise tentative, for 'a brief moment' (כמעט־רגע), as translated by Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 125; Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*: 123; Grol, "Exegesis of Exile," 35.. The phrase describes the *golah's* situation, McConville argues, as one of 'qualified privilege'; J.G. McConville, "Ezra-Nehemiah and the Fulfilment of Prophecy," *Vetus Testamentum* 36, no. 2 (1986): 209. Blenkinsopp prefers the translation 'suddenly', that avoids the implication that 'the time of grace will not last long'; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 181.

[599] See Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple*: 159-162; Lisbeth Fried, "The Land Lay Desolate: Conquest and Restoration in the Ancient near East," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschitz and Joseph Blenkinsopp (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 33-52; Laird, *Negotiating Power in Ezra-Nehemiah*: 61-74; Victor Hurowitz, *I Have Built*

is no notice in Ezra 6 that Yhwh has inhabited his temple. Sumerian, Assyrian, and Babylonian building accounts usually conclude with the indwelling of the deity,[600] an occasion vividly described in biblical temple building accounts by the arrival of Yhwh's כבוד.[601] The book of Ezra, as Hurovitz observes, 'contains no reference to the crucial event of God's entry into the Temple, nor to the installation in the Temple of any symbol of divine presence'.[602] The absence of such an indication cannot but generate uncertainty concerning the place of Yhwh's dwelling, especially where there are allusions to disputed Yahwistic cultic centres.[603]

4.2 The Problem of the Exile for the Masculinity of Yhwh

Despite the fact that Yhwh's entrance into the Temple is not explicitly indicated in Ezra 6, Lisbeth Fried argues that Cyrus's return of the vessels signals Yhwh's willingness to 'take up housekeeping' in the Temple that is to be built.[604] This indicates, she suggests, that the initiative for temple building, and for Yhwh's return to Jerusalem, comes from Yhwh – although 'practically speaking…the king who controls the image actually returns it'.[605] For Isaiah, Fried argues, the return of the Temple vessels is 'visible proof that God himself is returning to his Temple

You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 113-118.

[600] *I Have Built You an Exalted House*: 44-45,272,298.

[601] Exod 40.34, 1 Kgs 8.11; 2 Chr 5.14;[601] 7.1-3; Ezek 43.1-7. Alan Hooker associates Yhwh's כבוד with his masculinity, a 'manifestation of the divine for the purpose of conquering peoples and seizing land'; Hooker, "'Show Me Your Glory': The Kabod of Yahweh as Phallic Manifestation?," 30.

[602] Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*: 268.

[603] The book of Ezra references the worship of Yhwh outside the Jerusalem temple in Ezra 4.1-4 where the people of the land seek to join in temple building and confess that they worship Yhwh. The absence of any critique of the peoples of the lands that concerns the worship of other gods is also telling, especially in 9.1-2,11-14.

[604] See Ezra 1.7-11; 5.14-15. Fried, "The Land Lay Desolate," 51.

[605] "The Land Lay Desolate," 51.

in Jerusalem' (Isa 52.8).[606] Such conclusions point to the fine line biblical writers writers (and interpreters) must walk as they attempt to assure readers of Yhwh's presence in the guise of temple vessels that are not – assuredly not – cultic statues of the deity.

Bob Becking also looks to the Temple vessels to resolve the issue of Yhwh's absence in the book of Ezra. These are not Yhwh's cult statue, he indicates, but a 'symbolic Presence', an 'aniconic representation of the divine and…silent witness to the inscrutable presence of God'.[607] While Becking observes the political realities behind the manipulation of cultic icons, vessels and statues, his discussion of Yhwh and the Temple vessels veers away from the material and political and into the realm of the symbolic. He posits that the vessels

> …indicate how Yhwh disappeared in exile and the way He returned from exile as an inconceivable mystery that can be represented by an image, an icon, his Glory or by the cult vessels…Cultic vessels are mute, they do not speak for themselves, they communicate the silent God and people are invited to hear the subtext.[608]

The vessels, as posited by Becking, function as a signifier, a sign that communicates a reality external to itself. Such a distinction, however, is alien to the ancient West Asian context, Zainab Bahrani explains: 'an image is not a copy of something in reality, it is itself a real thing'.[609] An image is not a symbolic presence, a notion that, as Nathaniel Levtow argues, 'bases its view of deity, the

[606] "Cyrus the Messiah? The Historical Background to Isaiah 45: 1," *Harvard Theological Review* 95, no. 4 (2002): 377.
[607] The designation 'symbolic presence', Becking readily admits, has its roots in liberal Protestantism. Becking, "Reflections on the Silence of God," 26.
[608] "Reflections on the Silence of God," 28.
[609] Zainab Bahrani, *The Graven Image: Representation in Babylonia and Assyria* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 127.

world, and all of reality on the priority and veracity of the non-physical over the physical, of thought over action, and of belief over practice'.[610]

Furthermore, this understanding of the Temple vessels avoids dealing with the political and material implications of exile, conquest, and destruction for the status and masculinity of a national god of Israel. It should not be assumed that for the writers of the book of Ezra, or in the narrative world they construct, Yhwh's disappearance and return are 'inconceivable mysteries.' On the contrary, in ancient West Asian and biblical texts, city destruction, the removal of temple vessels, icons and cultic statues, and the captivity of a people had concrete explanations. Prevalent among these explanations was divine abandonment, specifically the despoliation of temples and removal of cultic icons by superior conquering kings and their gods.[611] It is precisely in light of this context that Yhwh's challenged masculinity must be rehabilitated.

The scenario described in the book of Ezra is one of conquest and temple despoliation. The vessels Cyrus returns to Jerusalem are those that 'Nebuchadnezzar had carried away (הוציא) from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods' (1.7),[612] and the men who 'came up from the captivity of the exiles (משבי הגולה)' are those that 'Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon led into exile (הגלה) to Babylon' (Ezra 2.1). The story of the Temple vessels is the story of the Exile of Judah and its deity. It is reiterated in Ezra 5.12 by the elders of the

[610] Nathaniel B. Levtow, *Images of Others: Iconic Politics in Ancient Israel*, Biblical and Judaic Studies (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 14.
[611] Icon abduction and destruction were common Mesopotamian practices of military conquest, Levtow notes; *Images of Others*: 101. The practice is also attested in the Levant, and reflected in the Hebrew Bible, (e.g. Judg 18.24; 2 Sam 5.21; 2 Chr 25.24-26; Jer 48.7). See Theodore J. Lewis, "Syro-Palestinian Iconography and Divine Images," in *Cult Image and Divine Representation in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Neal H. Walls (Boston: ASOR, 2005), 100.
[612] Cf. 2 Kgs 24.13. The same term (הוציא) describes the removal from the Jerusalem temple of the vessels of Baal and Asherah during Josiah's reform (2 Kgs 23.4).

Jews who identify the Temple they are building as the one destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, the king who also 'deported the people to Babylon', along with the gold and silver vessels from the house of Yhwh that he transferred to the 'the temple in Babylon'.[613]

It is this scenario of conquest that Ezra describes in his prayer: '…we, our kings and our priests have been handed over to the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, *as is now the case*' (9.7b).[614] Captivity, plundering, and sword, the signs of the absence of the deity are not only a thing of the past; Ezra makes it clear that they continue into the present, a present in which the *golah* resides in slavery to an imperial overlord (Ezra 9.8b-9a).[615]

A common motif in ancient West Asian texts for the departure of the deity from his or her temple and people is the anger of the god, frequently for the misdeeds of his or her people.[616] This is the explanation for Yhwh's silence and abandonment during the Exile offered in Ezra 5.12: 'because our ancestors angered the God of heaven, he gave them into the hand (יהב המו ביד, Ar.) of

[613] The elders respond to the inquiries of Tattenai, governor of Abar-Nahar and his associates, who question the Jews concerning their authorization for temple building and send a written report to King Darius (Ezra 5.3-17).

[614] The terminology references military defeat and exile, not unlike the triad 'sword, famine, plague' in Jer 14.2; 21.9; 44.13; and Ezek 12.16.

[615] Ezra attributes to Yhwh acts that provide reprieve in the midst of slavery: 'grant us a little sustenance in our slavery. For we are slaves, but God has not forsaken us in our slavery…' (Ezra 9.8-9).

[616] In some cases, an explanation is offered, while in others the deity simply leaves in anger or disgust, or for no explicit reason at all. See examples in Daniel Bodi, *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis (Freiburg, Schweiz Göttingen: Universitätsverlag; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 196-197; John F. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel*, Biblical and Judaic Studies (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 104-109; Mordechai Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah, and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E*, Monograph Series (Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974), 11; Daniel Block, *By the River Chebar: Historical, Literary, and Theological Studies in the Book of Ezekiel* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2013), 76-77.

King Nebuchadnezzar…'.[617] Ezra's prayer similarly affirms that the sword, captivity, plundering and shame that Israel has suffered are not due to Yhwh's incapacity to protect, but rather to the guilt of the *golah* past and present:

> From the days of our ancestors to this day we have been deep in guilt, and for our iniquities, we, our kings and our priests *have been handed over* (נתנו אנחנו מלכינו כהנינו ביד) to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, *as is now the case*.[618]

Likewise, in various biblical texts, the ills that befall Israel and Judah are attributed to their transgressions and infidelity, the consequent wrath of the deity, and his eventual abandonment of the city and land.[619]

Divine displeasure is a common explanation for divine abandonment that is rooted in the practice of temple despoliation. The 'oft-mentioned capture of the gods of defeated nations,'[620] Mordechai Cogan argues, 'was meant to portray the abandonment of the enemy by his own gods in submission to the superior might of Assyria's god'.[621] Thus, as Daniel Block comments, while 'ancient Near Eastern accounts of divine abandonment generally create the impression that the gods voluntarily leave their shrines…enemy invasions and the despoliation of divine images lie behind these accounts.'[622] Divine abandonment raises doubts concerning the ability of the titular god to protect his or her subjects in the face of

[617] The fear expressed in Ezra 9-10 is that intermarriage will result in renewed punishment for transgression, as Ezra emphasizes in his prayer: 'Would you not be angry with us until you destroy us without remnant or survivor?' (Ezra 9.14; also 10.2b,14).
[618] The elders of the Jews provide a similar explanation for the destruction of the temple: 'because our ancestors had angered the God of heaven, he gave them into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house and carried away the people to Babylonia' (5.12)
[619] Ezekiel vividly describes Yhwh's departure from Jerusalem (chap 10) and the abominations that fill the temple that make it make it impossible for Yhwh to remain (chap 8). The city is destined to destruction. See also Jer 12.7; Amos 9.1; Ps 78.60.
[620] Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*: 22. While this motif is most frequently attested in Neo-Assyrian sources, there is material evidence indicating that such practices were widespread. See Michael B. Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East*, Writings from the Ancient World Supplements Series (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 359; Lewis, "Cult Image and Divine Representation," 100-102.
[621] Block, *By the River Chebar*: 40.
[622] *By the River Chebar*: 95.

a military challenge or might suggest the god's surrender in recognition of the superior might of the conqueror's god.[623] The biblical insistence on human responsibility for divine abandonment belies just such an uncertainty.[624] In a context where the titular deity is the supreme patriarch responsible for the protection of his or her people, divine abandonment has implications for the masculine performance of this god.[625]

Calls for the despoliation of cultic icons in the Hebrew Bible evidence the prevalence of this motif amongst biblical writers and readers. In Deuteronomy, Israel's conquest of Canaan is to be accompanied by the destruction of the cultic statues and icons of the gods of the indigenous inhabitants (Deut 7.5).[626] Political reform in the books of Kings and Chronicles often involves removing, burning or destroying 'non-Yahwistic' cultic objects from Yhwh's Temple.[627] Oracles announcing exile of Chemosh, the god of the Moab (Jer 48.7), and Milcom, the god of Amnon (Jer 49.3), affirm Yhwh's supremacy over these tutelary deities of neighbouring peoples. [628] Countering the possibility that Yhwh was overcome and even taken into exile along with Judah, Isaiah announces that it is, in fact, the gods of Babylon that are led away into exile: 'Bel bows down, Nebo stoops low; their idols are on beasts and cattle…They stoop, they bow down together; they

[623] This motif that explains disaster from the perspective of the victim as punishment inflicted by its own gods, Cogan notes, is adapted by the conqueror to justify conquest of a city or territory. Thus, the gods of enemy peoples are sometimes described as abandoning their people 'in submissive recognition of the might of Assyria's god, Ashur'; Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*: 20.
[624] Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*: 105-107.
[625] I speak of masculinity even where the titular deity is a goddess. See Jer 44.17-18, where the Jews in Egypt, most particularly the women, attribute to the Queen of Heaven protection, provision, and security, traits associated with dominant masculinity in ancient West Asian texts and iconography.
[626] Cf. Deut 12.2-4,29-31; 16.21-22; 18.9-14.
[627] See 2 Kgs 23.4-20; 2 Chr 15.16; 29.5-17; 34.4-7,33.
[628] Such claims are directed not to the gods or nations referenced in these texts, Levtow argues, but to Israel: 'The authors of Israelite icon parodies attacked the cult images of Babylon but there true target was Israel and the cult of Yahweh'; Levtow, *Images of Others*: 16.

cannot save the burden, but themselves go into captivity' (Isa 46.1-2).[629] Their worthless icons are borne and carried away, while Yhwh, to the contrary, bears, carries, and saves 'the remnant of the house of Israel (Isa 46.3-4).[630]

The return of the vessels removed by Nebuchadnezzar is just as problematic as their removal, however, for it is not a Judean king who restores the vessels to their proper place, but another foreign king, Cyrus of Persia.[631] The vessels continue to be manipulated by the kings of the empires. The return of captured cult icons and statues and even the refurbishment of their temples are described in Mesopotamian texts as part of the ideology of empire. This 'benevolently persuasive feature of imperial policy' served to attract the favour of gods, priests, and local inhabitants, especially upon the accession of a new king.[632]

The manipulation of the temple vessels as well as the exile and return of Yhwh's people at the hands of foreign kings, rather than a king of the lineage of David, might problematically suggest to critics of this god that he requires help from a foreign king, no less, to return to his city, build his temple, and gather his people. Far from the 'inconceivable mystery' that Becking refers to, both the removal and the return of the temple vessels raise concrete problematic issues concerning Yhwh's masculinity. Is this a god who is victorious in battle, able to protect and sustain his people in their land? Or is Yhwh a local, conquered god

[629] See also Jer 48.7-8; 49.3.
[630] Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*: 144-145.
[631] It is Cyrus who 'brings out' (הוציא) the vessels and hands them over to Sheshbazzar to be taken to Jerusalem (Ezra 1.7)
[632] Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*: 115. Miller and Roberts note that the 'act of returning the captured gods could also be used to underline the superiority of their captors'; Patrick D. Miller and J. J. M. Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord: A Reassessment of the "Ark Narrative" of 1 Samuel* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 16. Captured gods were often held until the defeated ruler 'begged for their return, a public sign of his submission to Assyria', Cogan notes. In some cases, the victorious monarch sought to engender the goodwill of the defeated by returning their cult statues; Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*: 37-38.

incorporated into the vast holdings of the empire and its titular deities? Has Yhwh's own experience during the period of exile rendered him emasculated?

It is in this context that the 'masculinization' of Yhwh – the rehabilitation of this god in the face of his exile to Babylon, on the one hand, and his return by Persia, on the other – becomes a pressing matter. The people identified as Israel in the book of Ezra need a god who can control the empires, precisely because they exist at the mercy of these empires. Yhwh is 'masculinized' in this imperial context, I argue, by ascribing to the deity performances and attributes that are consistent with a model of masculinity that ensure his control of the empires.

Peter Diamond uses the phrase 'the rehabilitation of Yhwh' to refer to a 'complex of operations designed to prevent at any price the failure of Israel's patron deity and the cultural oblivion of Israel'.[633] Yhwh's failure is the failure of those whose status hinges on the superior masculinity of their god. Faced with the suggestion that the deity of Israel has failed, Diamond argues, the 'colonial elite' rehabilitates Yhwh and prevents 'divine instability' in order to ensure their own survival. They transform national disaster into a narrative of Israelite sin and divine acts of divine righteousness, benevolence, and restoration.[634]

Yhwh's masculinization and divine refurbishment are achieved by attributing to this god that traits and performances of the Persian kings in the book of Ezra. He is dominant over the kings of the empires, communicates through

[633] A. R. Pete Diamond, "Deceiving Hope," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 17, no. 1 (2003): 38.

[634] The book of Jeremiah, Diamond argues, must make 'recourse to re-elevated creation and election traditions which universalize divine power in the world in YHWH-alone. Imperial sovereignty returns!'; "Jeremiah," in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, ed. James D. G. Dunn and J. W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2003), 593. Diamond concludes that this rehabilitation serves the interests and preservation of those who claim to be the 'legitimate' people of Israel. The price for 'rehabilitating the myth of "Israel", he observes, is the 'disenfranchisement of competing communities whose claim to Yahwistic legitimacy is denied' (580).

authorized representatives, and emits authoritative texts, commands, and edicts whose disobedience risks destruction, and through which he manages the bodies of his subject peoples.

4.3 Yhwh the Supreme Monarch

The book of Ezra begins by announcing that Cyrus, king of Persia, is the restorer of the Temple (Ezra 1.1-2). While the Persian kings of the empire are key authority figures in the book of Ezra and are present in almost every chapter in the book, they are not depicted as physically present in Yehud. Instead, their control is exercised through an administrative network of representatives, scribes, designated officials, local governors, servants, and official communications. It is Mithredath, the treasurer, who turns over the temple vessels to Sheshbazzar to take them to Jerusalem (1.8-11). Disputes concerning temple building are dealt with through intermediaries (Rehum the royal deputy, Shimshai the scribe) through texts, and those who write, copy, translate, transport and read them (4.17-22; 5.3-17; 6.6-12). In Ezra 4, Artaxerxes appears to be unaware of what is going on in Jerusalem and must be reminded of past issues with the city (4.12-16), and in 6.1-5, Darius must have archives searched to verify Cyrus's authorization of temple building (6.1-5). Ezra himself is an intermediary who is charged to act for the king (7.12-26). Thus, distance and absence are a measure of imperial power in the book of Ezra, and of the vast territorial extent of the empire that is governed by these kings. Imperial presence is mediated by officially designated personnel, and imperial speech is communicated by means of official written documents.

Yhwh is similarly known to the *golah* and to readers of the text solely through his representatives, intermediaries, and his authoritative words

transmitted as Torah. Among these representatives we find Jeremiah, through whom Yhwh had announced the events that are reported in Ezra 1; Haggai and Zechariah, who 'prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God who was over them' (5.1); and the elders of the Jews who describe themselves as the 'servants of the God of heaven and earth', and speak to Yhwh's anger as the motive for exile and temple destruction (5.11-12). Ezra 7 introduces the eponymous priest-scribe of the book, who is directly charged to implement the Torah of Yhwh. Ezra's prayer in 9.5-16 offers the most considered and sustained intermediation of Yhwh's actions and his speech, including the announcement of his commandments for Israel. This carefully mediated representation of Yhwh evokes the attributes and performances of Persian imperial masculinity as represented in the book of Ezra.

Like the Persian kings, Yhwh is not directly accessible, but mediated and represented by others. While in other biblical texts Yhwh enters the Temple, sends down fire from heaven, or speaks directly to his servants, in the book of Ezra, Yhwh does not involve himself directly. He cannot, perhaps, be contained by the Temple; he is now the 'god of heaven' (1.1). Thus, though Yhwh is said to be over the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (עליהון; Ar., 5.1b) and support them (מסדין; Ar., 5.2b), the content of Yhwh's prophetic word goes wholly unreported. Neither does Ezra, the Torah scholar, receive direct communication from Yhwh. Yhwh's hand may be upon him,[635] but his mission, authority, and resources are given to him by Artaxerxes (7.13-26). In Ezra 9-10, the priest-scribe does not transmit direct speech given to him by Yhwh in the face of the infidelity of the

[635] Ezra 7.6, 7.9, 28; 8.18,22,31.

golah, rather he calls upon words given previously by Yhwh to the prophets (9.10b-11a).[636]

Not only does the representation of Yhwh evoke that of the Persian kings – he remains distant, his presence mediated by authorized representatives and texts – the Persian kings are themselves incorporated into Yhwh's retinue of servants and nominated agents. Any direct characterization of Yhwh is pointedly limited to Yhwh's instrumentalization of Cyrus and his royal successors. The temple-building account is framed by such references, as already noted (Ezra 1.2, 6.22),[637] and Ezra's first-person response to Artaxerxes' rescript similarly identifies Ezra's mission with Yhwh's purposes and action:

> Blessed be Yhwh, the God of our ancestors, who put such a thing as this in the heart of the king (נתן כואת בלב המלך) to glorify the house of Yhwh in Jerusalem, and who extended to me steadfast love before the king (עלי הטה־חסד לפני המלך) and his counsellors and before all the king's mighty officers (6.27-28).

Yhwh is credited for temple building and for Artaxerxes's edict that provides for the support and patronage of the Temple and elevates an exiled Judean to a position of power, even over Persian officials in the province (7.21-26). A similar claim is made in Ezra's penitential prayer, in which he attributes the benefits provided by Persia to Yhwh, who 'extended to us his steadfast love before the kings of Persia…' (יטה־עלינו חסד לפני המלי פרס; 9.9).

Yhwh's instrumental use of foreign empires and their kings to carry out his purposes is not unique to the book of Ezra. In the books of 2 Kings, Isaiah and

[636] 9.10b-11a: 'For we have forsaken your commandments, which you commanded to your servants the prophets'.
[637] Ezra 1.2: 'Yhwh the god of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah'; Ezra 6.22: '…for Yhwh had…turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, so that he aided them in the work on the house of God, the God of Israel'.

Jeremiah, the onslaught of Assyrian and Babylonian armies is attributed to the design and purposes of Yhwh. It is by deploying Assyrian invaders that Yhwh removes the Kingdom of Israel from his sight (2 Kgs 17.17), while in 2 Kings 24.2 he sends 'bands of the Chaldeans, bands of the Moabites, and bands of the Arameans' against Jerusalem. Isaiah describes Assyria as the rod of Yhwh's wrath to execute his purposes (Isa 10.5),[638] and the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar is Yhwh's servant, called to destroy Judah and the surrounding nations (Jer 25.8-14).[639] Thus, the biblical writers claim, Yhwh is neither defeated nor unmanned by the destruction of his cities and the exile of his people; to the contrary, the empires and their kings are merely instruments in his mighty hands.

The gendered implications of the Exile for both Yhwh and Israel have been considered by some scholars, especially as represented by the prophetic marriage metaphor in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.[640] Few have considered, however, the gendered implications of the 'return' from the Exile under Cyrus for Yhwh's masculinity. I would argue that the representation of Yhwh as the god who moves Cyrus and other Persian kings to carry out his purposes, may be read as an attempt to salvage or 'rehabilitate' the masculinity of this deity whose king is in exile, whose people are dispersed, and whose house is in 'shambles'. But if the Exile challenged Yhwh's dominant masculinity in relation to other gods and his ability to provide and protect his people – as so often attested in Deutero-Isaiah – might not Cyrus's 'beneficent' acts also problematize Yhwh's power, presence,

[638] See Isa 7.17-20; 8.5-8.
[639] Also, Jer 27.6; 43.10.
[640] See, among others, Stone, *Lovers and Raisin Cakes*: 111-128; Lemos, "The Emasculation of Exile," 377-393; Zsolnay, "The Inadequacies of Yahweh," 57-74; Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 60-140.

and ability to provide? In the book of Ezra, Yahweh's dominant masculinity is salvaged by the portrayal of Persia's kings as the deity's own agents.

Ezra's affirmations that the kings of Persia are roused, turned, and moved by Yhwh should be considered in all their radicality. The Persian Empire extended throughout most of the known world for over 200 years, and the loyalty of its subjects was ensured, historians explain, through a vast military and administrative network.[641] The traits awarded to Darius, Irene Madreiter argues, evidence 'a royal ideology based on manliness':

> The king has been instated to his office by Ahura-Mazda (the highest deity) in order to establish order out of chaos. This cosmic order is a result of righteous wars, pursued at the far reaches of the world…The king is an outstanding warrior, archer, and equestrian lancer…he is a perfect hunter and a hero, who overpowers wild beasts or mythical monsters in face-to-face duels…Only the king is capable of subduing these powers of chaos…The king is a just ruler, who can distinguish between right … and wrong... His subjects' duties are their obedience and loyalty to him. Cooperation is rewarded … whereas apostasy is severely punished…[642]

The might of the Persian empire and the hyper-masculinity of its kings are on display in monumental reliefs. The Behistun relief, in which Darius stands tall with an elaborate beard and robes as he towers above bound prisoners while stepping on his 'prostrate and pleading' usurper to the throne, is a prominent example. His skill as a warrior is indicated by the officers who bear his bow and spear.[643] Darius's chosenness and the legitimacy of his claim to the throne are furthermore evidenced by the ring of authoritative power Ahuramazda extends to him.[644]

---

[641] Josef Wiesehöfer, "The Achaemenid Empire," in *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium*, ed. Ian Morris and Walter Scheidel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 75-77; Amélie Kuhrt, "State Communications in the Persian Empire," in *State Correspondence in the Ancient World: From New Kingdom Egypt to the Roman Empire*, ed. Karen Radner (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 112-140.
[642] Madreiter and Schnegg, "Gender and Sex."
[643] See description in Root, *The King and Kingship*, 19: 59-60.
[644]The relationship between Darius and Ahuramazda and its political implications are vividly evidenced in the relief as Donald Polaski observes: '…while other vanquished monarchs file in to acknowledge his power, Darius raises an arm in praise of his god, Ahura Mazda'; Donald C.

When viewed from a perspective external to the metanarrative of the biblical text, the suggestion that the local god of a small stretch of land and a people dispersed among the nations uses the hyper-masculine kings of the Persian empire for his own purposes is nothing short of ludicrous. More importantly, it points to the perceived need to elevate Yhwh and secure his position as 'most masculine' over and above the Persian kings. A similar, even more explicit evocation of this masculinizing trope is evidenced in the prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah where, echoing the Cyrus Cylinder, Yhwh calls forth Cyrus as his anointed, virtually grafting him into the lineage of David, for the purposes of restoring his people, city and temple.[645]

Isaiah masculinizes Yhwh by elevating him above Cyrus, turning him into a designated servant to carry out Yhwh's purposes. Cyrus is instrumentalized by Yhwh to the same degree that Babylonian and Assyrian kings are in other biblical texts.[646] Yhwh thereby usurps the accomplishments of the Persian King, Erich Gruen argues:

> Cyrus serves as the instrument of God. The author ascribes no sterling qualities or lofty aims to the ruler of Persia. It is God who summons Cyrus to his service, delivers up nations to him, and subjects kings to his power (Isa 41.2,25) … God calls his agent to carry out predetermined duties and to fulfil the word of the Lord (Isa 46.11). In short, Cyrus's success against Babylon amounts to the discharge of divine commands (Isa 48.14-15). Deutero-Isaiah has, in effect, claimed for Yahweh the imperial

Polaski, "What Mean These Stones? Inscriptions, Textuality and Power in Persia and Yehud," in *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period*, ed. Jon L. Berquist (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), 38.

[645] See Isa 45.1,13; 44.28. Fried argues that Deutero-Isaiah 'wrote to legitimize him (Cyrus) as the Davidic monarch, heir to the Davidic throne'; Fried, "Cyrus the Messiah? The Historical Background to Isaiah 45: 1," 374. This gendered dynamic is not restricted to the Hebrew Bible. The Cyrus Cylinder similarly asserts the control of Marduk, the patron god of Babylon, over the Persian King; Amélie Kuhrt, "The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25(1983): 83-97.

[646] Cf. Isa 10.5; Jer 25.9.

> accomplishments of the Persian King. The work constitutes not so much celebration or admiration as usurpation.[647]

Yhwh's performance in Deutero-Isaiah and in the book of Ezra maps out onto a model of masculinity that performs patriarchal dominance by controlling and using, rather than defeating, the major contenders for universal power. In this light, it is of no little import that Ezra, a Persian emissary sent to 'inspect' the region and exercise judicial and economic oversight, abases himself before Yhwh, and not to Artaxerxes. In the face of what is, arguably, a civil matter, he directs himself to Yhwh. Persia has been used to favour the *golah,* but it is not to be the sovereign of the *golah*.

4.4 Yhwh the Benevolent Provider

The benevolence of the Persian Empire has long been assumed by historians and biblical scholars who have drawn on sources, Amélie Kuhrt observes, that have been 'read selectively and fitted together to provide this attractive, heroic image'.[648] The historical realities were far more complex, she argues.[649] Irrespective of this complexity, the book of Ezra portrays the Persian kings acting favourably toward the *golah*. This favour is not presented, however, as the initiative of the Persian kings; rather, as noted above, these are portrayed as instruments of Yhwh. It is not Persia, but Yhwh who provides for the *golah*.

This provision is highlighted in Ezra's prayer, that begins with the 'story' of Israel's transgression and Yhwh's punishment in 9.6 and continues in vv.8-9 with a description of Yhwh's participation in acts of favour and beneficence. The

[647] Erich Gruen, "Persia through the Jewish Looking-Glass," in *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers*, ed. Tessa Rajak (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 55.
[648] Amélie Kuhrt, "Cyrus the Great of Persia: Images and Realities," in *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Marlies Heinz and Marian H. Feldman (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 170.
[649] "Cyrus the Great of Persia," 175-176.

transition between punishment and favour is signalled in 9.8 by the temporal reference 'and now' (ועתה), signalling that the past of 'sword, plundering, captivity, and utter shame' at the hands of the kings of the lands (9.7) has given way to a present of favour (תחנה) granted by Yhwh. Significantly, the term תחנה used here references favour that may be bestowed by a powerful figure in response to the plea of an inferior party.[650] It figures prominently in Solomon's temple dedication prayer, in which he repeatedly asks Yhwh to hear the plea (שמעת אל תחנה) of those who direct their prayers toward Yhwh's dwelling place.[651] The use of this term in Ezra 9.8 signals Yhwh's capacity to respond to the pleas of his people.[652]

The favour Yhwh grants in 9.8 consists of four actions indicated by infinitive construct verbs, each of which benefits the *golah*, the 'us' (נו-) in Ezra's prayer:

> But now for a brief moment favour has been shown by Yhwh our God, who has left *for us* a remnant (להשאיר לנו פליטה); and given *to us* a stake in his holy place (לתת־לנו יתד במקום קדשו), in order that he may brighten *our* eyes (חאיר עיניני), and grant *us* a little sustenance in *our* slavery (לתתנו מחיה מעט בעבדתנו).

Each of these expressions describes an act of life-giving or life-preserving sustenance. The פליטה are those delivered by Yhwh, those of Israel who 'remain' because of Yhwh's intervention.[653] The יתד that Yhwh gives the *golah* 'in his holy

[650] Only here and in Josh 11.20 does it designate something that is granted; all other uses are in the context of a plea or supplication for favour from a superior, usually Yhwh. See Heinz-Josef Fabry, "Hānan," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol V*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 25-26.

[651] See 1 Kgs 8.30,38,45,49,52; 2 Chr 6.19,29,35,39.

[652] Problematically, however, the temporal reference 'for a brief moment' (כמעט־רגע), qualifies this favour, suggesting that it is limited. I return to this phrase below.

[653] The root פלט references deliverance, escape and survival. In conjunction with the root שאר (to remain or be left over), the term acquires an ambiguous meaning, Japhet observes. The *golah* have been rescued, but are at risk of complete destruction, with no possibility for another remnant. The terms are used repeatedly in Ezra's prayer (Ezra 9.9: להשאיר לנו פליטה; 9.13: ונתתה לנק פליטה כזאת; 9.14: לאין שארית ופליטה; and 9.15: כי־נשארנו פליטה). The remnant,

place' is a peg that secures a tent in its place. [654] The security and stability it references are highlighted by the use of this same term in Isaiah 33.20, where it describes the stability of the city of Jerusalem to which Israel returns, and where Yhwh rules, protects and saves: 'Look on Zion, the city of our appointed festivals! Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, an immovable tent, whose *stakes* (יתד) *will never be pulled up*, and none of whose ropes will be broken' (Isa 33.20-22).[655] The implication is that the *golah* has been granted a secure hold in the Temple and in Jerusalem.

The final acts of favour, the brightening of the eyes and the giving of sustenance (9.8b),[656] reference forms of provision that ensure the vitality and continuance of life. These benefits that Yhwh provides for his people are consistent with royal performances of masculinity in ancient West Asian representations:[657] a people are rescued from destruction, given a dwelling place, life, and sustenance. Yhwh is the subject of these verbs, not Cyrus, not Darius, not Artaxerxes.

The second part of Ezra's recital of Yhwh's actions more precisely explains how this favour has been carried out:

Japhet argues, 'is the axis around which the Judean community is conceived'; Japhet, "The Concept of the "Remnant" in the Restoration Period," 439-441.

[654] The term is used of the Tabernacle in Exod 27.19; 35.18; 38.20,31; 39.40; and Num 3.37;4.32; also, Isa 22.23,25, 33.20; 54.2 and Zech 10.4. Williamson indicates that the term metaphorically references security and stability; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 135.

[655] Ironically, however, the assurance that stakes will never be pulled up signals that this was, in fact, a very real possibility.

[656] The expression אור עין (brighten the eyes) is found seven times in the Hebrew Bible, where it always describes increased vitality, well-being, or hope amid a difficult situation – even death (1 Sam 14.27,29; Ezra 9.8; Ps 13.4; 19.9; 38.11; Prov 29.3). In Ps 13.3 the psalmist calls upon Yhwh to brighten his eyes, 'or I will sleep the sleep of death'. Aalen explains that the eyes reflect the light of day, which is a reference to life; when that light fails, the person is near to death; Sverre Aelen, "'Ôr," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol I*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 158.

[657] See Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 29-32,41-44.

> For we are slaves, yet our god has not forsaken us (לא עזבנו) in our slavery, but has inclined to us his steadfast love before the kings of Persia (יטה־עלינו חסד לפני המלי פרס), to give us sustenance (לתת־לנו מחיה), to set up the house of our god (לרומם את־בית אלהינו), to repair its ruins (להעמיד את־חרבתיו), and to give us a wall (לתת־לנו גדר) in Judea and Jerusalem (9.9).

The remnant exists because 'our God has not abandoned us' and has carried out his favour *through the kings of Persia*. The benefits provided by Yhwh's emissary correspond to those attributed directly to Yhwh above: to bring sustenance (מחיה), raise up the house of Yhwh, and find safety and security in Judah and Jerusalem.[658]

A key element of Yhwh's favour toward the *golah* is summarized by the twice repeated term מחיה, referencing that which is necessary for the preservation and renewal of life, as well as provision, nourishment, and protection.[659] The fundamental aspect of Yhwh's favour is associated with the provision of the conditions for new life, all of which are tied to the Temple and the land. Yhwh's sovereignty and ability to provide and favour, i.e. respond to the pleas, of his people, is characterized in terms of survival and security: survivors, tent peg, sustenance, repaired ruins, a wall.[660] The well-being experienced by the *golah* is attributed solely to Yhwh's provision and protection while the Persian kings carry out this task as agents for this divine overlord.

Claims to Yhwh's favour and even his dominance over the Persian kings are nuanced however, by phrases in these very verses that raise questions concerning the extent of Yhwh's power. The new moment announced in 9.8 and

[658] On the structural parallels between 9.8 and 9.9, see Grol, "'Indeed, Servants We Are'," 212.
[659] See Gen 45.5; Judg 6.4; 17.10; 2 Chr 14.12; and entry in Köhler and Baumgartner, *HALOT Vol. I*: 568.
[660] Notably, several of these acts of divine favour directly benefit the deity himself: his house is 'set up', its ruins repaired, his city secured.

the sustenance provided in 9.9-9 are qualified in 9.8 by the adjectives *brief* ('brief moment', כמעט־רגע) and *little* ('a little sustenance', מהיה מעט). The phrase כמעט־רגע in Ezra 9.8 is sometimes translated as 'suddenly', suggesting that Yhwh's favour was unexpected.[661] A sudden occurrence, however, is usually rendered in the Hebrew Bible with רגע alone, and the only other use of the phrase כמעט־רגע clearly references a brief period of time.[662] Also problematic is the limited nature of Yhwh's sustenance (מעט), which raises the question whether it is restricted by Yhwh, or by circumstances beyond the deity's control.

The current condition of slavery in which the community resides likewise presents a challenge to Yhwh's masculine performance. Ezra's recital of Yhwh's acts is interspersed with repeated references to this condition of slavery, as noted above (Ezra 9.8b-9a).[663] Yhwh may provide favour and sustenance, but it would appear that he has not broken the hold that the Persian Empire has on the *golah.* The prayer of penitence in Nehemiah 9 concludes with a similar reference to conditions in Yehud, evidencing the material and social effects of this slavery: '[the land's] rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us for our sins; they have power also over our bodies and over our livestock at their pleasure…' (Neh 9.37).

The benefits provided by Yhwh are nuanced by the tenuous circumstances in which the *golah* finds itself. The very term 'stake' with which stability and fixedness in 'your holy place' are claimed, is complicated by the fact that tent

---

[661] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 180-181.

[662] Isa 26.20: 'Hide yourselves for a brief moment until the wrath is past'. Also רגע קטן with a similar meaning in Is 54.7 ('for a brief moment I abandoned you'). Notably, these uses refer to Yhwh's wrath, rather than his favour.

[663] '…in our slavery…we are slaves, but in our slavery…' (בעבדתנו…כי עבדים אנחנו ובעבדתנו). On the political nature of this servitude, see Grol, "'Indeed, Servants We Are'," 213-218.

stakes, while strong, are movable and removable.[664] These phrases, along with the not unambiguous designation 'remnant', that alludes to both salvation and destruction, raise questions concerning Yhwh's masculine performance.[665] Is there a suggestion that Yhwh is limited in his ability to control the Persian kings? Has the plan to restore Judah ended up being a new form of captivity? Is Yhwh unable to fully liberate the *golah* from captivity, content with the transfer of his people and land from one imperial overlord to another? Such uncertainties concerning Yhwh's masculine performance are reflected in various other biblical texts.

This is the very issue that comes to the fore in Yhwh's complaint against his wife Israel in Hosea 2. Israel credits the bounty she enjoys – 'my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink' – to the Baals and not to Yhwh (Hos 2.5).[666] More humiliating than being cuckolded by his wife is the insinuation that Yhwh has failed at the masculine task of providing for her and that other gods are better able to do so. Yhwh claims emphatically that Israel is mistaken, that it is he who provides 'the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished upon her silver and gold' (2.8-9).[667] Ken Stone explains that

> [b]y characterizing Yhwh in terms of such recurring demonstrations of manliness as the vehement insistence that one is an adequate food provider, or the harsh punishment of women suspected of sexual infidelity, Hosea ironically leaves the Yhwh he constructs open to the charge of

[664] See Num 4.32.
[665] This liminal status is evidenced in Boda's description of the concept of the remnant in Second Temple penitential prayers: 'As a remnant, the people are those "left over" after God's discipline of the people. But as a remnant, they are also "those preserved" by God through this discipline'; Mark J. Boda, "Confession as Theological Expression: Ideological Origins of Penitential Prayer," in *Seeking the Favor of God Vol. 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney Alan Werline (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 44.
[666] Stone, *Lovers and Raisin Cakes*: 130.
[667] He then withdraws these provisions from his wife and punishes her, proving himself to be the source of these benefits (2.9-13), before luring her back with promises of safety and security (2.18-20).

> revealing through anxious assertion a sort of divine insecurity about Yhwh's ability to be … 'good at being a male god.'[668]

Similar challenges to Yhwh's masculinity are evidenced in other prophetic texts where the 'marriage metaphor' is employed. In Ezekiel 16, Ilona Zsolnay argues, Jerusalem goes after other gods, because Yhwh is 'an ineffectual and inadequate protector'.[669] The protection and aid Jerusalem requires are found in these gods, rather than in Yhwh. Yhwh likewise seems unable to compete with the 'hypermasculinity' of the physically desirable Assyrians, Babylonians, and well-endowed Egyptians in Ezekiel 23.12-21.[670] Not only is he the aggrieved 'raging and jealous husband' in an episode of domestic violence,[671] so also his ability to satisfy the needs of his wife is challenged.

Yhwh's dispute with Sennacherib in Isaiah 36-37 makes explicit the challenge of an imperial monarch to the masculinity of Yhwh. Sennacherib's emissary Rabshakeh argues that the Assyrian king is better able to provide and protect the Judeans than Yhwh. Their god, he announces, is no better than the ineffectual gods of the neighbouring peoples and will be unable to prevent Judah from being 'given in to the hand of the king of Assyria' (36.15-20). Sennacherib offers them a better life:

> Make your peace with me and come out to me; then every one of you will eat from your own vine and your own fig tree and drink water from your own cistern until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards (Isa 36.16b-17, NRSV).

These masculine contests are addressed by Yhwh. He punishes Israel to prevent her from going after other, perhaps more 'masculine', gods. He undermines

[668] Stone, *Lovers and Raisin Cakes*: 125.
[669] Zsolnay, "The Inadequacies of Yahweh," 58.
[670] Lemos, "The Emasculation of Exile," 379. This representation also suggests that Yhwh is less desirable and able to satisfy than these kings and their gods.
[671] Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 113.

Sennacherib's masculinity by transforming him from a military victor into the young suitor of Daughter Zion, one who is 'inexperienced and arrogant in relation to the eternal and universal power of Yahweh' (Isa 37.22-29).[672] Then he announces the defeat of Sennacherib and assures Jerusalem of his protection (37.33-35).

These cases of contested masculinity do not involve the feminization of either party; rather they are disputes concerning location on a gendered spectrum: who is more masculine, more powerful? The ambiguous characterization of Yhwh's performance in Ezra 9, renders this a more delicate dance. Who is using whom to further whose purposes? Ezra asserts that Yhwh is in control of the fate of the *golah*, its continued life in the land, its provision, protection, and security. But this control is limited: brief, little, amid continued slavery. Ezra's prayer explains this unstable situation by affirming that full restoration is not in effect due to the sins of the *golah* and Yhwh's rightful punishment of their transgression. The stark contrasts drawn between Yhwh and the *golah* in the prayer serves this agenda of divine masculinization: Yhwh has not forsaken us (לא עזבנו אלהינו; 9.9) but we have forsaken his commandments (עזבנו מצותיך; 9.10), Yhwh is just (צדיק אתה; 9.15), we are guilty before him (לפניך באשמתינו; 9.15).

The 'sword, plundering, and captivity' to which Israel was given over by Yhwh continues in the present of the text because the guilt of Israel continues 'from the days of our fathers to this day' (9.7a). The 'utter shame' experienced by

[672] *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 87; see also, Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st ed., The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 477. Sennacherib is not feminized, but his masculinity is called into question and his boastful claims are revealed to be vain flirtations.

the *golah* in the face of captivity and exile also continues, 'as is now the case' (9.7b). Yhwh's ability to act in favour of the *golah*, to effect complete restoration, is limited by the fact that guilt continues. The favour granted by Yhwh is undeserved. Yhwh is the beneficent, and powerful, ruler of the *golah;* but he metes out favour as he metes out punishment. The current state of imperial domination does not suggest that Yhwh is unable to save. He has punished 'much less than our iniquities deserved' (חשכת למטה מעוננו), Ezra affirms in 9.13, and has 'given us a remnant' (ונתתה לנו פליטה). Thus, it is due to the deity's deliberate restraint, rather than his inability to provide, that sustenance and the survival of a remnant are made possible (9.13).[673] The very identity of the *golah* – like that of their immediate fathers and the Exodus ancestors – is constituted by this tenuous balance between foreign domination, divine provision/salvation, and divine wrath.

Yhwh is a powerful god. He punishes but is capable of self-control; he is a land-giver (9.11-12), provider, nourisher, and mover of foreign kings. The *golah*, therefore, should not doubt Yhwh's power, but rather attribute its very existence to Yhwh's beneficence and his ability to control the forces that threatened, and continue to threaten, Israel with decimation. Yhwh is neither the conquered deity that some might suppose nor an inferior god on the map of Persian imperialism. He is, in fact, the divine overlord of all. Make no mistake, the book of Ezra affirms, it is Yhwh who has ordained temple building, the return of the exiles, their privileged position in the region, and the (albeit limited) security, provision and stability they enjoy**.**

[673] On self-control as a prominent feature of Greco-Roman masculinity, see Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, "Taking It Like a Man: Masculinity in 4 Maccabees," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117, no. 2 (1998): 249-273. Wilson argues that self-control is also a marker of masculinity in the Hebrew Bible; Wilson, *Making Men*: 39-40.

4.5 Yhwh the Imperial Lawgiver

Yhwh, I have argued, is 'masculinized' in Ezra 9-10 by attributing to him traits associated with the masculine performance of the Persian kings in the book. He is a supreme monarch who instrumentalizes the kings of the empires and calls on them to do his bidding, even to punish the transgressions of his people. Ezra's prayer presents Yhwh as the benevolent protector and provider of the *golah*, a deity able to ensure the security of his subject people. In this section, I consider another aspect of Yhwh's 'masculinization', one that has to do with the power exercised by Persian kings through royal edicts and authoritative texts.[674]

The importance of texts in the book of Ezra is evidenced in the multiple references to official letters (נִשְׁתְּוָן; 4.7; 7.11, Ar), letters (אִגְּרָה; 4.8,11; 5.6, Ar),[675] scrolls (4.15; 6.1, Ar), decrees (טְעֵם (16 x),[676] and records of different kinds,[677] that are written (כתב; 4.8;5.7,10;6.2,Ar; מִכְתָּב 1.1; כְּכְתָב; 3.2,4; כתב; 4.6-7; 8.34); copied (פרשׁגן; 4.11,23;5.6), translated (תרגם; 4.7,18), and sent (שׁלח; 4.11,14,17,18;5.6,7;6.13). Decrees are furthermore archived, searched for, retrieved, and consulted (4.19; 5.17-6.2). The scribe Shimshai figures

[674] For a discussion of the Persian documents in the book of Ezra, see Lisbeth Fried, "Ezra's Use of Documents in the Context of Hellenistic Rules of Rhetoric," in *New Perspectives on Ezra-Nehemiah: History and Historiography, Text, Literature, and Interpretation*, ed. Isaac Kalimi (Winina Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 11-26; Lester L. Grabbe, "The "Persian Documents" in the Book of Ezra," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 531-570; Kuhrt, "The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy," 83-97; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 42-44; H. G. M. Williamson, "The Aramaic Documents in Ezra Revisited," *Journal of Theological Studies* 59, no. 1 (2008): 41-62; Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*: 25-43.

[675] For the distinction between נִשְׁתְּוָן as official correspondence and אִגְּרָה as a means of written communication (letters), see Cameron Howard, "Writing Yehud: Textuality and Power under Persian Rule" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Emory University, 2010), 54-55.

[676] See 4.19, 21; 5.3,5,9,13,17; 6.1,3,8,11,12,14; 7.13,21. On the Persian provenance of the form טְעֵם שׁים, see John Makujina, "On the Possible Old Persian Origin of the Aramaic שים טעם, 'to Issue a Decree' " *Hebrew Union College Annual*, no. 68 (1997): 1-9.

[677] These include genealogical records (2.62; כתבם המתיחשׂים); inventories (מספרם,1.9), royal annals (כתבם המתיחשׂים; 4.15), memorandums (דכרון; 6.2), and lists (2.1-68; 8.1.14; 10.1-19).

prominently in the writing and transmission of letters and the implementation of royal decrees (4.9,17,23), while Ezra, the Persian emissary and the 'scribe of the law of the God of heaven' (7.12,7.21), studies, applies, and teaches the Torah (7.6,10), and is charged to enforce obedience to the 'law of your god and the law of the king' (7.26).

While the kings of Persia are not physically present in Yehud in the book of Ezra, they enact presence and exercise power in Yehud through their letters and decrees. The book contains references to these official imperial documents in more than half its chapters: the Cyrus Edict in chapter 1 (vv. 2-4); correspondence to and from King Artaxerxes in chapter 4 (vv.8-16; 17-33), a letter to King Darius in 5.7-17 and in 6.6-12, his response; and finally, the Artaxerxes rescript in Ezra 7 (7.11-26). Scholarly discussions concerning the 'authenticity' of these texts, especially with reference to the Cyrus Edict and the Artaxerxes rescript, are ongoing.[678] Dominating these debates is a concern with their value for historical reconstructions, while less emphasis has been placed on their role *as texts* that participate in the configuration of power in the book of Ezra.[679] It is the latter issue that I wish to focus on here.

The imperial texts and edicts in the book of Ezra are a primary means by which the Persian kings exercise power and control over political, economic, and

[678] On the Persian documents in the book of Ezra, see Fried, "Ezra's Use of Documents," 11-26; Grabbe, "The "Persian Documents" in the Book of Ezra," 531-570; Kuhrt, "The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy," 83-97; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 42-44; Williamson, "The Aramaic Documents in Ezra Revisited," 41-62; Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*: 25-43.

[679] See James W. Watts, "The Three Dimensions of Scripture," *Postcripts: The Journal of Sacred Texts and Contemporary Worlds* (2008): 2-6; Stavrakopoulou, "Materialist Reading," 223-237. Noegel argues that in ancient West Asia, text production was a 'technology of power' that served to define reality and establish the cosmic order; Scott B. Noegel, "'Literary' Craft and Performative Power in the Ancient near East: The Hebrew Bible in Context," in *Approaches to Literary Readings of Ancient Jewish Writings*, ed. K. A. D. Smelik and Karolien Vermeulen (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014), 19-38 (22). See also Polaski, "Approaching Yehud," 37-48; Nathaniel B. Levtow, "Text Production and Destruction in Ancient Israel: Ritual and Political Dimensions," in *Social Theory and the Study of Israelite Religion: Essays in Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Saul M. Olyan (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 111-140.

religious matters in the province of Abar-Nahar. This 'textualized' exercise of Persian power that Cameron Howard describes as 'hypertextuality', is evidenced in biblical books such as Ezra, Esther and Daniel, where Persia is depicted as 'an empire so invested in textual authority that the king's word, once written down, takes on power that surpasses that of the king himself'.[680] This authority attributed to Persian law in the Hebrew Bible, Michael LeFebvre notes, refers to the 'unwritten custom that royal injunctions, once written down, cannot be reversed'.[681]

The lasting relevance and authority of Persian decrees in these biblical texts rest not only on their immutability but also on their storage for later consultation. Imperial edicts are preserved as material objects that continue to enact power, even when their existence has been forgotten. *Golah* authorization for temple building is affirmed by Darius in Ezra 6.5-12, for example, only after the Cyrus Edict is brought out from the archives as an authoritative reference for his own command (5.1-4).[682] Concerning his own edict, Darius proclaims that 'anyone who alters this edict, a beam shall be pulled out of the house of the perpetrator, who then shall be impaled on it' (6.11).

While inscriptions, records, and archives are part of ancient (and modern) imperial administration more generally, the 'hypertextuality' of the Persian Empire as an exercise of power is evidenced in the archives and material remains as well

[680] Esth 1.19; 8.8; Dan 6.8,15; Howard, "Writing Yehud," 74.
[681] LeFebvre, *Collections, Codes, and Torah*: 100. He notes that there is testimony to this practice in Greek histories of Persian rule.
[682] The portrayal of Persian kings in Ezra 5-6 as 'diligent students of their archival records' responds, Wright argues, to the ideological agenda of the text more than it does Achaemenid policies; Jacob Wright, "Seeking, Finding and Writing in Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Unity and Disunity in Ezra-Nehemiah: Redaction, Rhetoric, and Reader*, ed. Mark J. Boda and Paul L. Redditt (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), 282. This portrayal is also present in Ezra 7-10, where Ezra who is a diligent 'seeker' (דרשׁ) of the Torah, seeks out the 'archives' of Yhwh's commandments concerning the matter of intermarriage (Ezra 9.10-12; 10.3).

as the testimony offered by Greek historians and biblical texts.[683] Royal inscriptions and the 'highly textual administration', Cameron argues, 'together projected an obsessive interest with the written word, with the power inherent in written texts, and with the ability of written texts to undergird the power centers of the empire'.[684] The Behistun inscription, which served to legitimize Darius's accession to the throne,[685] and the Cyrus Cylinder, which impacted biblical perspectives on the Persian Empire,[686] point to the effective deployment of Achaemenid imperial propaganda in the form of texts and monumental inscriptions.

This phenomenon by which textual authority comes to the fore as a key dimension of imperial masculinity is appropriated in the book of Ezra, I would argue, as a strategy for the masculinization of Yhwh. Yhwh's power is asserted, on the one hand, by his appropriation of the texts of the Persian kings, whose edicts serve to carry out the deity's own purposes. The Cyrus Edict announces that Yhwh's house is to be built and authorizes the 'return' of the exiles who are to participate in this task (Ezra 1.1-4). Darius's decree confirms the *golah's* authorization for temple building and announces royal patronage of Yhwh's house (6.6-12). And the Artaxerxes rescript charges Ezra with authority in matters concerning the 'law of your god that is in your hand' and positions him in authority over judicial, administrative, and religious matters in Abar-Nahar (7.11-26). Notably, in Ezra 1.2-4, the edict of Cyrus is attributed to Yhwh, and in 7.27-28,

[683] Cameron argues that writing and record-keeping were strategic for Achaemenid imperial control; Howard, "Writing Yehud," 37.
[684] "Writing Yehud," 62. State communications, Kuhrt explains, made it possible for the Persian Empire to 'control the conquered lands, proclaim its presence, collect and monitor its profits, and maintain security'; Kuhrt, "State Communications in the Persian Empire," 122.
[685] On the Behistun inscription, see Polaski, "Approaching Yehud," 37-40; Gard Granerød, "'By the Favour of Ahuramazda I Am King': On the Promulgation of a Persian Propaganda Text among Babylonians and Judeans," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 44, no. 4-5 (2013): 455-480.
[686] See Kuhrt, "The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy," 83-97.

Ezra credits Yhwh with Artaxerxes' rescript, especially in matters concerning the Temple.[687]

Yhwh's power is not only asserted by his appropriation of the texts of the Persian kings. It is also asserted by the emission of a text of his own; a text that is copied, studied, taught, transmitted, interpreted, and upheld as authoritative for the *golah* – namely, the Torah.[688] In keeping with the masculinity performed by the Persian kings in the book of Ezra, Yhwh is not directly involved in matters concerning the *golah* in Ezra 9-10. Instead, his relationship with the community is mediated by his authorized words, commandments, and statutes, as they are transmitted and interpreted by his representatives.

Yhwh's texts issued from a spatial distance and they are temporally distant from the context of the *golah* in the book of Ezra: Yhwh had given his words in the past to Jeremiah (Ezra 1.1), to his 'servants the prophets' (Ezra 9.11a), and to Moses (3.2;7.6). These texts, like archived royal edicts consulted by Persian kings, are sought out by Ezra as authoritative for current issues, in particular, the matter of intermarriage (9.10-12; 10.3). The role of the Torah in this text evokes,

[687] An almost parallel status is awarded divine and imperial edicts and commands in Ezra 6.14 and 7.26. In 6.14, it is announced that the temple was completed by the 'edict (טעם) of the God of Israel and by decree (טעם) of Cyrus, Darius, and King Artaxerxes of Persia'. The term טעם is vocalized differently in each case, and has thus been translated with different words. Williamson translates, 'the *command* of the God of Israel', 'the *edicts* of the kings', Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 72. Blenkinsopp, however, translates 'command' in both cases; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 128. In Ezra 7.26, Ezra is charged to ensure that both the 'law of your god and the law of the king' (דתא די־אלהך ודתא די מלכא) are obeyed. On these laws and the relationship between them, see essays in James W. Watts, ed. *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch*, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001).

[688] Persian imperial authorization of the Torah has long been debated by scholars concerned with the historical developments that led to the promulgation of Torah. In this reading, I consider how the Torah functions to masculinize Yhwh. On Persian influence on promulgation of Jewish law codes, see the summary of Peter Frei's seminal work; Frei, "Persia and the Torah: A Summary," 5-40. For a recent evaluation of this theory, see the essays in Watts, *Persia and the Torah*; and important discussion in Konrad Schmid, "The Persian Imperial Authorization as a Historical Problem and as a Biblical Construct: A Plea for Distinctions in the Current Debate," in *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 23-38.

I suggest, the model of textualized masculine power ascribed to Persian monarchs in the book of Ezra.

But the power of Torah, imperial edicts, and inscriptions lies not only in their content, but also in their production, manipulation, and display – that is, their very materiality.[689] Those like Ezra who 'literally and literarily hold the Torah' Stavrakopoulou affirms, are granted 'socio-religious and economic power' over those who are passive viewers and receptors.[690] Ezra is mediator and 'manipulator' of this Torah: he is a skilled scribe (סֹפֵר מָהִיר) of the Torah (7.6), who set his heart to seek (לִדְרוֹשׁ) the Torah, and to 'do it (לַעֲשׂוֹת) and to teach (לְלַמֵּד) its statutes and ordinances in Israel' (7.10). Ezra is presented as the authorized intermediary of Yhwh's words, commands, and Torah and thereby plays a key role in the masculinization of Yhwh: he bears and transmits Yhwh's commands and statutes and implements them as authoritative for Yehud (7.14).

Interestingly, there is no mention of Persian texts, decrees, or records in Ezra 9-10, unlike most of the rest of the book. The only authoritative texts in these chapters are the commandments of Yhwh, commanded through his 'servants the prophets' (9.10b), and the Torah referenced by Shecaniah in his call for covenant-making (10.3b). Most notably, the only divine 'decree' communicated by Ezra pertains not to the realm of the Temple or cultic practice, a concern evidenced in the decrees of Persian rulers earlier in the book, but marriage. Ezra's prayer suggests, however, that Yhwh is better able to control the Persian kings who build and benefit his Temple than he is *golah* men:

[689] Bowman and Woolf describe this as power over texts and power exercised through the use of texts; Alan K. Bowman and Greg Woolf, *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 6.
[690] Stavrakopoulou, "Materialist Reading," 234.

> And now, our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken your commandments (כי עזבנו מצותיך), which you commanded by your servants the prophets (אשׁר צוית ביד עבדיך הנביאים), saying: 'The land that you are entering to possess is a land unclean with the pollutions of the 'peoples of the lands' … Therefore, do not give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity…' (Ezra 9.10b-12).

Ezra presents these commandments as having been given in the past, to be 'registered' and transmitted by his servants. They are brought into the present-day of the text by Ezra, perhaps a product of his scholarly expertise (ספר מהיר בתורה) and dedicated study (דרשׁ) of the Torah.[691]

Ezra does not receive a prophetic word from Yhwh concerning intermarriage; he is not a prophet but a scribe, a scholar of the text given by Yhwh. Even as Darius consults the archives for Cyrus's temple building edict, Ezra consults the 'archive' of Yhwh's commandments. The continuity and stability evoked by the authority of past Persian decrees are similarly evoked by Yhwh's commands; both were issued in a different context but rendered applicable to a current situation. By reference to these commands, the choice of spouses that some *golah* men have made is judged to be a transgression: 'shall we break your commandments (להפר מצותיך) again and intermarry…?' (9.14a). The real problem faced by the *golah*, therefore, is not past captivity under Babylon, continued slavery under Persian domination, or even conflicts with neighbouring elites, but rather disobedience to the command of Yhwh, who is thereby rendered their true imperial overlord.[692]

Ezra's prayer speaks not to the solution to the problem of intermarriage, but rather to the consequences of transgression, evidencing Yhwh's power over

[691] Ezra 7.6,10.
[692] Also 9.10: כי עזבנו מצותיך

the life and death of the *golah*.[693] Exile, announced as the punishment for past transgression, remains a continued threat.[694] Ezra affirms Yhwh's power to control life and death as he has already done in the past: 'Would you not be angry with us until you destroy without remnant or survivor?' (9.14b).[695] It is feared that enraged, Yhwh may turn political and military powers against the *golah*, this time without 'holding back' (חשׂך, cf. 9.13). The generational implications of this destruction are emphasized: there will be no remnant, no survivors, and therefore no sons to possess the land, enjoy its benefits, and bear the name Israel.

The assembly that gathers in 10.14, is likewise concerned with averting Yhwh's wrath when it commits to a procedure for identifying the guilty men '…until the fierce wrath of our God (חרון אף־אלהינו) on this account is averted from us'. The expression 'turn away from his/your fierce wrath' (להשׁיב חרוןאף־אלהינו) is used in several biblical texts in which Yhwh is portrayed as having the power to destroy.[696] The threat of Israel's destruction at the hands of its own titular deity, or due to his abandonment, is a fear that pervades the biblical corpus; it affirms Yhwh's power over the life and death of his people. So too, the threat of Yhwh's wrath in Ezra 9-10 indicates an awareness that, while the *golah* may be subject to Persian domination, its continued existence as a people is not dependent on the Persian king, but on Yhwh. It is Yhwh who is elevated as overlord of the *golah*, and it is before/with Yhwh that the *golah* is called to covenant-making, to render its 'masculinity' to the deity: 'let us make a covenant with our God to expel the

[693] Artaxerxes' rescript announces that transgression of both Persian and divine law has dire consequences. Ezra is to punish those who refuse to obey, 'whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of their goods or for imprisonment' (7.26).
[694] Being 'given into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon' (5.12; cf. 9.7).
[695] הלוא תאנף־בנו עד כלה לאין שׁארית ופליטה. Similar terminology is used in Yhwh's response to Israel's worship of the golden calf in Exod 32-33 (see 32.10,12; 33.3,4).
[696] See Exod 32.12; Num 25.4; 1 Kgs 23.27; 2 Chr 29.10; 30.8; Jer 4.8.

women and those born from them' (10.3a). With this call, a shift is made from the landscape of Persian rule to Yhwh's position as ruler of the empires and suzerain of his people.

Conclusion

Yhwh's masculinity is called into question in Ezra 9-10 by Yhwh's silence, the past of exile, and the present of imperial domination. The ambiguity of Yhwh's status is suggested by the reports of the removal and return of the temple vessels (perhaps a cultic statue of Yhwh?) in Ezra 1. At issue is whether Yhwh can ensure the welfare of his people, whether he is good at 'being a male god'. Other gods and kings appear more masculine, more ready and able to provide and protect the people of Yhwh. It is this masculine performance that is negotiated in Ezra 9-10.[697]

Ezra's prayer mediates Yhwh's actions and authoritative speech and positions him as dominant over the Persian kings. Thus, Yhwh's distance and silence are appropriated as a model of imperial power: he is represented by servants, prophets, and scribes; he uses powerful monarchs as unwitting agents of his purposes; he emits authoritative texts with commands that are to be obeyed, on penalty of complete destruction. In Ezra 9-10, the manipulation of temple vessels is not at issue, rather it is the Torah that materially manifests and produces the masculinity of Yhwh. Yhwh's performance is not only that of a male god or king; he is a god who rules over the gods, a king who rules over the kings of the empires that dominate the known world and, more specifically, control the fate of the *golah*.

[697] This is more vehemently disputed in prophetic metaphor texts such as Hos 2 and Ezek 16 and 23, as discussed above.

In the book of Ezra, Yhwh is not a mighty warrior or a creator god, as he is in Deutero-Isaiah, or an overwhelming presence, as he is in the book of Ezekiel. Quite simply and quite radically, it is affirmed in Ezra 9-10 that it is Yhwh and not Cyrus who is the ruler of the kingdoms of the earth. It is Yhwh who builds the Temple and brings the exiles 'home' and it is Yhwh who provides for them. Furthermore, their 'story' is not determined by the movements of the great empires, but by their obedience to the commandments of this god. Yhwh's masculinity is performed through the skilful administration of the 'resources of the empire', even of the kings themselves. The issue to be addressed is whether he is capable of controlling his people and exacting their fidelity.

Chapter 5 Marriage, Masculinity, and the 'Foreign' Women

In the preceding chapters of this thesis, I explored the ways in which the masculinities of the peoples-of-the-lands, Ezra and the *golah*, and Yhwh are constructed in Ezra 9-10. I emphasized the relational production of masculinities in the text, as well as the situatedness and instability of such constructions. I now turn my focus in this last chapter to the issue of the marriages between *golah* men and 'foreign' women, a locus on which, I argue, masculinities among *golah* men are disputed. The problem with the marriages, as I have argued above, is not a matter of who the women are or what they do, but rather, how *golah* men have acted upon these women and their kin.

Golah masculinity, as noted in my discussion of Ezra's ritual performance in Chapter 3, is enacted and embodied in subordination to Yhwh. The *golah* men who seek out marriage, procreation and the land on their own terms are dissidents who perform masculinity in ways that are contrary to the commandments of Yhwh. The problem, I argue in this chapter, is that these performances of assertive, dominant masculinity – taking women in marriage, ensuring the perpetuation of the lineage, and securing land for that lineage to inherit – represent a challenge to the masculinity of the 'Ezra-group' – and even to Yhwh himself.

My reading here, as in the previous chapters, makes no attempt at reconstructing any actual events that might lie behind Ezra 9-10. I engage with the world constructed in and by the text and explore the social, religious, and gendered dynamic that is constituted therein, through the lens of masculinities.

5.1 Marriage and Masculinity

Ezra 9-10, as I discussed in Chapter 2, does not use the terminology of marriage more frequently found in the Hebrew Bible. Rather than 'taking' (לקח) daughters or women as wives, the *golah* men 'lift' or 'carry' (**נשׂא**) the daughters of the peoples-of-the-lands, and 'settle' (**הושׁיב**) the 'foreign' women.[698] My discussion in that chapter focused on the ways this terminology impacts the representation of the peoples-of-the-lands, who are portrayed as passive in the face of the more dominant *golah* men who act upon them and their daughters.[699] In this chapter, I delve further into these marriages, the terminology used to describe the actions of the *golah* men, and the ways in which these are implicated in relational constructions of masculinity among the men of the *golah*.

A primary assertion in Ezra 9-10 is that the marriages are problematic and should be rejected, even to the point of declaring necessary the expulsion of the wives and children of these *golah* men. Not all *golah* men are accused, however; the act of 'lifting' and 'settling' women from the peoples-of-the-lands is carried out only by those men who are implicated in the marriages.[700] A fundamental difference between men within the *golah* comes to the fore: some have acted

[698] **נשׂא**: 9.2,12; 10.44 and **הושׁיב**:10.2,10,14,17,18.

[699] See Chapter 2, section 2.2.

[700] Notably, there is no polemic directed explicitly at *golah* men who had married Babylonian or Persian wives. The issue at stake is the land of promise, and the problematic alliances are those established with inhabitants of the land – those who have a claim to the land. Babylonians and Persians are not conduits for possession of the land. See however, Johnson, who argues that the wives in question were Persian; Johnson, *The Holy Seed Has Been Defiled*: 52-53. It is important to note, however, that in the world of the narrative there is no mention of these other marriages and women. The masculine contest in this text is between the men who have sought access to the land through local women and those who have not. It should be noted that in other biblical texts women incorporated to Israel by marriage are not rendered problematic, as in the case of Ruth and Orpha who are, like the daughters of the peoples-of-the-land, 'lifted' (**נשׂא**) by Israelite men. For an interpretation of these as rape-marriages, see Wil Gafney, "Mother Knows Best: Messianic Surrogacy and Sexploitation in Ruth," in *Mother Goose, Mother Jones, Mommie Dearest: Biblical Mothers and Their Children*, ed. Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan and Tina Pippin (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 26-30.

upon the women and their kin, others have not. The terminology used for the marriages draws attention to these actions and to the dominant and active role of the men who perform them. Not only do they render inferior the masculinity of the peoples-of-the-lands, but they also call into question the masculine status of the *golah* men who *have not* taken 'foreign' women in marriage.

As noted previously, where נשׂא is used for the taking of wives, it is frequently a context in which the marriages are associated with the superior masculinity, virility, and military or political status of the men involved. This is most explicitly rendered in 2 Chronicles 13.19-21, where King Abijah, we are told, having taken cities away from Jeroboam, 'grew strong (יתחזק) and took for himself (ישׂא־לו) fourteen wives, and became the father (ויולד) of twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters' (13.21).[701] Abijah exhibits various attributes of dominant masculinity as evidenced in the Hebrew Bible and ancient West Asian representations: he achieves military success, he is strong, he takes wives, and he engenders many sons and daughters. Another king who 'lifts' other men's daughters is Rehoboam, whose repressive political and military strategies are highlighted in 2 Chronicles 10-11. Not only does he take (נשׂא) 18 wives and 60 concubines, he has (ויולד) 28 sons and 60 daughters with them, and places his sons in charge of 'all the districts of Judah and Benjamin, and in all the fortified cities' (2 Chr 11.22). Military might, marriage, and production of descendants are intertwined in these dominant performances of masculinity.

[701] A third example in Chronicles is that of the chief priest Jehoiada who, having orchestrated the overthrow of Athaliah in order to place Joash on the throne of Judah (2 Chr 23-24), 'lifted' two wives for himself, and became the father of sons and daughters' (2 Chr 24.3).

The verb הוֹשִׁיב similarly describes an act of dominance over others. The women in Ezra 10 are, literally, 'caused to dwell', by the men of the *golah*. Although the Hiphil of יָשַׁב is used for marriage only here and in Nehemiah 13.23, in numerous other texts the same verb form describes an action performed upon inferior parties that settles them in a particular place or a territory. Joseph, for example, is encouraged by the Pharaoh to settle (הוֹשִׁיב) his father and brothers in Egypt (Gen 47.6). Yhwh 'settles' Israel in the land of Canaan and promises to 'settle' the returned exiles in that very land (1 Sam 12.8; Jer 32.37), while Assyria 'settles' those deported from Samaria in 'Halah…and in the cities of the Medes' (2 Kgs 17.6,24,26).[702] Viewed within this broader biblical context, the spatial resonances of the verb הוֹשִׁיב suggest, as Eskenazi argues,[703] that in the world of the narrative these marriages involve 'settling' the women in a territory, or more narrowly in the households of the *golah*.[704]

The rhetorical move implied by this terminology was also discussed in Chapter 2 in relation to the peoples-of-the-lands but bears further analysis here. The act of 'settling', as in the examples mentioned above, is one of control and dominance, but not only over those who are 'settled'. It also presupposes control over the territory in which the settlement is to take place. I would argue, therefore, that settling peoples in a territory is, at the same time, a claim to that land and a means by which control of that territory is achieved and ensured. Thus, when Joseph is given the right to settle his kin in Egypt, it references both his superior

[702]The only time the object of הוֹשִׁיב is a woman, outside of Ezra 10, is Ps 113.9, where Yhwh 'settles/places the barren woman (in) a house'.
[703] Eskenazi, "The Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah," 522-523. She rightly notes that the land is a central concern in Ezra 9-10 and is 'embedded in the very language of the text' (520).
[704] While Eskenazi suggests that these marriages may have elevated the status of the women, Smith-Christopher posits, to the contrary, that the men are socially elevated by the marriage ties to the peoples-of-the-lands. See "The Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah," 522; Smith-Christopher, "The Mixed Marriage Crisis," 243-265.

status in relation to his father and brothers, as well as his authority in the land of Egypt and over the territory to which he is given access (Gen 47.6). The relationship between the 'settling' of peoples and claims to a territory is clearly evidenced in 2 Kings 17.24 where, having deported Israelites from Samaria, Assyria 'settles' (יוֹשֵׁב, Hiphil) in Samaria deportees brought from other conquered territories. Assyria thereby 'took possession (יִרְשׁוּ) of Samaria and dwelled (יֹשְׁבוּ) in its cities' (2 Kgs 17.24b).[705] Solomon likewise settles Israelites in rebuilt cities that have been given to him by the King of Tyre, thereby laying claim to those cities (2 Chr 8.2).[706] And when Yhwh settles the exiles in the land of promise, he lays claim to that land for himself and for his subject people.[707] This is the case of Ezra 1.2-3 where the 'return' of the exiles is announced with the goal that they build a house for Yhwh in Jerusalem.

Similar rhetoric is at work in Ezra 9-10, I suggest. The *golah* men who 'settle' the 'foreign' women by taking them as wives, lay claim to the land into which these women are 'settled'. Indeed, this move renders the peoples-of-the-lands outsiders in their own land, as I have argued. More significantly, those I refer to as the 'Ezra-group', those who have not married foreign women, are excluded from this means of access to the land. The 'lifting' and 'settling' of women is a performance of masculinity that is problematic for the Ezra-group. Not only does it enhance the status of the married men but it also evidences disputes within the *golah* concerning how normative performances of *golah* masculinity are defined and monitored.

[705] Also 2 Kgs 17.26, where the king of Assyria is warned that 'the nations you have carried away and placed (תּוֹשֵׁב) in the cities of Samaria do not know the law of the god of the land…' On Samaria as a province of Assyria, see

[706] 2 Chr 8.2; Isa 54.3.

[707] See Hos 11.11; Isa 54.3; Jer 32.37; Ezek 36.11,33.

Land possession in the Hebrew Bible is often mediated by means of women, whether through marriage, conquest or negotiation. Abraham's first holding in the land of Canaan is a field purchased from the Hittites as a burial plot for Sarah.[708] Rahab the prostitute opens her doors – and by strong implication, her legs – to the Israelite spies, and thereby opens the land for 'Israelite' armies to conquer (Josh 2).[709] Achsah, Caleb's daughter is the incentive offered for the conquest of Kiriath-Sepher (Judg 1.12). Most explicitly, in Genesis 34, Shechem's desire for Jacob's daughter Dinah opens the land to settlement by the sons of Jacob who are invited to

> *make marriages* with us (והתחתנו), *give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves*; you shall live (ישׁב) with us; and the land shall become open to you (והארץ תהיה לפניכם); live (ישׁב) and trade in it and get property in it (והאחזו בה) (Gen 34.10).[710]

The Hithpael of the verb חתן describes a kinship agreement that establishes ties between two non-kinship groups, in this case, the sons of Jacob and the sons of Hamor.[711] Due to the sexual violation of Dinah, the sons of Jacob reject this offer and act to redress their aggrieved masculinity.[712] The proposed arrangement

[708] Gen 23.17-20. On this text as a Persian Period land claim, Stavrakopoulou, *Land of our Fathers*: 29-53.

[709] The king of Jericho calls on Rahab to send out the men that have 'entered into you' (בוא אל־), a phrase used in some texts for sexual relations (cf. Gen 16.4; 19.5; 29.21; 29.23.

[710] This mutually beneficial proposal is tempered, however, by the humiliating effects of the act perpetrated upon Dinah by Shechem.

[711]Quite literally, the verb means 'to make oneself a son-in-law', evidencing the primary relationship established as one between woman's father and husband, in other words, between the two kinship groups involved in the union. See Guenther, "A Typology of Israelite Marriage: Kinship, Socio-Economic, and Religious Factors," 390-398; E Kutsch, "htn," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol V*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 270-277. The Hithpael verb form is used primarily in contexts where such unions are polemical (especially, Deut 7.3; Josh 23.12; 1 Kgs 3.1; 2 Chr 18.1; Ezra 9.14).

[712] The sons of Jacob have been humiliated by the sexual possession of Dinah by Shechem, a challenge to their masculinity, and recuperate their masculine honour by cheating and humiliating the Shechemites. Having requested that the men be circumcised, the sons of Jacob attack them in a weakened state, destroy them, plunder the city, and take their women by force (Gen 34.25-29).

indicates, however, that the taking of daughters is envisioned as a means by which to settle and secure life in a new territory.[713]

Marriage is also part of the settlement strategy announced by Jeremiah in his letter to the exiles (Jer 29). Staving off claims that the Exile would soon be over and countering futile attempts to resist Babylonian domination, Jeremiah calls on the exiles to settle and go on with their lives in Babylon (Jer 29.1-7). The men are exhorted to

> …take wives (קחו נשים) and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons (וקחו לבניכם נשים), and give your daughters in marriage (ואת־בנותיכם תנו לאנשים), that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease (Jer 29.6).[714]

No restriction is placed on the identity of the women who may be taken in marriage; the call is to settle in Babylon by establishing ties to other inhabitants and engendering children with them. Getting married, having children, building and planting (Jer 29.5), are ways in which the exiles are to seek the welfare (שלום) of Babylon, which in turn ensures their own welfare (Jer 29.7).

Jeremiah's exhortation to exchange daughters and establish marriage ties in a city full of non-Israelite peoples seems contrary to the logic of Ezra 9-10 where such marriages are rejected, where the inhabitants are abominable, and where the land is impure. Contrary to Jeremiah 29.7, the *golah* is *not* to seek the welfare (שלום וטוב) of the peoples-of-the-lands (Ezra 9.12b). The settlement strategy advocated by Jeremiah is appropriate for Babylon, but is not acceptable,

---

[713] See Ruth 1.4, where Mahlon and Chilion take (נשא) Moabite wives and live (ישב, settle) in Moab for ten years, and other examples discussed in what follows.

[714] While it might be argued that the marriages are intended to be among the exiles, Eberhard Bons posits that it is unlikely that Jeremiah's intention was that they should prosper and settle without establishing ties to the Babylonians. See his discussion of Jer 29 in light of Ezra 9 and the socio-economic implications of marriage in these texts; Eberhard Bons, "Work for the Good of the City to Which I Have Exiled You: Reflections on Jeremiah's Instructions to the Exiles in Jer 29:5-7," *Anales de Teología* 19, no. 1 (2017): 7-22.

for *golah* settlement of the land of Israel, the land promised by Yhwh to Israel's forefathers.[715] It is akin, however, to the strategy employed by the *golah* men who marry the daughters of the peoples-of-the-lands, and thereby stake a claim to the territory and garner 'the good of the land' (Ezra 9.12b). The Ezra-group, those who have not married foreign women, look to Yhwh, the supreme monarch and provider, to give them the land as their possession. Land possession, however, is not included among beneficent acts with which Yhwh favours the *golah* in Ezra 9.8-9. They are given a 'tent peg' (יתד) in 'your holy place' (9.8), but it is an impermanent status that is a far cry from the possession that is sought.

Even more problematically for the Ezra-group, the men of the *golah* who 'lift' and 'settle' the women, appear to have engendered children (Ezra 10.3,44b).[716] This should not come as a surprise, as one of the primary reasons for marriage in the Hebrew Bible is to produce descendants, perpetuate the lineage, and ensure the transmission of inheritance within that lineage.[717] Marriage and procreation are performances of dominant masculinity and evidence the virility and fertility of the *golah* men who enact them.[718] These men

[715] The 'land of Israel' receives special treatment in the Hebrew Bible. In Chr 36.21, the Exile is declared a sabbath rest for the land, that is broken by the untoward efforts made by the *golah* men who seek to settle the land by 'lifting' and 'settling' local women. The special, even sacral status of the land of Israel is laid out in Lev 25, where the land is declared to by Yhwh's and Israel its tenants (v. 23) and its sabbath rest (vv. 20-21) and redemption (vv.23-28) are prescribed.

[716] The terminology used for these children is ambiguous, as noted in the Introduction, but does not obscure the fact that the women have children.

[717] The natural progression, Block notes, is for a man to 'know' (ידע) his wife after which she conceives (ותהר) and gives birth (ותלד), as in Gen 4.1 and 1 Sam 1.19-20; Block, "Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel," 47 n.59.

[718] Male sexuality in the Hebrew Bible, Graybill argues, is a 'practice of power. Male sexual relations with, and control of, women, figure into the larger economy of masculinity and domination'; Rhiannon Graybill, "Male-Female Sexuality: Hebrew Bible," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Gender Studies*, ed. Julia M. O'Brien (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 446. The object of marriage, as Matthews observes, aside from 'the economic considerations of the families who had arranged it, was to produce children who would inherit the parents property, care for them as they aged, and continue to make the offerings necessary to the ancestor cult'; Victor H. Matthews, "Marriage and Family in the Ancient Near East," in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*, ed. Ken M. Campbell (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 16. On the importance of male virility and the production of offspring as key markers of masculinity, see Hoffner, "Symbols for Masculinity and Femininity."; Mark K.

have produced ‘seed’ that dwells in the land. The ‘guilty’ men of the *golah* have shed their liminal status as ‘exiles’ and have become ‘settled’, via the ‘foreign’ women.

The unproductive, unsettled masculinity of the Ezra-group, however, is embraced in the text as the appropriate performance of masculinity for all *golah* men. The dominant performance of the ‘guilty’ is a transgression of the *golah*’s relationship with Yhwh. They have enhanced their masculinity without divine participation and beyond the bounds of divine control (and the control of the Ezra-group). In keeping with the biblical meta-narrative of divine land-ownership, the Ezra-group advocates that it is Yhwh, declared in Ezra 1.2 to be the ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth, who gives the land to Israel and who determines the conditions under which it is to be entered and possessed.[719] Foremost among these conditions in Ezra 9-10 is the prohibition of intermarriage. *Golah* men are not to enter the land by entering ‘foreign’ women.

Marriage requires particular oversight in the Hebrew Bible where Israel’s possession of the land of Canaan is at stake.[720] The people of Israel are reminded time and again that the land is given to them by Yhwh,[721] and is not to be ‘settled’ by establishing marriage ties with indigenous inhabitants.[722] Joshua’s farewell address lays out the consequences of intermarriage with respect to the land:

George, "Masculinity and Its Regimentation in Deuteronomy," in *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, ed. Ovidiu Creanga (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), 73-77; Lipka, "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks," 275.

[719] Ezra 9.11[a]: **באים** לרשׁתה. This giving of land to Yhwh’s people as a possession, as argued above, is a means by which Yhwh himself establishes a claim to the land.

[720] See Deut 7.3-4; Exod 34.15-16; Josh 23.7,12-13; and Judg 3.5. The problem with intermarriage in Deuteronomistic texts is that the relationships established with the indigenous peoples lead Israelite men after other gods.

[721] Gen 12.7; 13.17; Exod 6.4; 33.1 and throughout the book of Deuteronomy.

[722] Exod 34.15-16; Deut 7.3-4; also, Josh 23.12-13; Judg 3.5.

> …if you join (דבק) the remnant of these nations, and you intermarry with them (התחתן), and enter into them and they into you (ובאתם בהם והם בכם), know assuredly that Yhwh your God will not continue to drive out these nations…until you perish (אבד) from the good land that Yhwh your God has given you (23.12-13).

The term התחתן used in Joshua 23.12 references alliances between kinship groups – Israelites and non-Israelites in this case – established through marriage. These are described in sexualized terms: 'so that you enter them and they in you' (ובאתם בהם והם בכם). Joshua does not warn specifically against taking 'foreign' women, but rather against the ties that are established through these unions. These ties involve men (husband and father-in-law) and the kinship groups they represent.[723] The mutual taking and giving of daughters, as noted in the discussion of Genesis 34 and Jeremiah 29 above, is a settlement strategy that provides access to a specific territory. It is not surprising, therefore, that intermarriage – the giving and taking of daughters – is forbidden when the land of Canaan is at stake, and that these marriages are often accompanied by prohibitions concerning the making of covenants with these peoples and admonishments concerning infidelity to Yhwh, the giver of the land.[724]

Prohibitions against intermarriage and covenants with the inhabitants of Canaan, therefore, evidence a concern with the means by which land is acquired and inhabited. The land is to be given by Yhwh, not acquired through intermarriage or covenants with the local inhabitants, much less through adherence to their gods. Furthermore, the land is not earned or even deserved by Israel; as the book of Deuteronomy insists, it is Yhwh's gift.[725] This ideology of

[723] Military, economic or cultic alliances between men are established through marriage (e.g. 1 Sam 18.26; 1 Kgs 3.1; 2 Chr 18.1; Neh 6.18; 13.28).
[724] See Deut 7.2; Exod 34.15-16; Judg 2.2 and Edenburg's argument that in the Persian Period covenant was applied to connubium; Edenburg, "From Covenant to Connubium," 131-144.
[725] Deut 1.21; 6.10-12; 7.7-8; 9.1-6.

land possession secures Yhwh's dominant status as protector and provider of the *golah* and renders his subject people beholden to his commandments.[726] Yhwh's effective control over his people ensures their obedience and thereby his own permanence in the land.[727]

Similarly, it is Yhwh who opens the womb,[728] and it is Yhwh who provides the 'seed' that will possess and dwell in the land of Canaan.[729] This dynamic in the Hebrew Bible suggests that the 'productive' *golah* marriages not only undermine the masculinity of the non-married *golah* men, they also undermine the masculinity of Yhwh. They render Yhwh expendable for the tasks of providing land and descendants – both of which are primary performances of divine masculinity throughout the biblical 'story' of Israel.[730] Yhwh, therefore, asserts his masculinity by affirming his crucial role in the production of the descendants who are to possess the land that he gives Israel. The sons of *golah* men and 'foreign' women are rejected, as are Abraham's own attempts in the Genesis narratives at producing offspring to inherit the land.[731]

---

[726] See Deut 12.1: 'These are the statutes and ordinances that you must be careful to do in the land that Yhwh, the God of your ancestors, has given you to possess all the days that you live on the earth'.

[727] Cf. Ezek 8-10, where the abominable practices of Israel leave Yhwh no choice but to abandon his temple and city and to follow his exiles to Babylon.

[728] Yhwh opens and closes the womb in Gen 16.2; 20.18; 30.2; 1 Sam 1.5; Hos 9.7.

[729] In the story of Israel's progenitors, Abraham is promised a 'seed' to whom the land will be given: 'To your seed I will give this land' (Gen 12.7).; also Gen 13.15,17; 15.7,18; 17.9. 9.

[730] Eilberg-Schwartz has argued that women's reproductive capacity makes Israelite men expendable in the relationship with Yhwh. The dynamic I propose in this reading, however, takes into consideration the implications of both women's fertility and men's virility for the masculinity of the deity. See Eilberg-Schwartz, *God's Phallus and Other Problems for Men and Monotheism*: 137-142.

[731] Abraham seeks to adopt his servant and has a son with Hagar. Both are rejected as viable 'seed' to inhabit the land. The son who will inherit that land is Isaac, the son that is 'engendered' by Yhwh, that is, by means of Yhwh's intervention (Gen 21.1-7; cf. Gen 25.21; 29.31-35; 30.22-24). Deborah Sawyer insightfully argues that Yhwh appropriates Abraham's masculinity, that is, his role as husband, father, and producer of progeny. In the face of Yhwh, she notes, 'male power is emasculated' in order that the masculinity of the male god be 'triumphant and unchallenged'; Deborah F. Sawyer, "Biblical Gender Strategies: The Case of Abraham's Masculinity," in *Gender, Religion, and Diversity: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Ursula King and Tina Beattie (London; New York: Continuum, 2004), 164-171.

In Ezra 9-10, the 'guilty' men that have entered the land and produced offspring outside these parameters and likewise have challenged Yhwh's role. The marriages are, therefore, declared to be transgressive performances of masculinity, acts of infidelity (מעל) to Yhwh that threaten the well-being of the collective *golah* (Ezra 9.14-15). They are declared to be such by various persons and groups associated with Ezra throughout the text,[732] including the officials who introduce the matter (9.2b), the 'tremblers' who join in Ezra's mourning (9.4), Shecaniah who announces that the marriages are a betrayal of the relationship with Yhwh (10.3),[733] and Ezra who accuses the *golah* of compounding the already significant guilt of the community with this infidelity (10.10).[734]

In the Hebrew Bible, the term מעל designates a sin against the deity, either in the form of trespass against the sancta or the violation of an oath.[735] In other words, Yhwh is the aggrieved party of מעל.[736] Common to accusations of מעל is that those so accused have transgressed boundaries and norms established by Yhwh, and have sought benefits or security through their own efforts.[737] The מעל committed by Achan in Joshua 7 is a notable example, with links to Ezra 9-10 in

[732] The term מעל is used in substantive form in 9.2,4 and 10.6, and verbal form in 10.2,10.

[733] 10.3: 'We have been unfaithful (מעל) to our God and have settled foreign women from the peoples of the land' (10.3).

[734] 10.10: 'you have been unfaithful (מעל) and have settled foreign women, *and so increased the guilt* (אשמה) of Israel' (10.10).

[735] Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*: 345; "The Concept of Ma'al in the Bible and the Ancient Near East," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 96, no. 2 (1976); Helmer Ringgren, "māʿl," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol VIII*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997). See cases of מעל in Lev 5.15; 6.2; 26.40; Num 31.16; Deut 32.51; Josh 7.1; 22.16,20,22,31; 1 Chr 2.7; 5.25; 9.1; 10.13; 2 Chr 12.2; 26.16-18; 29.19; 30.7; 33.19; 36.14; Neh 1.8; 13.27; Ezek 14.13; 15.8; 17.20; 20.27; 39.26; Dan 9.7.

[736] The exception is Num 5.12,27 where a woman is accused of being unfaithful to her husband. In Lev 6.2 and Num 5.6 a person is wronged, but it is qualified as a trespass against Yhwh. The violation of a political oath against the king of Babylon, is similarly described as a trespass against Yhwh in Ezek 17.20. See Milgrom, "The Concept of Ma'al in the Bible and the Ancient Near East," 236-247; Ringgren, "māʿl."

[737] Such acts are מעל, I suggest, because they challenge Yhwh's masculine performance of provision, protection, and dominance.

terms of terminology and argumentation, as noted by Mark Boda.[738] Achan takes the חרם, spoils devoted to destruction, for himself and brings upon Israel the wrath of Yhwh (Josh 7.1), that results in defeat at the battle of Ai (7.10-13). As a soldier, Achan enacts a dominant performance of masculinity, but it is a masculine performance that is transgressive of the relationship with Yhwh and the wellbeing of the social group. The consequences of מעל are severe in many biblical texts: Yhwh responds to מעל with invasion, conquest and/or exile,[739] plague,[740] illness or death,[741] famine, and desolation.[742] These acts reassert the appropriate subordination and dependence of Israelite men in relation to Yhwh.

Thus, the Ezra-group not only declares the marriages to be unacceptable but even more so and more grievously, they are a transgression of the relationship with Yhwh that must be addressed. This 'transgressively' dominant masculine performance of the married men, by which some seek to 'eat the good of the land and give it as a possession to your sons forever' (9.12b) on their own terms, rather than Yhwh's, must be brought under control and into conformity with the masculinity of mourning, self-abasement, and subordination embodied by Ezra. The bodies, practices, and alliances of *golah* men must be 'managed' in

[738] Boda describes the following shared elements in these texts: the transgression is declared to be a מעל in both texts; both Joshua and Ezra tear their clothes, fall down, and remain fallen until the evening where they are joined by other men; in both, a covenant is referenced, the guilty party is identified in an assembly; there are calls to confession; confession, and punishment. Both texts emphasize the urgent need to 'turn away the fierce wrath of Yhwh'; Boda, *Praying the Tradition*: 58-59.

[739] Lev 26.39; 1 Chr 5.25-26; 9.1; 2Chr 12.2; 30.7; 36.14-17; Ezek 17.20; 20.27-37.

[740] Num 31.16.

[741] Josh 7.1-15; 22.20; 1 Chr 10.13; Deut 32.51; 2 Chr 26.16-21.

[742] While most cases of מעל in Lev and Num are addressed either by a guilt offering (Lev 5.16), or through restitution of property (Lev 6.2-5; Num 5.6-8), its use in the closing chapters of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy attribute much graver consequences to acts characterized as מעל (see, Lev 26.40; Num 31.16; Deut 32.51).

Ezra 9-10 and realigned to the demands of the relationship with Yhwh in order to avoid challenging divine masculinity; that is, in order to avoid his wrath.

5.2 Managing Men

Feminist critics have highlighted the degree of control men in the Hebrew Bible are awarded over the women of their households, and women more generally. A wife is socially and sexually subordinate to her husband, while a father controls the sexuality, body, and the very life and death, of his daughter.[743] As Esther Fuchs explains, in the Hebrew Bible

> female sexuality needs to be controlled, female procreativity is to be used, female political power needs to be contained…When all is said and done, the biblical narrative justifies the domination of women and children – by male heads of households, and male national and religious leaders.[744]

Not only women, however, but also men are placed under control of other men in the Hebrew Bible. Political, military, and cultic contexts are rife with men who dominate other men and control their bodies, even their sexuality.[745] And yet this is rarely considered as a gendered matter in biblical studies.

Biblical cultic and social prescriptions exhibit a significant concern with 'managing' men, their bodies, relationships, and performance of masculinity. The books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers categorize, classify, and determine the cultic and ritual status of Israelites – predominantly Israelite men. Men are ranked, among other things, by lineage, degrees of holiness, the degrees of access they are granted to cultic space, and the cultic activities in which they are allowed

[743] Stiebert, *Fathers and Daughters in the Hebrew Bible*: 153.
[744] Esther Fuchs, *Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 32.
[745] See, for example, prohibitions against sexual relations with certain members of the household in Lev 18 and 20; with menstruating women (Lev 15.24; 18.19; Ezek 18.6; 22.10); with animals (Lev 18.23), and with another man's wife or betrothed (Ezek 18.6; Deut 22.22-30).

participation.[746] Deuteronomy likewise, Mark George argues, displays a system of regimentation by means of which 'classifications and categorizations' are deployed that 'shape and control' the lives of Israelite men.[747] The Torah is directed primarily to men, and its stipulations are concerned with the behaviour of Israelite men: what they eat, whom they marry, which god they worship, where and how they worship, when and how they sacrifice.[748] These texts determine what alliances they establish, how they manage their households, their wives and daughters, their servants and slaves, and how they address grievances. These texts also manage the status of men's skin and genital emissions, who they have sexual relations with, how they are to secure their lineage and distribute their inheritance. In short, the Torah determines the appropriate behaviour of Israelite men and 'manages' their masculinity, rendering it subordinate to Yhwh and his authorized representatives.

I have referred in this thesis to various categories and classifications assigned to men in Ezra 9-10 and the implications thereof: the peoples-of-the-lands are cast as women, abominable, foreign, and impure; the sons of the *golah* are the holy seed, they are Israel, they are men. But as Ilona Zsolnay observes, since masculinities are in a constant state of 'flux, negotiation and outright war',[749] a culturally and socially dominant performance of masculinity must continually be asserted, even as the inferiority of other masculinities must be emphasized. Where these are 'feminized', the task is simplified. But when the challenge comes

[746] See Olyan, *Rites and Rank*: 10-14.
[747] George, "Masculinity and Its Regimentation in Deuteronomy," 64-65.
[748] Women are often affected by Torah legislation, but are not addressed directly, except where they are included in a generic plural 'you'. See Karin Finsterbusch, "Women between Subordination and Independence: Reflections on Gender-Related Legal Texts of the Torah," in *Torah*, ed. Irmtraud Fischer, Mercedes Navarro Puerto, and Andrea Taschl-Erber (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 407-435.
[749] Zsolnay, "Introduction," 16.

from those who exhibit culturally exalted masculine traits and performances, these must be 'managed'. In what follows, I consider the strategies by which the transgressive masculinity of the 'guilty' *golah* men is addressed, redressed, and managed by the Ezra-group.

Covenant and Community

Ezra 9-10 begins with an accusation against a group of men who have taken daughters from the peoples-of-the-lands (9,1-2). Far from calling out the men and reprimanding them, Ezra's prayer of penitence and confession in 9.6-15 extends this transgression to the entire community. He classifies the *golah* as a community of guilt, carriers of the guilt of the fathers that led to captivity and to 'shame of face' (9.6-7). The entire *golah*, past and present, is characterized by Ezra as a people of iniquity, guilt, and evil deeds; they have forsaken and transgressed the commandments of this god.[750]

Yhwh, on the other hand, is declared to be just (צדיק, 9.15) and faithful (לא עזבנו, 9.9); he has extended favour to the *golah* (תחנה, חסד, 9.8-9), and punished them less than their iniquities deserved (חשׂכת למטה מעוננו, 9.13).[751] The interpretation of present distress in the prayer is fundamentally Deuteronomistic: it is a consequence of the transgression of the relationship with Yhwh that is predicated on obedience to his commands. [752] There are no nuanced qualifications in the prayer: the *golah* is guilty, Yhwh is just. The affirmation of

[750] עון: 9.6,7,13; אשׁמה: 9.7,13,15, 19; מעשׂה רע: 9.13; עזבנו מצותיך: 9.10; להפר מצותיך: 9.14.

[751] צדיק:9.14; לא עזבנו:9.9; חסד:9.9; תחנה,:9.8

[752] Boda, "Confession as Theological Expression:," 46-49. On the influence of Priestly, Deuteronomistic, and prophetic traditions on Second Temple penitential prayers, see "Confession as Theological Expression:," 26-50; Rom-Shiloni, "Seeking the Favor of God Vol. 1," 62-64.

collective guilt binds this community together and to the 'fathers' before them,[753] and makes the marriages not only a matter of public interest but survival. Thus, by rendering intermarriage a transgression of the relationship with Yhwh, mediated by his commandments (9.10b-12), Ezra's prayer effectively positions the entire *golah* at the mercy of Yhwh's wrath.

The call to action comes not from Ezra, but from a heretofore unmentioned man, Shecaniah, the son of Jehiel and a descendant of Elam (10.3).[754] He affirms the collective guilt of the *golah* but also proposes a way to redress the matter: 'We have been unfaithful to our God and have married foreign women from the peoples-of-the-lands, but even now there is hope for Israel in spite of this' (10.2). Shecaniah then calls for the community to repair the relationship by making 'a covenant with/to our God (נכרת־ברית לאלהינו) to expel (**חוציא**) the women and those born from them' (10.3).[755]

The phrase כרת ברית with which Shecaniah calls the *golah* to action is variously used in the Hebrew Bible to designate agreements or alliances between

[753] Ezra 9.6. On the cumulative and intergenerational nature of sin in penitential prayers, see Boda, "Confession as Theological Expression:," 34-39. Guilt is cumulative, he notes, but only has implications for future generations if they incur in similar behaviour (39).

[754] The identity of the Shecaniah, the son of Jehiel and a descendant of Elam in Ezra 10.2 has raised questions for scholars. Several Shecaniahs are mentioned in Ezra 8.3,5 and Nehemiah 3.29; 6.18, 12.3, the list of 'returnees' in Ezra 2 mentions two different Elams (2.7,31), and several men of the household of Elam are listed as having married foreign women in 10.26, including Jehiel, the father of Shecaniah. This would mean, however, that Shecaniah is himself the son of a mixed marriage and is advocating his own expulsion, which seems unlikely.

[755] If this covenant is intended to renew the covenant with Yhwh in the face of transgression, as the terminology might suggest, it is curious that the call comes from Shecaniah rather than Ezra, as might be expected. This may be explained, perhaps, by Ezra's role as the mediator of the divine commands and interpreter of Torah. He is not the convener, but rather the authority figure on which the terms of the covenant are defined.

men,[756] between Yhwh and specific men in the 'pre-story' and 'story' of Israel,[757] and between Yhwh and Israel.[758] The covenant between Yhwh and Israel places obligations on Yhwh to be the god of Israel, but most importantly, it determines and effectively 'manages' all aspects of the life of the people of Israel, including, and most particularly, Israelite men.[759] The call to 'make a covenant with our God' brings the *golah* together as the people of Yhwh. It is important to note that the 'guilty' men are not excluded from this community. Rather, they are brought under 'management' by calling them to affirm their ties to the *golah*/Yhwh by rejecting their ties to the peoples-of-the-lands and whatever benefits derived thereof.

Scholars have debated the meaning that should be attached to כרת ברית in Ezra 10.3. Dennis McCarthy, Klaus Baltzer, Juha Pakkala, and Mark Boda, among others, argue that the phrase does indeed describe a covenant between the *golah* and the deity, one that follows in the steps of the covenant between Yhwh and Israel on Mount Horeb/Sinai, and the covenant renewal under Josiah (2 Kgs 23.3), albeit with some particularities.[760] On the other hand, David Sperling

[756] Cf. Abraham and Abimelech (Gen 21.27), Isaac and Abimelech (Gen 26.28), Jacob and Laban (Gen 31.44), Joshua (Israel) and the Gibeonites (Josh 9.1-10.1), Jonathan and David (1 Sam 18.3; 20.8; 11-17; 23.18); David and Abner (2 Sam 3.12-13); David and the elders of Israel (2 Sam 5.3; 1 Chr 11.3); Solomon and Hiram (1Kgs 5.26); Asa and Ben-Hadad (1 Kgs 15.19; 2 Chr 16.3); Ahab and Ben-Hadad (1 Kgs 20.34); Jehoiada and the temple guards (2 Kgs 11.4; 2 Chr 23.1); Joash and the people (2 Kgs 11.17; 2 Chr 23.3); and Zedekiah and the people of Jerusalem (Jer 34.8

[757] Especially the covenants with Noah (Gen 9.8-17), Abraham (Gen 15.18-21; 17.1-22); and David (2 Sam 23.5; Ps 89.3).

[758] The covenant with Israel on Mount Sinai and on the plains of Moab (Exod 34.10,27; Deut 4.13; 29.1).

[759] In Exod 19.8, for example, Moses sets the 'words of the covenant' before the elders first, and then before the people.

[760] Dennis J. McCarthy, "Covenant and Law in Chronicles-Nehemiah," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44(1982): 26; Klaus Baltzer, *The Covenant Formulary in Old Testament, Jewish, and Early Christian Writings* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971); Pakkala, *Ezra the Scribe*: 104,133,233. Boda argues for a Deuteronomistic model of covenant in Ezra 9-10, but one in which there is a focus on specific stipulations, where covenant is democratized, that is, where individual commitment is emphasized and the leader has a lesser role, and where the covenant is presented as an initiative of the community that seeks to avoid or overcome the curse of the covenant. See Boda, *Praying the Tradition*: 36-41. Blenkinsopp also sees similarities, but suggests that this 'type of pact may be seen as transitional between the standard Deuteronomic form of the covenant in which the entire people is involved and the kind of sectarian covenant exemplified in the Qumran texts, especially the Damascus Document'; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 105.

argues, along with Bob Becking and Sarah Japhet, that in post-exilic texts the term ברית no longer indexes the 'conditional covenant' between Yhwh and Israel, because the 'unconditional covenant, by which Yahweh and Israel remained in permanent relation had triumphed over the notion of a covenant that might be broken'.[761] Japhet further emphasises that Ezra 10.3 describes a commitment 'between parties to obey Yhwh' and not a contract between Israel and Yhwh.[762]

A particular problem is the form כרת ברית ל- used in Ezra 10.3, as it is usually employed where a covenant is imposed by a superior party upon an inferior.[763] This would mean the *golah* imposes a covenant on Yhwh, which cannot be the case. The preposition ל- may also be understood to indicate that the covenant is sworn before, rather than with, Yhwh. It is not used in this way elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, however; instead, לפני is used where covenants are explicitly described as being made 'before Yhwh'.[764]

I would argue that the function of כרת ברית in Ezra 10.3 may have less to do with the type of relationship it refers to than with the way it resonates with other biblical covenant-making accounts. It may well be the case that the call to a covenant in 10.3 is one that seeks a commitment to a course of action, as Japhet

[761] S. David Sperling, "Rethinking Covenant in Late Biblical Books," *Biblica* 70, no. 1 (1989): 59-60. Becking similarly posits that Ezra 10.3 depicts a 'political ritual to bind the community to a specific moral rule'; Becking, "Continuity and Community," 262. See also Martin Noth who argues that 'in the late Old Testament literature the word "covenant" (used in the figurative sense of the relationship between God and the people) was emptied of all its meaning'; Martin Noth, *The Laws in the Pentateuch, and Other Studies* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 93. For a similar position, see George E. Mendenhall and Gary A. Herion, "Covenant," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol I*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1194.The positions of Noth and Mendenhall reflect, at least in part, a disparaging view of post-exilic Judaism as a religion of empty ritual.

[762] Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*, English ed. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 91.

[763] See Gen 15.18; 34.12; Josh 9.15; 24.26; Moshe Weinfeld, "bĕrîth," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol II*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 256-259.

[764] As in 2 Kgs 23.3 and 2 Chr 34.31.

argues,[765] but these resonances should not be overlooked as an important aspect of the social, religious, and gendered dynamic of the text. The literary, structural, and lexical ties between Ezra 9-10 and Josiah's covenant 'renewal' (2 Kgs 23 and 2 Chr 34) are notable in this respect.[766]

In both Ezra 9-10 and the Josiah covenant, the Torah is the authoritative text that produces awareness of transgression.[767] The Torah is introduced in both narratives as that which has been lost or forgotten and is rediscovered or reintroduced: it is found during temple restoration in the Josiah narrative, and in Ezra 9-10, it is brought to Yehud by Ezra, the scribe-priest.[768] Both leaders perform rituals of lament and self-debasement before Yhwh in the face of the announced transgression seeking a response from the deity and relief from his wrath and punishment.[769] In both texts, the covenant made to/before Yhwh commits the people to fulfil the commandments of Yhwh and address the

[765] Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*: 91.

[766] Baltzer identifies several elements in Ezra 9-10 that he describes as characteristic of covenant renewals. These include an antecedent history which is at the same time a confession of sin (Ezra 9.6-15), confession of present transgression (10.2), stipulations (10.3), and oath (10.5); Baltzer, *The Covenant Formulary*: 43-38.

[767] Ezra 9.10-12; 10.3b; 2 Kgs 23.11-13 (cf. 2 Chr 34.19-28)

[768] The motif of the discovered text that is presumed to have been lost serves to validate or authorize practices, ideological positions, and/or the broader narrative in which 'book finding' is reported. See Jonathan Ben-Dov, "Writing as Oracle and as Law: New Contexts for the Book-Find of King Josiah," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 2 (2008): 223-239; Katherine M. Stott, "Finding the Lost Book of the Law: Re-Reading the Story of 'the Book of the Law' (Deuteronomy - 2 Kings) in Light of Classical Literature," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 30(2005): 153-169; Thomas C. Römer, "Transformations in Deuteronomistic and Biblical Historiography: On 'Book-Finding' and Other Literary Strategies," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 109(1997): 1-11; Nadav Na'aman, "The 'Discovered Book' and the Legitimation of Josiah's Reform," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, no. 1 (2011). Stott identifies at least two cases of lost and found documents in the book of Ezra. The most obvious case is the Cyrus Edict that was forgotten and then found by Darius in Ezra 6.1-5 and serves to authorize *golah* temple building. But in Ezra 4.13-10 a reference is made to annals that provide evidence of Jerusalem's seditious past and convince Artaxerxes to detain temple building. Katherine M. Stott, *Why Did They Write This Way?: Reflections on References to Written Documents in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Literature*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 128-133. I would argue that the Torah embodied by Ezra in chapters 7-10 is a variation on this trope. Ezra reminds the *golah* that intermarriage was forbidden by Yhwh long ago in his commands to the prophets.

[769] Ezra 9.3-10.1; 2 Kgs 22.11-19 (2 Chr 34.19-27). Josiah consults the prophetess Huldah for a word from Yhwh, Ezra addresses Yhwh directly concerning the transgression.

transgression.[770] Furthermore, these covenants require the expulsion of that which is deemed 'foreign' to Israel: Ezra 10.3 calls for the expulsion (להוצוא) of the women and children while in 2 Kings 23.4, Josiah's casts out (להוצוא) 'the vessels made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven'.[771]

Despite these similarities, there are many differences between these texts, as Douglas Nykolaishen points out.[772] In the Josiah text, a king calls the people to covenant-making;[773] in Ezra 10.3 it is Shecaniah, an unknown man of indeterminate social status who makes the call. Josiah makes a covenant that commits him and the people to obey the Torah and all the commandments and statutes contained therein (2 Kgs 23.3; 2 Chr 34.32-33), while Ezra 10.2-3 focuses on one stipulation that has been breached. In the Josiah narrative, the response to covenant-making is immediate and unanimous (2 Kgs 23.3b; 2 Chr 34.32b), while the aftermath of Ezra 10.3 includes negotiations, delays, and even objections before an agreement is reached.[774] Furthermore, in Ezra 9-10, the expulsion is not reported as having taken place.

---

[770] In Ezra 10.3, the people are called to נכרת ברית לאלהינו in order to address the transgression of having married 'foreign' women; in 2 Kgs 23.3-4, Josiah יכרת את־הברית לפני יהוה to obey the commandments, decrees, and statutes of Yhwh (cf. 2 Chr 34.31-32)

[771] 2 Kgs 23.4; also 2 Chr 29.6 where Hezekiah makes a covenant that commits to 'casting (**יצא**) out the filth (נדה)' from the temple. In 2 Chronicles, Josiah begins his purge of Jerusalem and Judah before 'discovering' the book of the law. His only action after making the covenant is reported in 34.33: 'Josiah took away (סור) all the abominations from all the territory that belonged to the peoples of Israel…'. On the Chronicler's account of Josiah's covenant and reform, see Ehud Ben Zvi, "Observations on Josiah's Account in Chronicles and Implications for Constructing the Worldview of the Chronicler," in *Essays on Ancient Israel in Its Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman*, ed. Yaira Amit, et al. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 89-106; Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 1015-1037.

[772] Douglas J.E. Nykolaishen, "Ezra 9-10: Solemn Oath? Renewed Covenant? New Covenant?," in *Covenant in the Persian Period: From Genesis to Chronicles*, ed. Richard J. Bautch and Gary N. Knoppers (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 378-380.

[773] 2 Kgs 23.1; 2 Chr 34.29.

[774] Ezra is the first to interrupt the sequence of events with his return to mourning (10.6); the community is called to gather (again), this time under duress (10.7); the response to Ezra's exhortation in 10.11 is to call for an inspection process that delays matters (10.13-14); and some men stand up to express opposition to the process or the expulsion itself (10.15).

Nykolashin rightly argues that similarities between Ezra 9-10 and other covenant-making texts may likely be the intentional result of the 'narrator's selection and arrangement of events and speeches'.[775] Resonances of the Josiah covenant, I would argue, signify the covenant in Ezra 10 as a decisive moment in the story of this community and thereby function to configure power relations within the group. The effect of these resonances is to elevate the Torah of Moses, embodied and interpreted by Ezra, as the norm for the relationship with Yhwh, and to place *golah* men under 'management' of this Torah, as it is wielded by the Ezra-group.[776]

The ברית called for by Shecaniah also has significant gendered implications: it is a contract entered into by men, before (or to) a male deity. As Sabine van den Eyden argues, in the Hebrew Bible 'ברית is no neutral term, but an image taken out of a male-dominated world and in the religious discourse applied to the relationship of God and men or his people'.[777] In the Hebrew Bible, covenants are a means by which men establish relationships with other men, and with the deity involving land, trade, goods, political allegiance, military settlements, and marriage.[778] Covenants between men may affirm the superior

[775] Nykolaishen, "Ezra 9-10: Solemn Oath? ," 377.
[776] This 'management' requires negotiation. Ezra must 'cause' the chief priests, Levites and Israelites to swear to do as had been said (10.5). He then returns to mourning (10.6) as if nothing had been resolved, and the community is called to gather under duress (10.7). Ezra again exhorts the *golah* to separate from the peoples-of-the-land in 10.11, after which a plan is made to examine the community and identify the men who had married foreign women. Some men express opposition to the plan (10.15). Finally, the text concludes without announcing the expulsion of the women and children.
[777] Sabine Van den Eynde, "Between Rainbow and Reform: A Gender Analysis of the Term Berit in the Hebrew Bible," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 116(2004): 409.
[778] See Abraham and Abimelech (Gen 21.27), Isaac and Abimelech (Gen 26.28), Jacob and Laban (Gen 31.44), Joshua (Israel) and the Gibeonites (Josh 9.1-10.1), Jonathan and David (1 Sam 18.3; 20.8; 11-17; 23.18); David and Abner (2 Sam 3.12-13); David and the elders of Israel (2 Sam 5.3; 1 Chr 11.3); Solomon and Hiram (1Kgs 5.26); Asa and Ben-Hadad (1 Kgs 15.19; 2 Chr 16.3); Ahab and Ben-Hadad (1 Kgs 20.34); Jehoiada and the temple guards (2 Kgs 11.4; 2 Chr 23.1); Joash and the people (2 Kgs 11.17; 2 Chr 23.3); and Zedekiah and the people of Jerusalem (Jer 34.8).

position of one party over the other,[779] place limits on the dominance of one party,[780] or even seek to remedy an affront to the masculinity of a man or group. Women are never the *subjects* of a covenant agreement,[781] but they may be the implicated and affected by the agreements made by men.[782]

In Genesis 31, for example, women, property, and territory are negotiated in the covenant between Laban and Jacob (Gen 31.43-55). Laban has been cheated by Jacob, and Jacob has been threatened by Laban. The dispute is negotiated and resolved by means of a covenant that grants Jacob the daughters and grandchildren of Laban and addresses Laban's aggrieved masculinity by stipulating Laban's continued authority over his kin.[783] Similarly, negotiations between David and Abner to put David on the throne of Israel in 2 Samuel 3 are predicated on the restitution of the affront to David's masculinity: Michal, who was removed from him by Saul, is to be returned as his wife (2 Sam 3.12-14).[784]

Similarly, in Ezra 9-10, the 'faithful' men of the *golah* address their aggrieved masculinity in the face of the 'transgressively dominant' masculinity of the 'guilty' men, by calling for the expulsion of the women and children. The call

[779] As is the case of Yhwh and Abraham (Gen 15; 17); Yhwh and Israel (Exod 24.1-8; 34.10-28; Deut 5.1-21)

[780] See negotiations between Abraham and Abimelech, then Isaac and Abimelech over land and water sources in Gen 21.27 and Gen 26.28.

[781] The only explicit exception to this is Prov 2.17 where the נכריה/זרה is accused of 'forgetting the covenant of her God'. Most commentators understand the phrase as a reference to adultery. See, for example, Stuart Weeks, *Instruction and Imagery in Proverbs 1-9* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 86. In Ezekiel 16.59, feminized 'Israel' is accused of breaching the covenant with YHWH. Mark Smith also suggests that Ruth's expression of loyalty to Noemi is a covenant between women. The term ברית is not used in the text; See Mark S. Smith, "'Your People Shall Be My People': Family and Covenant in Ruth 1: 16-17," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69(2007): 242-258.

[782] Van den Eynde, "Between Rainbow and Reform," 411.

[783] The agreement concludes: ´if you ill-treat my daughters, or if you take wives in addition to my daughters, though no one else is with us, remember that God is witness between you and me' (Gen 31.50).

[784] Michal had been taken from David by her father Saul and given to another man (1 Sam 35.44). See also Yhwh's covenant with Abraham promises him descendants that must be provided by women (Gen 17.19-21) and Jehoiada's covenant that commits the people to Joash and to removing Athaliah from the throne (2 Kgs 11.4; 2 Chr 23.1).

is addressed to the entire community, and while the objects of expulsion are the women and children the intent is to 'manage' the masculinity of the 'guilty' men. This 'management' is presented as an affair that pertains to Yhwh, and that addresses the infidelity perpetrated against Yhwh. The decision the men must make is highlighted by the syntax of 10.3 where a contrast is drawn between Yhwh and the 'foreign' women: the covenant with Yhwh requires the expulsion of the women and children (נכרת־ברית לאלהינו להוציא כל־נשים והנולד מהם). There is no middle ground. The men must choose between voluntary subordination to their male god on the one hand, and the 'manly' acts of marriage, engendering of children, and settling a territory, on the other.

The covenant grants some *golah* men the authorization to 'manage' others by removing their wives and children. The 'guilty' men of the *golah* are to be humiliated, indeed 'unmanned', by the removal of the wives, who should remain under their own 'management' and protection, and the children who should ensure the continuation of their lineage. A strikingly similar scene, albeit in a military context, is found on a palace relief of Sennacherib's siege of Lachish that depicts women and children driven out of the city by the Assyrian conquerors.[785] The depiction of men exercising power over conquered women, pointedly speaks to the failed masculinity of the men who should be protecting them. As Cynthia Chapman explains:

> The juxtaposition of masculine failure with the exposure of women to harm is played out with devastating clarity in the siege scenes of the Assyrian palace reliefs…Assyrian soldiers storm the city with drawn bows and battering rams. The women of Lachish are depicted neatly filing out of their

[785] See Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 46-47. Marcus notes that the imagery of male conquest 'was also related to the imagery of female as object of conquest'. Where women appear in Assyrian depictions of warfare, it is usually as foreigners and victims; Marcus, "Geography as Visual Ideology," 202.

> city gate…and their children accompany them…Their own king and husbands failed the masculine contest of battle…[786]

A similar reading may be proposed of the call to expel the women and children in Ezra 10.3. Their divinely sanctioned removal addresses the aggrieved masculinity of the Ezra-group, the men who had not 'lifted' or 'settled' women nor engendered children. The expulsion of the women pointedly enacts the failed masculinity of the guilty men from whom wives and offspring are to be removed.

Shecaniah concludes his call to covenant-making with a reference to the authority by which the call is made: 'according to the counsel of my lord [Ezra],[787] and of those who tremble at the commandments of our God, and let it be done according to the Torah (כתורה)' (10.3b). Thus, the authoritative reference for 'managing' the guilty men and bringing the 'transgressively' dominant masculinity under control of the Ezra-group, is the Torah. There is an emphasis on collective participation throughout Ezra 9-10: all are declared guilty and unfaithful, and all are called to the covenant with/to Yhwh.[788] The call may be extended to all, however, but it does not affect all equally: the 'Ezra-group' imposes the regulations of the covenant, while the married men are called to come under 'management' of the Torah and give up their wives and children.

Difference Within

Separation from the peoples-of-the-lands is a demand placed upon the entire *golah*. It seeks to manage not only the masculinity of those who have married the women and are called to expel them but that of all the men of the

[786] Chapman, *Gendered Language of Warfare*: 47.
[787] The pointing on the MT reads 'according to the counsel of Adonay' (בעצת אֲדֹנָי), which Williamson sees as an error in pointing due to the increasing use of **אדני** for Yhwh; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*: 143. Most translations render this phrase 'according to the counsel of my lord', where 'my lord' refers to Ezra.
[788] See Ezra 9.6-7,10,14-15; 10.2,3,12.

golah who are called to subordinate themselves to Yhwh, as mediated by the scribe-priest, Ezra. But while the required act of separation between the *golah* and the peoples-of-the-lands is not carried out within the confines of the narrative, separation does take place within the *golah*. These acts of separation produce distinctions between *golah* men that have social and gendered implications.

In Ezra 10.7, a call goes out for the 'sons of the *golah*' to gather in Jerusalem within three days to address the matter of the 'foreign' women. This is not an invitation, but rather an order given by the leaders (שׂרים) and elders (זקנים). Refusal to respond is punished with confiscation of property (יחרם כל־רכושׁו) and separation from the assembly (יבדל קהל גולה,10.8). If implemented, the punitive measures announced would render dissident men socially impotent: their property withdrawn, their ties to the *golah* severed.[789] It is worth noting that while refusal to attend garners individual punishment, the matter at hand, the infidelity of the *golah*, affects the future of the entire community. The men's subordination to Yhwh may require negotiation and collective bargaining, but their subordination to the hierarchical structures of the assembly is punitively enforced. Separation from the peoples-of-the-lands constitutes the identity and distinctiveness of this collective male group; separation of *golah* men from their own community configures power within the group.

A second, very different act of separation is carried out by Ezra when he sets apart (ויבדלו) 'men, heads of families' (אנשׁים ראשׁי האבות), for the task of 'inspecting the matter' of the men who had married foreign women (10.16-17).

[789] In light of my argument that, in the world of the narrative, the 'lifting' and 'settling' of women is associated with land settlement and, one might suggest, the acquisition of property, the banning of the property of the unresponsive men is suggestive of an attempt to control these men, even if they do not participate in the 'covenant' process.

The scene recalls Ezra's separation (הבדיל) of leading priests in 8.24 to transport temple treasures to Jerusalem. In 10.16 however, it is not priests but heads of the families (ראשי האבות) who are set apart. This act constitutes a privileged group that is granted the authority to determine guilt or innocence of *golah* men – including that of the priests and Levites – in the matter of the foreign women.

While priests and Levites are not the only men accused of intermarriage, they are mentioned among the guilty in 9.2 and are practically absent amid those who take responsibility for resolving the matter. They are also named at the head in the list of guilty men in Ezra 10.18-22, and their only participation in the resolution of the matter of intermarriage is the oath Ezra obliges them to make after the people are called to covenant-making (10.5).[790] A privileged status before Yhwh is awarded to those who wield the Torah and stand outside the Temple, rather than the priests who sacrifice within the precincts of the Temple. Those who bear, interpret and fear the commands of Yhwh implement measures to 'separate' the impure from the realm of the holy, and to restore the *golah*'s relationship with Yhwh. In other words, divine 'edicts' in the form of Torah, itself an instrument of the deity's imperial masculinity as discussed in Chapter 4, are an effective means for 'managing' the transgressive masculinity of the married *golah* men.

Not only do distinctions drawn between *golah* men elevate some in relation to others, but they also establish 'difference' within the households of the men of the *golah*. As noted in Chapter 2, a primary attribute of masculinity in the book of Ezra is to be a son, where membership in the *golah* is determined by registration

[790] Notably, the oath is not spontaneous, but required of these men by Ezra (וישבע, Hiphil: cause to swear), cf. Neh 13.25b.

as the son of an exilic בית אבות (2.59-62).[791] While the identity-creation system in the book of Ezra is based on *male* kinship and descent, as Claudia Camp notes,[792] not all sons of *golah* בית אבות are equal. The list of guilty men with which Ezra 10 concludes calls into question the status of these 'guilty' sons who are distinguished from their brothers, even as their בית אבות are distinguished from the בית אבות of other *golah* men.

This list (Ezra 10.19-43), the result of the investigation undertaking by the ראשׁי האבות, identifies the men of the *golah* who have married foreign women. It begins with priests in 10.19, followed by Levites, singers, and gatekeepers in 10.23-24. The remainder of the list identifies lay Israelites (vv.25-43).[793] The formula used in these verses to designate the guilty men names them in relation to their male forbearer: 'from among the sons of…' (x מבני).[794] The partitive mem (מ־) indicates each son's relationship to the father's house but also singles him out from amid his brothers as guilty of having taken foreign women.[795] This is a list of the men who have come under the 'management' of the *golah*, whose wives and children have been earmarked for expulsion. Their wives have been rejected as biological producers of the seed of the *golah*, and their sons have been 'dis-elected' and de-selected as the seed that is to possess the land promised by

[791] 2.59: 'they could not prove their families (בית אבות) or their descent (זרע), whether they belonged to Israel'; 2.62: 'these looked for their entries in the genealogical records (כתבם המתיחשׂים), but they were not found there…'

[792] Camp, "Feminist- and Gender-Critical Perspectives," 306-307.

[793] The Masoretic Text lists 10 lay בית אבות, but scholars argue that textual corruptions in vv.38 and 40 suggest that the original number may have been 12. See Pakkala, *Ezra the Scribe*: 103 n.163; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*: 199. Although Levites, singers and porters are mentioned, they are not described as 'sons' (10.23-24); see however, Ezra 2.40-42.

[794] The formula varies only in v.23-24.

[795] The partitive mem is also used in the list in Ezra 8.2-14 also identifies specific men from a household, those who travelled with Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem. These lists, in which specific members of a household are singled out, contrasts with the form used in Ezra 2.3-58 where the totality of each household is included (2.64,70).

Yhwh.[796] These are the men whose settlement in the land, mediated by the women and children, is rejected in favour of the divine performance of land-giving. Thus, in Ezra 9-10, I would argue, not only women are written out of the 'identity-creating ideology of the kinship system', as Camp argues,[797] certain sons of the *golah* are at risk of being written out as well.

My analysis thus far has focused on the men, the construction of masculinities, and the negotiation of masculine status, performance, and embodiment between men, male groups, and the deity. In this chapter, I have posited that in Ezra 9-10 as in other biblical texts, women are the disputed ground on which masculinities are constituted, challenged, debated, and defined. This approach runs the risk of homogenizing and essentializing the category 'woman', as it is indeed essentialized in the text itself. It is, therefore, necessary, in this final section of the chapter, to consider and problematize the role of women in the production of *golah* masculinities.

5.3 The 'Foreign' Women and the Production of Masculinities

As I turn to the women in Ezra 9-10 it is important to clarify, as I did in the Introduction to this thesis, that I make no attempt to 'reconstruct' the lives of women in fifth-century BCE Yehud. As Bahrani emphasises in her studies of ancient West Asian art and archaeology, depictions of women in ancient iconography can be 'studied for how things were *represented* in antiquity', but not 'for how things were.'[798] The same may be said, I would argue, of ancient literary

[796] On the de-selection of Israelite sons in the Patriarchal narratives and echoes of Persian Period concerns, see R. Christopher Heard, *Dynamics of Diselection: Ambiguity in Genesis 12-36 and Ethnic Boundaries in Post-Exilic Judah*, The Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001).
[797] Camp, "Feminist- and Gender-Critical Perspectives," 309. For Camp, writing out the women has the effect of denying their necessary role in the kinship system.
[798] Bahrani, *Women of Babylon*: 31-32. Emphasis mine.

texts. Biblical texts do not offer access to 'real women' or their voices, but rather to the ways in which women have been portrayed and represented – constructed – in keeping with the heteronormative, masculine/male-focused interests of the text.[799] My interest, in keeping with the focus of this thesis, is to explore how the representation, and appropriation, of the women in Ezra 9-10 is inextricably bound with the production of *golah* masculinities.

The relationships between the men of the *golah* and their relationship with Yhwh are mediated by the 'foreign' women in Ezra 9-10. This dynamic is not infrequently represented in the Hebrew Bible, as Ken Stone observes: women are frequently the means by which dominant masculinity is achieved or challenged.[800] The Deuteronomistic history evidences various occasions in which political power is disputed as control over women: King David consolidates his power 'in part through his ability to take women from other men, whether fathers or husbands'.[801]

The appropriation of a king's concubines is likewise a challenge to the masculinity of the king, who is not 'able to maintain control over the sexuality of the women who…ought to be under his oversight'.[802] Such is the case of Abner and Rizpah, Saul's concubine (2 Sam 3.6-11), David's inability to protect his daughter Tamar (2 Sam 13.21-22), and Absalom's appropriation of David's concubines (2 Sam 16.20-23),[803] The violation of the women is not the only problem in these texts; more pertinently for this study, these women are the

[799]Fuchs critiques feminist scholarship that seeks to 'recover' information about women in ancient Israel, and argues rather for investigating the 'discursive formations' that constitute 'woman' in the Hebrew Bible; Fuchs, "Reclaiming the Hebrew Bible for Women," 64.
[800] Women, Stone argues, are often the 'means by which one male challenges the honour and power of another male'; Stone, *Sex, Honor, and Power*: 20.
[801] *Sex, Honor, and Power*: 20.
[802] *Sex, Honor, and Power*: 91.
[803] See Stone's study of these texts; *Sex, Honor, and Power*: 85-127.

means by which questions are asked of a man's ability to protect the women he is responsible for and to dominate the men who take them from him.

Genesis 34 is one of several texts in which masculinities are disputed on the body of a woman. Shechem's unauthorized sexual access to Dinah is an affront to her male kin that challenges their masculinity. Dinah is finally returned to her family, but not until the sons of Jacob kill the Shechemite men, plunder their goods, and capture 'all their little ones and their wives' (34.29), thereby restoring their masculine status and honour.[804] The rape of Tamar, mentioned above, is another case in which disputes between men – here between David's sons who are vying for his throne – are waged on the very body of a woman.[805] Another case that must be mentioned is the rape and brutal dismemberment of the Levite's concubine in Judges 19, over whom disputes between the tribes of Israel are waged.[806]

The women mentioned above are not 'foreign' to Israel, although their use and abuse by the 'wrong' men may indeed render them sexually 'strange' and socially 'othered', and in the case of Judges 19, dead and dismembered. Fathers and husbands are rendered vulnerable by the liminal position occupied by these 'Israelite' women, on whose bodies men's masculinities are negotiated, challenged, and claimed. Daughters are vulnerable to being taken by the wrong man, an act that renders the daughters 'othered' and humiliates their male kin. A wife may be 'entered' by the wrong man, casting doubt on the legitimacy of her husband's descendants, or she may be unable to bear children at all, thereby

[804] On Gen 34, see Helena Zlotnick, *Dinah's Daughters: Gender and Judaism from the Hebrew Bible to Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 33-56.
[805] The passive role of the fathers is evident in both Gen 34 and 2 Sam 13.
[806] Keefe argues that rapes of women in Gen 34, Judg 19 and 2 Sam 13 offer a critique of the degree of social chaos in Israel; Alice A. Keefe, "Rapes of Women/Wars of Men," *Semeia* 61(1993): 64-94.

casting doubt on her husband's virility. Even more problematic are 'foreign' women, especially women taken from the peoples who are closest to Israel, who are brought into the Israelite household, potentially exposing it to 'foreign' influences.[807]

Women are rendered passive and silent in Ezra 9-10. *Golah* women are mentioned only in 10.1 as part of a collective assembly and are quickly overlooked in favour of the 'foreign' women.[808] As noted above, these women are described as daughters and wives but are not otherwise characterized except as pertains to their original kinship group, the peoples-of-the-lands. The actions, voices, and agency of the women are silenced in the text. Even where they have given birth to children, the text avoids assigning agency to them: they do not give birth, rather the children are those 'born from them' (הנולד מהם;10.3b). The threat represented by these women in Ezra 9-10 is not derived from what they do or say, it appears, but from how they are acted upon by the men, and how these acts configure power within the *golah*. However, as noted in the awkward, but significant, last verse of Ezra 10 – the final verse of the whole book – the women do indeed have an active role: 'some of the women have "set" (שׂים) sons'.[809]

The female body's capacity for birth, signalled in Ezra 10 by the twice mentioned children of the foreign women, points to the indispensable role women

---

[808] Fuchs critiques scholarly treatment of Israelite women in relation to the figure of the foreign woman in the Hebrew Bible. Some scholars, she notes, position Israelite women as a subcategory of the foreign woman, others emphasize the victimization of Israelite women, and still others view them as oppressors. She emphasizes the liminal position of the Israelite women and her role in identity construction, as she 'exceeds and disrupts' insider-outsider categories employed for the analysis of the foreign women. The status of Israelite women is that of 'insider in the nation's body politic and outsider whose relationship is mediated through men (father, husband, or son);' Esther Fuchs, "Intermarriage, Gender, and Nation in the Hebrew Bible," in *The Passionate Torah: Sex and Judaism*, ed. Danya Ruttenberg (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 74. Fuchs's analysis, as it impacts the representation (or lack thereof) of *golah* women in Ezra 9-10, merits further exploration.

[809] See discussion in the Introduction.

play in the production and preservation of men's lineage, inheritance, and more broadly, community identity. Female biological reproduction plays no little role in the construction of masculinities and the negotiation of intra-male power and is a matter to be dealt with and contained in many biblical texts. Despite the patrilineal ideology of the Hebrew Bible that would ideally allow for male-only reproduction, free of the interference of women, Camp observes,[810] women – who are outsiders in relation to male lineage – must inevitably participate in the production of patrilineal descent.[811] This tension is suggestive of the problem that women – as reproducers of biological descendants – represent for the construction of *male* Israelite identity. As Nancy Jay has argued, in patrilineal kinship groups, women's participation is necessary for social and 'intergenerational continuity'.[812] The biological tie between mother and child is problematic for male paternity, however, and must be socially and ritually overcome, or controlled, in order to 'transcend dependence on childbearing women'.[813]

The perceived need to control women's participation in the biological and social production and reproduction of male social groups highlights women's capacity to both establish boundaries between men and male social groups and to blur them. In Ezra 9-10, the 'foreign' women may be silenced, but their bodies are rendered 'productive' as they are acted upon by the men of the *golah* and as they produce sons that they 'set' in the land. It is on and through the bodies of these women that appropriate performances of *golah* masculinity, including that of Yhwh, are produced. And it is on and through the bodies of these women that

[810] Camp, "Feminist- and Gender-Critical Perspectives," 309.
[811] Kelso notes that in Chronicles women's association with maternity is problematic to the extent that it is repressed, thereby enabling 'the phantasy of mono-sexual, masculine reproduction'; Kelso, "Reading Silence," 288.
[812] Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever*: 35.
[813] *Throughout Your Generations Forever*: 37.

power relations are negotiated among *golah* men. Inclusion and exclusion from the *golah*, and status within the *golah*, is determined by the way *golah* men act upon these women and their offspring. In Ezra 9-10, descent from 'woman' is not only ritually transcended by men it is also denied: the sons are to be expelled along with their mothers.

A helpful contribution for exploring the role of the 'foreign' women in Ezra 9-10 comes from the work of late 20th century post-colonial feminist scholars who explore the ways in which women are 'managed' in nation-building projects.[814] Irene Gedalof carefully curates the response to Western feminist theories of several Indian feminist scholars who helpfully complicate and nuance the notion of women's exclusion as abjection.[815] She argues that 'national or racial/religious community identities are constituted on or through the bodies of women',[816] precisely because the 'female body's capacity for birth…makes women crucial to the preservation of a particular community's integrity and purity'.[817]

Drawing on Michel Foucault's theorization of power, Gedalof argues that women's exclusion and subordination do not render them 'inert or consenting targets' of power,[818] but 'always also the elements of its articulation'.[819] Where

[814] See Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, Politics and Culture (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 26, 45-46; and Deniz Kandiyoti, "Identity and Its Discontents: Women and the Nation," *Millenium* 20, no. 3 (1991): 429-443.
[815] Irene Gedalof, *Against Purity: Rethinking Identity with Indian and Western Feminisms*, Gender, Racism, Ethnicity (London; New York: Routledge, 1999). Gedalof draws on various Indian feminist critics to interrogate the theories of Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler, and Donna Haraway.
[816] *Against Purity*: 202. It may be argued that Ezra 9-10 is not dealing with national identity as such – if nationalism is defined in terms of territory and state. Mollow, Kandiyoti, and Yuval-Davis more broadly explore the way in which women are positioned in terms of the construction of diverse kinds of 'imagined communities' in which nationalist projects appeal to myths of common origin, common culture or citizenship, and focus on the role of gender relations, and specifically women, in these national projects; Maureen Molloy, "Imagining (the) Difference: Gender, Ethnicity and Metaphors of Nation," *Feminist Review* 51(1995): 94-112; Kandiyoti, "Identity and Its Discontents: Women and the Nation," 429-443; Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*.
[817] Gedalof, *Against Purity*: 34.
[818] *Against Purity*: 18.
[819]See Michel Foucault and Colin Gordon, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, 1st American ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 98.

women's exclusion is represented and/or practised they are not erased, but rather 'managed' – a term that points to what she argues, is the 'productive' role of such acts in the particular constructions of community identity.[820] The management of women and women's bodies produces not only models of gender relations, she argues, but also 'versions of fixed community identities and nation-ness'. [821] They are the 'ground upon which groups of men contest norms of nationhood and identity'.[822]

Gedalof's dialogue with post-colonial feminist theories helps to deconstruct and complicate the flattened portrayal of silenced biblical women. The aim, however, is not to 'recover' the voices of these silenced women, but to interrogate this silence and the ways in which these women are 'managed' and rendered 'productive' for the interests of the text. I would argue that the women in Ezra 9-10 are not only 'managed', they are also appropriated. Their bodies are the site on and around which Israelite and masculine identities are produced, and on and around which the relationship with Yhwh is negotiated. They are appropriated by *golah* men, first of all, for the production of the 'transgressively' dominant masculinity of those who marry them and establish themselves by 'settling' the women in the land. This version of 'fixedness' is rejected by the Ezra-group, however, who call for an alternative version of 'fixed community identities and nation-ness', one that is predicated on dependence and subordination to Yhwh. Women's subordination is not disputed; rather, it is the premise that renders the women 'useful' bodies for the men and for Yhwh.

[820] Gedalof, *Against Purity*: 179.
[821] *Against Purity*: 224.
[822] *Against Purity*: 36.

The very 'productiveness' of these women challenges the boundaries of identity and fixedness for which they are appropriated. *Golah* masculinity is predicated on the notion of stability, fixedness, and separation, as evidenced by the ascription 'holy seed' with which the *golah* is identified and marked. From a social and gendered perspective, holiness rejects multiplicity and promotes separation in an attempt at producing and maintaining a unified, holy, subject. In cultic contexts, as Olyan argues, the act of separation is fundamental to the social distinctions implicated in access to sacred space.[823] Separation in the cultic realm produces distinctions not only between Israelites and non-Israelites, men and women but also between Israelite men. The high priest, for example, is the most holy/separate, for he enters the holiest place. Priests who enter the sanctuary are separated from Levites, who remain on the boundaries, and from lay Israelites, who remain in the Temple courts.[824] Impure men and women may not approach at all,[825] and access for foreigners is prohibited or carefully conditioned.[826]

This logic of holiness and separation that protects the holy from impurity is at the basis of the notion of the holy seed, and its cultic, ethnic, and gendered associations, as explored in this thesis.[827] This logic, however, is complicated by the very 'foreign' women in rejection of whom, it is constituted. Here again, post-colonial feminist scholars can offer powerful insights for interrogating the model of (masculine) identity constituted in Ezra 9-10. María Lugones's discussion of hybridity and mestizaje calls for resistance to the 'logic of purity' as that which

[823] Olyan argues that 'access to privileged cultic space, privileged rites, or privileged items is a cult-specific way that biblical texts present the realization and communication of social differentiation'; Olyan, *Rites and Rank*: 8; see also Philip Peter Jenson, *Graded Holiness* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 40-55.
[824] See Olyan, *Rites and Rank*: 24-33.
[825] See *Rites and Rank*: 38.
[826] See *Rites and Rank*: 63-102.
[827] Admission to sacred space is determined by the distinction between clean and unclean (purity and impurity). Clean and unclean, Olyan notes, distinguishes the 'admissible from the excluded'; *Rites and Rank*: 17.

seeks to 'control the multiplicity of people and things' and 'attain satisfaction through exercises in split separation.'[828] The designation 'holy seed' references just such an 'urge for control'. It claims the unity of the subject – the *golah*, descendants of the Judean exiles – and 'sustain(s) its fiction of purity' through the imposition of norms, discourses, and narratives that secure its power to determine who belongs to/enters/is brought into this unified subject and who is not. The call to expel the women and to separate from the 'feminized' peoples of the lands in Ezra 9-10 seeks to uphold this 'logic of purity' and the purported unitary subject it produces.

But the impurity (cultic, ethnic, and otherwise) of the peoples-of-the-lands embodied by the foreign women complicates and resists the notion of a unified subject, a 'holy seed'. 'Woman' is introduced not as a 'stable, unchanging and pure ground' (in Gedalof's terms), but as complexly constituted by intersecting, shifting, and ambiguous identities.[829] These women, arguably acted upon and rendered silent in the text, nevertheless interrogate and interrupt the stability of *golah* masculinity: in their wake, the men become prostrate mourners and weepers, expose their bodies and bare their chins. Authority structures are reconfigured away from the Temple and toward the Torah and its interpreters, and the community enters an altogether chaotic process through which they seek to address not an invading army, but the presence of a group of women and children. The 'active management' of these women powerfully draws out

[828] Maria Lugones, "Purity, Impurity, and Separation," *Signs* 19, no. 2 (1994): 458-476 (464). Mestizaje references the stigma associated with the 'racial' and cultural mixing derived from Latin American and Caribbean colonization and the inferior status of such 'mixed' peoples in relation to the 'pure' race and culture of the colonizer. Gloria Anzaldúa's use of the term mestizaje to challenge racial superiority and essentialism has been developed and broadened by other feminist, postcolonial, Latino and Chicano scholars and critics. See Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1987). Homi Bhabha's well known work also develops a critique of impurity, what he calls hybridity, as a non-identity; Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994).
[829] Gedalof, *Against Purity*: 202-203.

fractures within the *golah* that are more threatening than the so-called 'foreign' women themselves or their children.

It should be noted, as I conclude this thesis, that in Ezra 9-10 the 'foreign' women are rendered more productive for identity construction than are *golah* women. *Golah* women are mentioned only once (10.1), as noted above, as part of the group of men, women, and children (אנשים ונשים וילדים) that gathers around Ezra as he mourns, confesses, and weeps.[830] They are silent, their appropriation and 'management' are not disputed in the text. Unlike their counterparts in Genesis, Israelite wives in Ezra 9-10 are withheld active participation in this narrative of 'Israelite' origins. Their 'foreign' counterparts may be rejected as mothers of *golah* seed, but they are – at the least – 'productive' objects of dispute and negotiation. *Golah* women are neither active nor visible as the chosen mothers of the sons who are to inherit and inhabit the land. The exclusion of women in Ezra 9-10 is not restricted to the 'foreign' women, but it is the 'foreign' women who are more complexly rendered, and thereby more 'productively managed' for the construction of *golah* masculinities.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the implications of intermarriage for *golah* masculinities. Men who 'lift' and 'settle' 'foreign' women are rendered unfaithful to Yhwh. I analysed this infidelity from a gendered perspective in terms of a 'transgressively dominant' performance of masculinity by which these men establish themselves in the land. This performance challenges the masculinity of the 'faithful' *golah* men who argue that Yhwh is the land-giver and who call for a

[830] It may be assumed that they are *golah* women, as they are identified as part of an assembly that gathers 'from out of Israel'.

covenant to expel the women and children. The married men are brought under ‘management’ of the Torah and of those who wield this authoritative text. The ‘management’ of the foreign women is likewise analysed as productive of a version of *golah* identity that is predicated on separation from the peoples-of-the-lands and differentiation within the community itself. This identity is undermined by the complex and shifting categories of otherness embodied by the ‘foreign’ women. The dispute over these women brings to light the instability and vulnerability of *golah* masculinities.

Conclusions

Biblical scholars look to the Babylonian and Persian Periods – frequently referred to as the exilic and post-exilic periods in the biblical story of Judah – as the formative contexts of production for the received text of the Hebrew Bible. While the actual events surrounding the deportation of peoples from Judah by Babylon are debated, it seems clear that the memory of exile has impacted on the way in which the story of Israel is told in the biblical texts. The book of Ezra offers one version of that story, one in which issues of community identity and organization, relationships with neighbouring peoples, land possession, the role of temple and Torah, and above all, the relationship with Yhwh in a continued context of imperial domination, are thrashed out.

In Ezra 1-8, matters of regional politics and temple building – debates in which only men participate – are addressed. Chapters 9-10 then moves to issues internal to the *golah*, to the very households of the community. It is here, where marriage is debated, that fractures within this heretofore unified group, the *golah*, are revealed. And it is in these chapters, and only these, where women receive more than a fleeting mention in the text. While these women, designated 'foreign' in Ezra 10, have been central to scholarly studies of Ezra 9-10, they are not central to the text itself. Men are the primary actors in the text; it is men who initiate the marriage ties and are implicated in alliances by marriage; it is men's 'holy seed' that is at stake; it is men's possession of the land that is disputed. It is men, not women, who are the focus of these chapters. But not all men are the same, as my analysis demostrates.

Masculinities Matter

Discussions of masculinities often begin as I begin this thesis, by remarking on the fact that while men are the primary object of study in many disciplines, including biblical studies, they are not analysed as *men*, but rather as default 'human beings' (if such a thing does in fact exist). Studies of the Hebrew Bible, ancient Israel, its history, institutions, and its god assume a unitary model of manhood and masculinity. This gendered construct is not evident, however, but rather hidden behind a cloak of assumed normativity that assimilates them to a neutral subject, one that is unmarked by gender. Thus, a focus on masculinities brings to light the gendered agenda buried deep in the pages of Ezra 9-10, and indeed in biblical texts more broadly. As Deborah Sawyer insightfully argues in her 2004 essay on Abraham's masculinity:

> …the gender games apparent in biblical literature apply as much to constructed masculinity as to femininity. However, through focusing primarily on female characters in biblical literature, feminist critique has often overlooked the implications of constructed masculinities.[831]

When the scholarly gaze shifts from the gendered problematization of women, female bodies, and femininity to that of men, male bodies, and masculinities, the complexity, nuanced character and indeed richness of the text and the gendered constructs and identities that are produced by the text – and are indeed productive of the text – come into sharper focus.

This thesis seeks to remove this cloak of gendered invisibility cast over the men of Ezra 9-10 and to shed light on the primary characters in this narrative world. I thereby problematize the scholarly gaze upon the women, their ethnic

[831] Deborah F. Sawyer, "Biblical Gender Strategies: The Case of Abraham's Masculinity," in Gender, Religion, and Diversity: Cross-Cultural Perspectives, ed. Ursula King and Tina Beattie (London; New York: Continuum, 2004), 165-166.

identities, cultic practices, and ritual status, as focal issues in the text. The social and cultic world narrated in the text is one in which men engage in the masculine performances of marriage, settlement, and the production of descendants; they also establish alliances, perform rituals of mourning, and are placed under the authority of Torah. These debates, I argued, are better analysed as they pertain to men and the production of masculinities.

As emphasized by gender and queer studies, gender does not attach to particular bodies, and masculinities should not be considered solely in terms of men's identities and performances. The path I have chosen in this thesis, however, is to shed light on the characters gendered as men in Ezra 9-10. This includes not only the men of the *golah*, but also the peoples-of-the-lands, Yhwh, and the Persian kings, as they are constituted in relation to each other, through what is presented as a debate over the matter of *golah* marriages to 'foreign' women.

Contrary to most scholarly assumptions, the primary issue in Ezra 9-10 is not the desired expulsion of the women and children; much more grievously, the dispute is not even about them. It is about men, alliances and power relationships between men, the land to be possessed by men and their sons, and the relationship between these men and Yhwh. Furthermore, it is about the status of this male god – a status that is called into question by the memory of exile, the ongoing experience of Persian domination, and his silence throughout the text. In the narrative world of the book of Ezra, the *golah* is caught between the past and the present; a liminal location that demands the articulation of distinct performances of masculinities for the *golah* and in relation to the deity. Women

play a key role, not as agents or actors in the text (explicitly at least), but as the site on which, and in relation to which, masculinities are disputed and constituted.

Drawing on insights from both biblical and non-biblical critical studies of men and masculinities, I argue in this study that a sustained analysis of the construction, production, and performance of masculinities in Ezra 9-10 brings to the fore numerous issues that are otherwise overlooked by readers and scholars. Furthermore, it draws the frequently quasi-voyeuristic scholarly gaze away from the women, whose otherness is repeatedly emphasized, to highlight the more complex gendered dynamics present in the text.

My discussion in the Introduction outlines the primary approaches to Ezra 9-10 in biblical scholarship and challenges the problematizing gaze upon the women. I argue for engaging with the narrative world of the text, and for considering the gendered dynamic of this narrative world as read, reread, appropriated, and transmitted by readers of the received text. Information concerning the social conditions of fifth-century BCE Yehud and the historical reconstruction of the text itself may contribute to this analysis, I argue, but are not solely determinative either of its meaning, or of its impact on early Jewish readers, or indeed on modern ones.

I propose embracing, rather than resolving, the fractures and ambiguities in the text, and between the text and its purported historical context. In that light, I conclude the Introduction by considering the implications of the last verse in the text. Ezra 10.44 problematically offers no indication that the women and children are expelled by the *golah*. The achievement it announces is the identification of the guilty men and the fact that some of their wives have ‘put’ sons. Ezra 9-10,

thus, begins and ends with men, marriage, and disputed relationships between *golah* men, matters that I address in Chapters 2-5 of this study.

The diversity of masculinities, their inherent instability, and the ways in which power is implicated in the construction and performance of masculinities, are key contributions from masculinities studies embraced in this thesis, as discuss in Chapter 1. The social constructionist approach to masculinities proposed by Connell's model of hegemonic masculinity is complemented, and complicated, by insights from theories of intersectionality, materiality, performance, and embodiment.

Studies of biblical masculinities are gathering increasing momentum and offer numerous possibilities for addressing issues of power, embodiment, sexualities, and gender that are not predicated on the sole problematization of women, women's sexuality, women's presence, and women's roles. Amid the various issues that are ripe for exploration, this thesis contributes to focused consideration of the ways in which the construction of masculinities appropriates women, their bodies, social locations, reproductive capacity, and silenced voices, as vehicles by which men's concerns are articulated, expressed, and debated. The women are silent, and rather than attempt a 'recovery' of the 'real' women of Yehud through the text or by means of historical reconstructions, I choose to explore the ways in which their silence and appropriation in Ezra 9-10 are productive of masculinities.

Women are therefore not excluded from consideration; to the contrary, I argue that while the subordination of women is not the objective of the text, it is quite disturbingly the premise on which masculinities are debated. Not only is the expulsion of the women declared to be an act favoured by Yhwh, but also control

over marriage and women is a means by which membership and status within this male social group are constituted.

This approach, I argue, contributes to elucidating gendered dynamics, both in biblical texts and modern social contexts, that are not restricted to hierarchical binary constructions that oppose women and men, femininity and masculinity, culture and nature, mind and body, belief and ritual. The prevalence of these binary constructs in scholarly studies of Ezra 9-10 is evidenced in the Orientalised representation of the foreign women and the absence of gendered explorations of the men and masculinities in the text. Illustrative of this tendency is David Janzen's conclusion that the expulsion of the women in Ezra 9-10 derives, ultimately, from their femaleness which inevitably positions them close to nature and renders them threatening, potentially deviant, and therefore targets of a witch-hunt.[832]

I consider the traits and performances associated with dominant masculinity in biblical texts and ancient West Asian texts and iconography as a broad cultural imaginary amid which the gendered dynamic of Ezra 9-10 is explored. The fallen bodies of mourners and penitents are examined in the light of iconographic representations of fearful, defeated warriors, foreign tributaries, and kings who flee in the face of the mightier, more masculine victors. The taking of women from the peoples-of-the-lands evokes both neo-Assyrian and modern Western tropes of the sexualized conquest of a land and its peoples. The call in Ezra to expel women and children similarly recalls captive foreign women and children led away by victorious Assyrian armies and, in modern contexts, the sexual abuse and genocidal acts perpetrated against war victims that undermine

[832] Janzen, *Witch-Hunts*: 78-83.

the masculinity of their male protectors. The contested and precarious nature of masculinities evidenced in these images resonate in my discussion of masculinities in the narrative world of Ezra 9-10.

On the Men in Ezra 9-10

The primary contribution of this thesis is to bring the men of Ezra 9-10 to light as heterosocial and homosocial, gendered beings, and to evidence the ways in which multiple masculinities are negotiated and by which a normative, even divinely authorized, status is claimed for specific models of *golah* masculinity. The relational construction of masculinities plays a key role in this analysis, as masculinities are predicated not solely on the attributes, embodiment, and performances ascribed to persons. Rather, these must be considered in terms of the ways in which they position persons on a gendered spectrum in relation to other persons and within institutional, social, and religious contexts. With this nuanced consideration of masculinities, this study shies away from the tendency in some studies of biblical masculinities to signify masculinity in terms of certain traits borne by men in relation to predetermined scholarly categories.

In Chapter 2, I explore the attributes ascribed by scholars to the 'foreign' women – abominations, 'Canaanite-ness', impurity – not as characterizations of the women, but rather of a male social group, the peoples-of-the-lands. My gendered reading of this group, as it is represented in the text, offers insights into the ways in which women and the traits culturally ascribed to femininity are appropriated in a dispute between male social groups. I argue that these peoples are strategically feminized as socially subordinate women, passive, weak, womanlike men, and peoples of menstrual impurity. These intersecting feminized

social and gendered locations render them illegitimate inhabitants of the land and draw on a memorialized ‘past’ of conquest to affirm *golah* claims to the land.

The representations that bolster *golah* masculinity bear the seeds of their own undoing. The daughters of the peoples-of-the-lands occupy a liminal place that blurs the boundaries between the households of the *golah* and those of the quasi-Canaanite peoples-of-the-lands, the wives bear children without male participation in procreation, and the menstrual impurity of these peoples renders the land inhospitable for the holy seed. The instability of masculinities, emphasized throughout the thesis, demands continual negotiation of masculine status in relation to those who are both superior and inferior.

Ezra’s response to the report of intermarriage is the touchpoint for my analysis of the ritual performance that (as I posit in Chapter 3) materially modifies the bodies of Ezra and those who mourn with him. The gendered dynamics articulated in these mourning rituals evidences the plural and contingent nature of masculinities, embedded as they are in networks of intersecting social locations and identities. Like vassal kings whose local authority is predicated on allegiance and subordination to their suzerain, Ezra draws power from his splayed, weepy, exposed body, and his gestures of obeisance and self-abasement.

In his subordination to Yhwh, the modification of his body is such that it is rendered less-than-masculine by prevalent cultural standards. It thus has the effect of positioning him as the privileged mediator between the *golah* and Yhwh. Ezra chooses subordination to Yhwh over his Persian emissarial role and mediates not the commands of the Persian kings for Yehud, but those of Yhwh

for the *golah*. It is not a king or priest that is elevated to pride of place, but rather the Torah, through Ezra as its authorized interpreter.

Mourning similarly modifies the bodies of *golah* men and constitutes an alternative model of masculinity that appropriates the liminality of landlessness, imperial domination, and divine silence. In this liminal place, masculinity is performed not through military might or political dominance, but absolute fealty to Yhwh. This fealty is premised on the deity's supremacy, his dominant masculinity. In Chapter 4, I propose, however, that the book of Ezra reveals a distant, silent deity, one whose masculinity has been called into question by the destruction of his house and removal of its vessels, and the captivity of his people who, despite their return, continue to live as subjects to an empire – albeit one that is purportedly more benevolent than the Babylonian conquerors of Judah and Jerusalem. The masculinity of Yhwh is not self-evident but a performative product of Ezra's own performance of mourning and his mediation of Yhwh's presence and commands for the *golah*.

The silence and absence of Yhwh are signified in the light of the masculinity of the Persian kings in the book of Ezra: like those kings, Yhwh's presence is mediated by servants and scribes; his commands are communicated by edicts and decrees in his treaty ('torah') – an 'imperial document crafted by Yhwh and executed by his servants – that is the subject of scribal transmission and inquiry. The current relative well-being of the *golah* remnant in the midst of servitude point not to the limited power of this deity, but to his self-restraint and beneficence in the face of *golah* transgression. Important in this discussion is how Yhwh is constituted not only as the hyper-masculine deity of the *golah* but also as an imperial suzerain in control of the imperial kings who do his bidding. Yhwh's

performance of masculinity, as envisaged in Ezra 9-10, responds not to the needs of the deity, but to those of the *golah* in the narrative world of the text.

In Ezra 9-10, Yhwh is better able to control the Persian kings, however, than his own people. While Yhwh has been faithful in favouring the *golah*, despite their sin, the community has been unfaithful and has taken local women in marriage. This is the issue I discuss in Chapter 5 of this study. I argue that the men who had taken local women as wives have performed a 'transgressively' dominant masculinity, acting upon the peoples-of-the-lands, entering the land through the women, a strategy evidenced in various biblical texts. The marriages evidence a performance of dominant masculinity that is far from that which is modelled by Ezra, the – apparently celibate – mourner and his 'trembling' companions. The 'unfaithful' *golah* men have settled the land, established themselves in it, entered into alliances (covenants) with local men, and produced progeny. The call to 'make a covenant with our God and expel the women and those born from them' (Ezra 10.3), seeks to manage the masculinity of the 'unfaithful' men and bring it under control of the Ezra-group that wields the Torah.

Managing Women to Manage Men

The focus on masculinities allows for envisioning the various elements that constitute the infidelity of the *golah* in terms of their gendered implications, and how issues of social and cultic status are gendered and implicated in the very notion of 'being a man'. The survival of the *golah* is determined by its appropriate performance of masculinity, one that is 'managed' by Torah through its authorized interpreters. The incipient sectarianism in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is a

gendered matter,[833] one in which the ritual authority of Torah already in evidence in the book of Ezra, where it validates the cultic service of the *golah* (Ezra 3) – is broadened to encompass matters of kinship, marriage, and even the production of descendants.[834] Marriage, therefore, is a locus on which *golah* masculinity is produced and the 'guilty' men of the *golah* are brought under the management of the Torah-wielding group. Silenced in the text are not only the women and their children, but also their *golah* husbands. While women are certainly 'managed' and appropriated in this narrative world, this is not an end in itself, but a means by which to manage men.

The reading of Ezra 9-10 proposed in this thesis is not without its limitations, as are all readings of biblical texts. I am readily aware of the risks involved in focusing so intently on the men in a text in which the expulsion of women is discussed and where it is argued that such expulsion is required by the deity. Religious legitimation of gendered violence remains a critical and prevalent issue in modern contexts, and biblical images of this legitimation resonate in modern Western narratives of colonial and imperial domination.

It is these biblical models and images, including the silence and absence – or absenting – of women in biblical texts, that feminist scholarship has rightly analysed, problematized, condemned and rejected. Increasingly, feminist and

[833] On incipient sectarianism in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, see Moshe Weinfeld, "The Crystallization of the Congregation of the Exile," in *Normative and Sectarian Judaism in the Second Temple Period* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 227-238; Richard J. Bautch, *Glory and Power, Ritual and Relationship: The Sinai Covenant in the Postexilic Period*, LHB/OTS (New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 42; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Judaism, the First Phase: The Place of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Origins of Judaism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 196-204; Morton Smith, "The Dead Sea Sect in Relation to Ancient Judaism," in *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh*, ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), 176-181.

[834] James Watt's argues that the Torah's ritual authority preceded its authority in other matters. The text functions to legitimate the local cult by ascribing its practices to a 'book that claimed to be much older than the disruptions in cult practice caused by the exile' James W. Watts, "Ritual Legitimacy and Scriptural Authority," *Journal of Biblical LIterature* 124, no. 3 (2005): 416.

gender-critical scholarship has recognized that gendered identities, performances, constructs, and embodiments, and associated power relations, are nuanced and complex. As such, they are not satisfactorily addressed by attempting to deconstruct hierarchical binary oppositions.

Studies of masculinities, along with those insights from queer theories, and studies of performance, embodiment, and materiality that I draw on in this thesis allow for not only deconstructing, but also destabilizing and undermining the very binaries that are employed in the text. These binaries, I would argue, function to cloak men's gendered identities even as they silence women and transgressive men, allowing them to speak only in service of male interests and those of the male deity. Since gendered identities are relationally constituted, problematizing men's identities also serves to 'put flesh on the bones', to quote my thesis supervisor, of the women of Ezra 9-10 and unmasks the agenda of the biblical text.

If the landscape of Ezra 9-10 were that of warfare and battle, or even city-building and temple-building, as elsewhere in Ezra and Nehemiah, the absence of women would perhaps not be an issue worth noting for most readers. Marriage and procreation, however, are consistently assumed to be 'women's issues'. But studies of ancient West Asian and biblical masculinities reveal that marriage pertains to men, relationships between men and male kinships groups. Likewise, the engendering of descendants is a crucial matter for men and masculinity as it evidences virility, ensures the continuation of the lineage, and the perpetuation of name and inheritance. My study of Ezra 9-10 seeks not to silence the women, therefore, but to evidence just how serious the silence of these women is and the ways in which it extends to inferior(ised) men.

Bibliography

Ackerman, Susan. "The Deception of Isaac, Jacob's Dream at Bethel, and Incubation on an Animal Skin." In *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel*, edited by Gary A. Anderson and Saul M. Olyan. 92-120. Sheffield, England: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1991.

————————. *When Heroes Love: The Ambiguity of Eros in the Stories of Gilgamesh and David*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Ackroyd, Peter R., Gary N. Knoppers, Lester L. Grabbe, and Deirdre N. Fulton. *Exile and Restoration Revisited: Essays on the Babylonian and Persian Periods in Memory of Peter R. Ackroyd*. Library of Second Temple Studies. London: T & T Clark, 2009.

Aelen, Sverre. "'Ôr." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol I*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. 147-167. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.

Alberti, Benjamin "Archaeology, Men and Masculinities." In *Identity and Subsistence: Gender Strategies for Archaeology*, edited by Sarah M. Nelson. 69-102. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007.

Albertz, Rainer, Bob Becking, and European Association for Biblical Studies. *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era: Papers Read at the First Meeting of the European Association for Biblical Studies, Utrecht, 6-9 August 2000*. Studies in Theology and Religion. Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 2003.

Albright, William Foxwell. *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957.

Anderson, Cheryl B. "Reflections in an Interethnic/Racial Era on Interethnic/Racial Marriage." In *They Were All Together in One Place: Toward Minority Biblical Criticism*, edited by Randall C. Bailey, Tat-Siong Benny Liew and Fernando F. Segovia. 47-64. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009.

Anderson, Perry. *The H-Word: The Peripeteia of Hegemony*. Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2017.

Angel, Hayyim. "The Literary Significance of the Name Lists in Ezra-Nehemiah." *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2007): 143-152.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 1st ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1987.

Asad, Talal. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Assante, Julia. "The Lead Inlays of Tukulti-Ninurta I: Pornography as Imperial Strategy." In *Ancient Near Eastern Art in Context: Studies in Honor of Irene J. Winter*, edited by Irene Winter, Jack Cheng and Marian H. Feldman. 370-407. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007.

————————. "Men Looking at Men: The Homoerotics of Power in the State Arts of Assyria." In *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity*, edited by Ilona Zsolnay. 76-134. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Assmann, Jan. *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Azzoni, Annalisa. "Women of Elephantine and Women in the Land of Israel." In *In the Shadow of Bezalel: Aramaic, Biblical, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bezalel Porten*, edited by Alejandro F. Botta. 3-12. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013.

Bahrani, Zainab. *The Graven Image: Representation in Babylonia and Assyria*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.

————————. *Women of Babylon: Gender and Representation in Mesopotamia*. London; New York: Routledge, 2001.

Baltzer, Klaus. *The Covenant Formulary in Old Testament, Jewish, and Early Christian Writings*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.

Bar, Shaul. "Incubation and Traces of Incubation in the Biblical Narrative." *Old Testament Essays* 28, no. 2 (2015): 243-256.

Batten, Alicia J. "Clothing and Adornment." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 40, no. 3 (2010): 148-159.

Baumann, Gerlinde. *Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between Yhwh and Israel in the Prophetic Books*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003.

Bautch, Richard J. *Developments in Genre between Post-Exilic Penitential Prayers and the Psalms of Communal Lament*. Academia Biblica. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

————————. *Glory and Power, Ritual and Relationship: The Sinai Covenant in the Postexilic Period*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies. New York: T & T Clark, 2009.

Bautch, Richard J., and Gary N. Knoppers. *Covenant in the Persian Period: From Genesis to Chronicles*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015.

Becking, Bob. "Continuity and Community: The Belief System of the Book of Ezra." In *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic & Post-Exilic Texts*, edited by Bob Becking. 256-275. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

————————. "Ezra on the Move: Trends and Perspectives on the Character and His Book." In *Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Construction of Early Jewish Identity*, edited by Bob Becking. 1-23. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

————————. *Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Construction of Early Jewish Identity*. Forschungen zum Alten Testament. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

————————. "The Idea of Thora in Ezra 7-10: A Functional Analysis." In *Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Construction of Early Jewish Identity*. 42-57. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

————————. "On the Identity of the Foreign Women." In *Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Construction of Early Jewish Identity*. 58-73. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

————————. "Temple Vessels Speaking for a Silent God: Notes on the Divine Presence in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah." In *Reflections on the Silence of God: A Discussion with Marjo Korpel and Johannes de Moor*. 14-28. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013.

Bedford, Peter Ross. "Diaspora: Homeland Relations in Ezra-Nehemiah." *Vetus Testamentum* 52, no. 2 (2002): 147-165.

————————. *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism. Leiden Boston: Brill, 2001.

Bell, Catherine M. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Ben-Dov, Jonathan. "Writing as Oracle and as Law: New Contexts for the Book-Find of King Josiah." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 2 (2008): 223-239.

Ben Zvi, Ehud. "Inclusion in and Exclusion from Israel as Conveyed by the Use of the Term 'Israel' in Post-Monarchic Biblical Texts." In *The Pitcher Is Broken. Memorial Essays for Gösta W. Ahlström*, edited by Steven W.

Holloway and Lowell K. Handy. 95-149. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.

————————. "Observations on Josiah's Account in Chronicles and Implications for Constructing the Worldview of the Chronicler." In *Essays on Ancient Israel in Its Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman*, edited by Yaira Amit, Nadav Na'aman, Ehud Ben Zvi and Louis Finkelstein. 89-106. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

————————. "Re-Negotiating a Putative Utopia and the Stories of the Rejection of the Foreign Wives in Ezra-Nehemiah." In *Worlds That Could Not Be: Utopia in Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah*, edited by Steven James Schweitzer. 105-128. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016.

————————. "Total Exile, Empty Land and the General Intellectual Discourse in Yehud." In *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts*, edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin. 155-168. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010.

Ben Zvi, Ehud, Diana Vikander Edelman, and Frank Polak. *A Palimpsest: Rhetoric, Ideology, Stylistics, and Language Relating to Persian Israel*. Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and Its Contexts. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009.

Bergmann, Claudia. "We Have Seen the Enemy, and He Is Only a "She": The Portrayal of Warriors as Women." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69 (2007): 651-672.

Berlin, Adele. "The Exile: Biblical Ideology and Its Postmodern Ideological Interpretation." In *Literary Construction of Identity in the Ancient World*, edited by Hanna Liss and Manfred Oeming. 341-356. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010.

Bernthal-Hooker, Alan. "'You Shall Know Yahweh': Divine Sexuality in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond." Unpublished PhD, University of Exeter, 2017.

Berquist, Jon L. *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period*. Semeia Studies. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008.

————————. "Constructions of Identity in Postcolonial Yehud." In *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, edited by Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming. 53-66. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London; New York: Routledge, 1994.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary*. The Old Testament Library. 1st ed. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988.

————————. *Isaiah 1-39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible. 1st ed. New York: Doubleday, 2000.

————————. "A Jewish Sect of the Persian Period." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990): 5-20.

————————. *Judaism, the First Phase: The Place of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Origins of Judaism*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009.

————————. "The Mission of Udjahorresnet and Those of Ezra and Nehemiah." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106 (1987): 409-421.

————————. "The Social Context of the 'Outsider Woman' in Proverbs 1-9." *Biblica* 74 (1991).

Block, Daniel. *By the River Chebar: Historical, Literary, and Theological Studies in the Book of Ezekiel*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2013.

————————. "Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel." In *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*, edited by Ken M. Campbell. 33-102. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003.

Boda, Mark J. "Confession as Theological Expression: Ideological Origins of Penitential Prayer." In *Seeking the Favor of God Vol. 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, edited by Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk and Rodney Alan Werline. 21-50. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.

————————. *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999.

Boda, Mark J., and Paul L. Redditt. *Unity and Disunity in Ezra-Nehemiah: Redaction, Rhetoric, and Reader*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008.

Bodi, Daniel. *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra*. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis. Freiburg, Schweiz Göttingen: Universitätsverlag; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991.

Boehler, Genilma. "Teorías, Teologías, Género e Ideologías." *Vida y pensamiento: De la ideología de género a la justicia de género* 38, no. 1 (2018): 55-88.

Boer, Roland. "Marx, Postcolonialism, and the Bible." In *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*, edited by Stephen D. Moore and Fernando F. Segovia. 166-183. London; New York: T & T Clark, 2007.

————————. *Marxist Criticism of the Bible*. London New York: T & T Clark International, 2003.

————————. "No Road: On the Absence of Feminist Criticism of Ezra-Nehemiah." In *Her Master's Tools?: Feminist and Postcolonial Engagements of Historical-Critical Discourse*, edited by Caroline Vander Stichele and Todd C. Penner. 233-252. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005.

————————. "Of Fine Wine, Incense and Spices: The Unstable Masculine Hegemony of the Book of Chronicles." In *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, edited by Ovidiu Creanga. 20-33. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010.

————————. "Spermatic Sputtering Pens: Concerning the Construction and Breakdown of Prophetic Masculinity." In *Prophets Male and Female: Gender and Prophecy in the Hebrew Bible, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Ancient Near East*, edited by Jonathan Stökl and Corrine L. Carvalho. 215-237. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

Bons, Eberhard. "Work for the Good of the City to Which I Have Exiled You: Reflections on Jeremiah's Instructions to the Exiles in Jer 29:5-7." *Anales de Teología* 19, no. 1 (2017): 7-22.

Bosworth, David A. "The Tears of God in the Book of Jeremiah." *Biblica* 94 (2013): 24-46.

Bourdieu, Pierre. "Identity and Representation: Elements for a Critical Reflection on the Idea of Region." Translated by Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. In *Language and Symbolic Power*. 220-228. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.

Bowman, Alan K., and Greg Woolf. *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Briant, Pierre. *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*. Winona Lake: Eisenbraun, 2002.

Brown II, A. Philip "The Problem of Mixed Marriages in Ezra 9-10." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 162 (2005): 437-458.

Budin, Stephanie. "Fertility and Gender in the Ancient Near East." In *Sex in Antiquity: Exploring Gender and Sexuality in the Ancient World*, edited by

Mark Masterson, Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and James Robson. 30-49. London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015.

Burrus, Virginia. "Mapping as Metamorphosis: Initial Reflections on Gender and Ancient Religious Discourses." In *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses*, edited by Todd C. Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele. 1-10. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Butler, Judith, and Elizabeth Weed. "Introduction." In *The Question of Gender: Joan W. Scott's Critical Feminism*. 1-8. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011.

Calabro, David. "Gestures of Praise: Lifting and Spreading the Hands in Biblical Prayer." In *Ascending the Mountain of the Lord: Temple, Praise, and Worship in the Old Testament*, edited by Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Matthew J. Grey and David Rolph Seely. 105-121. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013.

Camp, Claudia V. "Feminist- and Gender-Critical Perspectives on the Biblical Ideology of Intermarriage." In *Mixed Marriages: Intermarriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period*, edited by Christian Frevel. 303-315. New York: T & T Clark International, 2011.

————. *Wise, Strange, and Holy: The Strange Woman and the Making of the Bible*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.

Careaga-Pérez, Gloria. "Moral Panic and Gender Ideology in Latin America." *Religion & Gender* 6, no. 2 (2016): 251-255.

Carroll, Robert P. "Exile! What Exile? Deportation and the Discourses of Diaspora." In *Leading Captivity Captive: "The Exile" as History and Ideology*, edited by Lester L. Grabbe. 62-80. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.

Carter, Charles E. *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

Chapman, Cynthia R. *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter*. Harvard Semitic Monographs. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004.

————————. "Sculpted Warriors: Sexuality and the Sacred in the Depiction of Warfare in the Assyrian Palace Reliefs and in Ezekiel 23: 14-17*." *Lectio Difficilior: European Electronic Journal for Feminist Exegesis* 1 (2007).

Chedid, Saad. "La Torah Leída con los Ojos de los Cananeos o la Otra Cara de la Conquista." In *La Biblia Leída con los Ojos de los Cananeos*, edited by Saad Chedid and Nur Masalha. 185-226. Buenos Aires: Editorial Canaán, 2011.

Choi, John H. *Traditions at Odds: The Reception of the Pentateuch in Biblical and Second Temple Period Literature*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies. New York: T & T Clark, 2010.

Christensen, Ann-Dorte, and Sune Qvotrup Jensen. "Combining Hegemonic Mascuinity and Intersectionality." *Norma* 9, no. 1 (2014): 60-75.

Cifarelli, Megan. "Gesture and Alterity in the Art of Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria." *The Art Bulletin* 80, no. 2 (1998): 210-228.

Clauss, Jan. "Understanding the Mixed Marriages of Ezra-Nehemiah in the Light of Temple-Building and the Book's Concept of Jerusalem." In *Mixed Marriages: Intermarriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period*, edited by Christian Frevel. 109-131. New York: T & T Clark International, 2011.

Clines, David J. A. "Being a Man in the Book of the Covenant." In *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham*, edited by Gordon Wenham, J. G. J.McConville and Karl Möller. 3-9. New York; London: T & T Clark, 2007.

————————. "Dancing and Shining at Sinai: Playing the Man in Exodus 32-34." In *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, edited by Ovidiu Creanga. 54-63. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010.

————————. "David the Man: The Construction of Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible." In *Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible*. 212-241. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.

————————. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.

————————. "Final Reflections on Biblical Masculinity." In *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, edited by Ovidiu Creanga. 234-239. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010.

————————. "He-Prophets: Masculinity as a Problem for the Hebrew Prophets and Their Interpreters." In *Sense and Sensitivity: Essays on Reading the Bible in Memory of Robert Carroll*, edited by Alastair G. Hunter and Philip R. Davies. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, 311-328. Sheffield; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

Cogan, Mordechai. *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah, and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E*. Monograph Series. Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974.

Cohn, Robert L. "Before Israel: The Canaanites as Other in Biblical Tradition." In *The Other in Jewish Thought and History: Constructions of Jewish Culture and Identity*, edited by Laurence J. Silberstein and Robert L. Cohn. 74-90. New York: New York University Press, 1994.

Conczorowski, Benedikt J. "All the Same as Ezra? Conceptual Differences between the Texts on Intermarriage in Genesis, Deuteronomy 7 and Ezra." In *Mixed Marriages: Intermarriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period*, edited by Christian Frevel. 89-108. New York: T & T Clark, 2011.

Connell, R.W. *Masculinities*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005.

Connell, R.W., and James W. Messerschmidt. "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept." *Gender & Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 829-859.

Cornwall, Andrea, and Nancy Lindisfarne. *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies*. London; New York: Routledge, 1994.

————————. "Dislocating Masculinity: Gender, Power and Anthropology." In *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies*. 11-47. London; New York: Routledge, 1994.

Creanga, Ovidiu, ed. *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, The Bible in the Modern World, vol. 33. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010.

————————. "Variations on the Theme of Masculinity: Joshua's Gender in/Stability in the Conquest Narrative." In *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, edited by Ovidiu Creanga. 83-109. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010.

Creanga, Ovidiu, and Peter-Ben Smit, eds. *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014.

Croatto, José Severino. " La destrucción de los símbolos de los dominados." *Ribla* 11 (1992): 37-48.

Davies, Philip R. "Exile? What Exile? Whose Exile?". In *Leading Captivity Captive: "The Exile" as History and Ideology*, edited by Lester L. Grabbe. 128-138. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.

————————. *In Search of 'Ancient Israel'*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series. Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1992.

————————. "Scenes from the Early History of Judaism." In *The Triumph of Elohim: From Yahwisms to Judaisms*, edited by Diana Vikander Edelman. 145-184. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1996.

Davies, Philip R., and John M. Halligan. *Second Temple Studies III: Studies in Politics, Class, and Material Culture*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series. London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

Demetriou, Demetrakis Z. "Connell's Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique." *Theory and Society* 30, no. 3 (2001): 337-361.

Dempsey, Carol. "The 'Whore' of Ezekiel 16: The Impact and Ramifications of Gender-Specific Metaphors in Light of Biblical Law and Divine Judgment." In *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, edited by Victor Harold Matthews, Bernard M. Levinson and Tikva Simone Frymer-Kensky. 57-78. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.

Diamond, A. R. Pete. "Deceiving Hope." *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 17, no. 1 (2003): 34-48.

————————. "Jeremiah." In *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, edited by James D. G. Dunn and J. W. Rogerson. 543-616. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2003.

Dietler, Michael. "Feasting and Fasting." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*, edited by Timothy Insoll. 179-194. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

DiPalma, Brian Charles. "De/Constructing Masculinity in Exodus 1-4." In *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, edited by Ovidiu Creanga. 36-53. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010.

————————. *Masculinities in the Court Tales of Daniel: Advancing Gender Studies in the Hebrew Bible*. Routledge Studies in the Biblical World. London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018.

Dor, Yonina. "The Composition of the Episode of the Foreign Women in Ezra IX-X." *Vetus Testamentum* 53, no. 1 (2003): 26-47.

————————. "The Rite of Separation of the Foreign Wives in Ezra-Nehemiah." In *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*, edited by Oded Lipschitz, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming. 173-188. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011.

Douglas, Mary. *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. 2nd ed. London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1973.

————————. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Pelican Books. Harmondworth: Penguin, 1970.

Dyck, Jonathan E. "Ezra 2 in Ideological Critical Perspective." In *Rethinking Contexts, Rereading Texts: Contributions from the Social Sciences to Biblical Interpretation*, edited by M. Daniel Carroll R. 129-145. Sheffield: Shefflield Academic Press, 2000.

————————. *The Theocratic Ideology of the Chronicler*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1998.

Ebersole, Gary L. "The Function of Ritual Weeping Revisited: Affective Expression and Moral Discourse." *History of Religions* 39, no. 3 (2000): 211-246.

Edelman, Diana Vikander. *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem*. Bibleworld. 1st ed. London; Oakville: Equinox Pub., 2005.

Edenburg, Cynthia. "From Covenant to Connubium: Persian Period Developments in the Perception of Covenant in the Deuteronomistic History." In *Covenant in the Persian Period: From Genesis to Chronicles*, edited by Richard J. Bautch and Gary N. Knoppers. 131-149. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015.

Eilberg-Schwartz, Howard. *God's Phallus and Other Problems for Men and Monotheism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994.

Erbele-Küster, Dorothea. "Gender and Cult: 'Pure' and 'Impure' as Gender-Relevant Categories." In *Torah*, edited by Irmtraud Fischer, Mercedes Navarro Puerto and Andrea Taschl-Erber. 375-406. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011.

Eskenazi, Tamara C. "Imagining the Other in the Construction of Judahite Identity in Ezra-Nehemiah." In *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity*

in the Early Second Temple Period, edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana Vikander Edelman. 230-256. London; New York: T&T Clark, 2014.

————. *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach to Ezra-Nehemiah*. Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988.

————. "The Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah." In *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, edited by Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming. 509-529. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

————. "Out from the Shadows: Biblical Women in the Postexilic Era." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 17, no. 54 (1992): 25-43.

Eskenazi, Tamara C., and Eleanor P. Judd. "Marriage to a Stranger in Ezra 9-10." In *Second Temple Studies. 2: Temple and Community in the Persian Period*, edited by Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Kent Harold Richards. 266-285. Sheffield, England: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1994.

Esler, Philip F. "Ezra-Nehemiah as a Narrative of (Re-Invented) Israelite Identity." *Biblical Interpretation* 11, no. 3/4 (2003): 413-426.

Fabry, Heinz-Josef. "Hānan." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol V*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. 22-36. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.

Feinstein, Eve Levavi. *Sexual Pollution in the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Fenn, Richard K. *The End of Time: Religion, Ritual, and the Forging of the Soul*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1997.

Fensham, F. Charles. *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.

Finkelstein, Israel. "Persian Period Jerusalem and Yehud: A Rejoinder." *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 9, no. 24 (2009).

Finsterbusch, Karin "Women between Subordination and Independence: Reflections on Gender-Related Legal Texts of the Torah." In *Torah*, edited by Irmtraud Fischer, Mercedes Navarro Puerto and Andrea Taschl-Erber. 407-435. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011.

Fishbane, Michael A. *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Fontaine, Carole R. "'Be Men, O Philistines!' (1 Samuel 4: 19): Iconographic Representations and Reflections on Female Gender as Disability in the

Ancient World." In *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies*, edited by Hector Avalos, Sarah J. Melcher and Jeremy Schipper. 61-72. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

Fontana, Benedetto. *Hegemony and Power: On the Relation between Gramsci and Machiavelli*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Foster, Benjamin R. "The Poem of the Righteous Sufferer." In *Context of Scripture*, edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger. 486-492. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003.

Foucault, Michel, and Colin Gordon. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. 1st American ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.

Frei, Peter. "Persia and the Torah: A Summary." Translated by James W. Watts. In *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch*, edited by James W. Watts. 5-40. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001.

Frevel, Christian, and Benedikt J. Conczorowski. "Deepening the Water: First Steps to a Diachronic Approach on Intermarriage in the Hebrew Bible." In *Mixed Marriages: Intermarriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period*, edited by Christian Frevel. 15-45. New York: T & T Clark International, 2011.

Frevel, Christian, and Christophe Nihan. "Introduction." In *Purity and the Forming of Religious Traditions*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012.

Fried, Lisbeth. "The 'Am Ha'ares in Ezra 4: 4 and Persian Administration." In *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, edited by Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming. 123-145. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

————. "Because of the Dread Upon Them." In *The World of Achaemenid Persia: History, Art and Society in Iran and the Ancient Near East*, edited by John Curtis and St John Simpson. 457-469. New York, London: I.B. Tauris, 2010.

————. "The Concept of 'Impure Birth' in 5th Century Athens and Judea." In *In the Wake of Tikva Frymer-Kensky*, edited by Steven Holloway, Jo Ann Scurlock and Richard Henry Beal. 121-141. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009.

————. "Cyrus the Messiah? The Historical Background to Isaiah 45: 1." *Harvard Theological Review* 95, no. 4 (2002): 373-393.

————————. "Ezra's Use of Documents in the Context of Hellenistic Rules of Rhetoric." In *New Perspectives on Ezra-Nehemiah: History and Historiography, Text, Literature, and Interpretation*, edited by Isaac Kalimi. 11-26. Winina Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012.

————————. *Ezra and the Law in History and Tradition*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2014.

————————. "The Land Lay Desolate: Conquest and Restoration in the Ancient near East." In *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, edited by Oded Lipschitz and Joseph Blenkinsopp. 21-54. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003.

————————. *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire*. Biblical and Judaic Studies. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004.

————————. "'You Shall Appoint Judges': Ezra's Mission and the Rescript of Artaxerxes." In *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch*, edited by James W. Watts. 63-89. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001.

Fuchs, Esther. "Intermarriage, Gender, and Nation in the Hebrew Bible." In *The Passionate Torah: Sex and Judaism*, edited by Danya Ruttenberg. 73-92. New York: New York University Press, 2009.

————————. "Reclaiming the Hebrew Bible for Women: The Neoliberal Turn in Contemporary Feminist Scholarship." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 24, no. 2 (2008): 45-65.

————————. *Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.

Gafney, Wil. "Mother Knows Best: Messianic Surrogacy and Sexploitation in Ruth." In *Mother Goose, Mother Jones, Mommie Dearest: Biblical Mothers and Their Children*, edited by Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan and Tina Pippin. 23-36. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010.

Galambush, Julie. *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh's Wife*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992.

Galling, K. "The 'Gola-List' According to Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 70 (1951): 149-158.

Gedalof, Irene. *Against Purity: Rethinking Identity with Indian and Western Feminisms*. Gender, Racism, Ethnicity. London; New York: Routledge, 1999.

George, Mark K. "Masculinity and Its Regimentation in Deuteronomy." In *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, edited by Ovidiu Creanga. 64-82. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010.

Gerstenberger, Erhard. *Israel in the Persian Period: The Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.E*. Society of Biblical Literature Biblical Encyclopedia. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010.

Gleason, Maud. "The Semiotics of Gender: Physiognomy and Self-Fashioning in the Second Century C.e.". In *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, edited by David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin. 389-416. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Goldstein, Elizabeth W. *Impurity and Gender in the Hebrew Bible*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015.

Gorman, Frank. "Ritual Studies and Biblical Studies: Assesment of the Past, Prospects for the Future." *Semeia* 67 (1994): 13-37.

Grabbe, Lester L. *Ezra-Nehemiah*. Old Testament Library. London; New York: Routledge, 1998.

————. *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period Vol 1.* Library of Second Temple Studies. London; New York: T & T Clark International, 2004.

————. *An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism: History and Religion of the Jews in the Time of Nehemiah, the Maccabees, Hillel and Jesus*. London; New York: T & T Clark, 2010.

————. "The "Persian Documents" in the Book of Ezra." In *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, edited by Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming. 531-570. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

Granerød, Gard. "'By the Favour of Ahuramazda I Am King': On the Promulgation of a Persian Propaganda Text among Babylonians and Judeans." *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 44, no. 4-5 (2013): 455-480.

Graybill, Rhiannon. *Are We Not Men?: Unstable Masculinity in the Hebrew Prophets*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

————————. "Male-Female Sexuality: Hebrew Bible." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Gender Studies*, edited by Julia M. O'Brien 445-450. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Greenberg, Moshe. "The Etymology of Nidda "(Menstrual) Impurity"." In *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honour of J.C. Greenfield*, edited by Ziony Zevit. 69-77. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995.

Grimes, Ronald L. "Performance Theory and the Study of Ritual." In *New Approaches to the Study of Religion. Volume 2: Textual, Comparative, Sociological, and Cognitive Approaches*, edited by Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz and R. R. Warne. 109-138. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004.

Grol, Harm van. "Exegesis of Exile – Exegesis of Scripture? Ezra 9: 6-9." In *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel*, edited by Johannes C. de Moor. 31-61. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1998.

————————. "'Indeed, Servants We Are': Ezra 9, Nehemiah 9 and 2 Chronicles 12 Compared." In *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times*, edited by Bob Becking and Marjo C. A. Korpel. 209-227. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999.

Grosz, E. A. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Theories of Representation and Difference. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Gruber, Mayer I. *Aspects of Nonverbal Communication in the Ancient Near East*. Studia Pohl. 2 vols Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980.

Gruen, Erich. "Persia through the Jewish Looking-Glass." In *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers*, edited by Tessa Rajak. 53-75. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

Guenther, Allen. "A Typology of Israelite Marriage: Kinship, Socio-Economic, and Religious Factors." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29, no. 4 (2005): 387-407.

Gunneweg, A.H.J. "'Am Ha'arez – a Semantic Revolution." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 95 (1983): 437-440.

Haag, H. . "Bēn." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol II*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. 145-159. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.

Haddox, Susan E. "(E)Masculinity in Hosea's Political Rhetoric." In *Israel's Prophets and Israel's Past: Essays on the Relationship of Prophetic Texts and Israelite History in Honor of John H. Hayes*, edited by Brad E. Kelle and Megan Bishop Moore. 174-200. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.

————————. "Favoured Sons and Subordinate Masculinities." In *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible & Beyond*, edited by Ovidiu Creanga. 2-19. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010.

————————. "Masculinity Studies of the Hebrew Bible: The First Two Decades." *Currents in Biblical Research* 14, no. 2 (2016): 176-206.

————————. *Metaphor and Masculinity in Hosea*. Studies in Biblical Literature. New York: Peter Lang, 2011.

Hamp, Vinzenz. "Bakkah." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol II*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Heinz-Josef Fabry. 116-120. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Harrington, Hannah. "Holiness and Purity in Ezra-Nehemiah." In *Unity and Disunity in Ezra-Nehemiah: Redaction, Rhetoric, and Reader*, edited by Mark J. Boda and Paul L. Redditt. 98-116. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008.

————————. "The Use of Leviticus in Ezra-Nehemiah." *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 13.a3 (2013): 1-20.

Harris, Rivkah. "Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox and a Coincidence of Opposites." *History of Religions* 30, no. 3 (1991): 261-278.

Harrisson, Juliette. "The Development of the Practice of Incubation in the Ancient World." In *Medicine and Healing in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, edited by Dēmētrēs Michaēlidēs. 284-290. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014.

Hayes, Christine. *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Haywood, Chris, and Mártín Mac an Ghaill. *Men and Masculinities. Theory, Research and Social Practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2003.

Heard, R. Christopher. *Dynamics of Diselection: Ambiguity in Genesis 12-36 and Ethnic Boundaries in Post-Exilic Judah*. The Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001.

Heckl, Raik. "The Composition of Ezra-Nehemiah as a Testimony for the Composition between the Temples in Jerusalem and on Mt. Gerizim in the

Early Years of Seleucid Rule over Judah." In *The Bible, Qumran, and the Samaritans*, edited by Magnar Kartveit and Gary Knoppers. 115-132. Boston: De Gruyter, 2018.

Helle, Sophus. "Weapons and Weaving Instruments as Symbols of Gender in the Ancient Near East." In *Fashioned Selves: Dress and Identity in Antiquity*, edited by Megan Cifarelli. 105-115. Philadelphia: Oxbow, 2019.

Heltzer, Michael. "The Flogging and Plucking of Beards in the Achaemenid Empire and the Chronology of Nehemiah." *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 28 (1995-1996): 305-307.

Hendel, Ronald S. "'Begetting' and 'Being Born' in the Pentateuch: Notes on Historical Linguistics and Source Criticism." *Vetus Testamentum* 50, no. 1 (2000): 38-46.

————————. *Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory, and History in the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Hensel, Benedikt. "Ethnic Fiction and Identity-Formation: A New Explanation for the Background of the Question of Intermarriage in Ezra-Nehemiah." Chap. 133-148 In *The Bible, Qumran, and the Samaritans*, edited by Magnar Kartveit. pages cm. Boston: De Gruyter, 2018.

Hillers, Delbert R. *Treaty-Curses and Old Testament Prophets*. Biblica et Orientalia. Vol. 16, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964.

Hoffner, Harry A. Jr. "Symbols for Masculinity and Femininity. Their Use in Ancient Near Eastern Sympathetic Magic Rituals." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 85, no. 3 (1966): 326-334.

Hoglund, Kenneth G. "The Achaemenid Context." In *Second Temple Studies 1. The Persian Period*, edited by Philip R. Davies. 54-72. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991.

Hooker, Alan. "'Show Me Your Glory': The Kabod of Yahweh as Phallic Manifestation?". In *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, edited by Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit. 17-34. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014.

Houtman, Dick, and Birgit Meyer. "Introduction: Material Religion – How Things Matter." In *Things: Religion and the Question of Materiality*. xvi, 482 p. New York: Fordham University Press, 2012.

————————. *Things: Religion and the Question of Materiality*. The Future of the Religious Past. 1st ed. New York: Fordham University Press, 2012.

Howard, Cameron. "Writing Yehud: Textuality and Power under Persian Rule." Unpublished PhD Thesis, Emory University, 2010.

Howson, Richard. *Challenging Hegemonic Masculinity*. Routledge Advances in Sociology. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Hundley, Michael B. *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East*. Writings from the Ancient World Supplements Series. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

Hurowitz, Victor. *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992.

Hurvitz, Avi, Leeor Gottlieb, Aaron D. Hornkohl, and Emmanuel Mastéy. *A Concise Lexicon of Late Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Innovations in the Writings of the Second Temple Period*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014.

Hutchings, Tim. *Materiality and the Study of Religion: The Stuff of the Sacred*. London; New York: Routledge, 2017.

Ishida, Tomoo. "The Structure and Historical Implications of the Lists of Pre-Israelite Nations." *Biblica* 60 (1979): 461-490.

Janzen, David. *Witch-Hunts, Purity and Social Boundaries: The Expulsion of the Foreign Women in Ezra 9-10*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

Japhet, Sara. "The Concept of the "Remnant" in the Restoration Period." In *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period*. 432-449. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

————. "The Expulsion of the Foreign Women (Ezra 9-10): The Legal Basis, Precedentes, and Consequences for the Definition of Jewish Identity." In *'Sieben Augen auf einem Stein' (Sach 3,9): Studien zur Literatur des Zweiten Tempels*, edited by Friedhelm Hartenstein and Michael Pietsch. 141-161. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2007.

————. *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

————. *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*. Old Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993.

————. *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*. English ed. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009.

————————. "Interchange of Verbal Roots in Parallel Texts in Chronicles." *Hebrew Studies* 28 (1987): 9-50.

————————. "Law and 'the Law' in Ezra-Nehemiah." In *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period*. 137-151. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

Jay, Nancy B. *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion, and Paternity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Jenson, Philip Peter. *Graded Holiness*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992.

Johnson, Sally A. "Theorizing Language and Masculinity." In *Language and Masculinity*, edited by Sally A. Johnson and Ulrike Hanna Meinhof. 8-26. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1997.

Johnson, Willa Mathis. *The Holy Seed Has Been Defiled: The Interethnic Marriage Dilemma in Ezra 9-10*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.

Kaiser, Otto. *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary*. Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972.

Kamionkowski, S. Tamar. *Gender Reversal and Cosmic Chaos: A Study on the Book of Ezekiel*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series. London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003.

Kandiyoti, Deniz. "Identity and Its Discontents: Women and the Nation." *Millenium* 20, no. 3 (1991): 429-443.

Karrer-Grube, Christiane. "Ezra and Nehemiah: The Return of the Others." In *Feminist Biblical Interpretation: A Compendium of Critical Commentary on the Books of the Bible and Related Literature*, edited by Luise Schottroff, Marie-Theres Wacker and Martin Rumscheidt. 192-206. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2012.

Kazen, Thomas. "Dirt and Disgust: Body and Morality in Biblical Purity Laws." In *Perspectives on Purity and Purification in the Bible*, edited by David P. Wright, Jeffrey Stackert and Naphtali S. Meshel. 43-64. New York: T&T Clark, 2008.

Keefe, Alice A. "Rapes of Women/Wars of Men." *Semeia* 61 (1993): 79-97.

Kelle, Brad. "Wartime Rhetoric: Prophetic Metaphorization of Cities as Female." In *Writing and Reading War: Rhetoric, Gender, and Ethics in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, edited by Brad E. Kelle and Frank Ritchel Ames. 95-112. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008.

Kelso, Julie. *O Mother, Where Art Thou?: An Irigarayan Reading of the Book of Chronicles*. Bibleworld. London; Oakville, CT: Equinox Pub., 2007.

————————. "Reading Silence: The Books of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, and the Relative Absence of a Feminist Interpretative History." In *Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Retrospect: I. Biblical Books*, edited by Susanne Scholz. 268-289, 2013.

Kessler, John. "The Diaspora in Zechariah 1-8 and Ezra-Nehemiah: The Role of History, Social Location, and Tradition in the Formulation of Identity." In *Community Identity in Judean Historiography*, edited by Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau. 119-146. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009.

————————. "Persia's Loyal Yahwists: Power, Identity, and Ethnicity in Achaemenid Yehud." In *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, edited by Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming. 91-122. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

Kim, Koowon. *Incubation as a Type-Scene in the Aqhatu, Kirta, and Hannah Stories: A Form-Critical and Narratological Study of Ktu 1.14 I-1.15 III, 1.17 I-II, and 1 Samuel 1: 1-2: 11*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum. Boston; Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Kirova, Milena. "When Real Men Cry: The Symbolism of Weeping in the Torah and the Deuteronomistic History." In *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, edited by Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit. 35-50. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014.

Klawans, Jonathan. *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

————————. *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Klingbeil, Gerald A. "'Not So Happily Ever After...': Cross-Cultural Marriages in the Time of Ezra-Nehemiah." *Maarav* 14, no. 1 (2007): 39-75.

Knoppers, Gary N. "Aspects of Samaria's Religious Culture During the Early Hellenistic Period." Chap. 159-174 In *The Historian and the Bible: Essays in Honour of Lester L. Grabbe*, edited by Lester L. Grabbe, Philip R. Davies and Diana Vikander Edelman. xiv, 238 p. London; New York: T & T Clark, 2010.

————————. "The Construction of Judean Diasporic Identity in Ezra-Nehemiah." *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 15, no. a.3 (2015).

————————. "Ethnicity, Genealogy, Geography and Change: The Judean Communities of Babylon and Jerusalem in the Story of Ezra." In *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives*, edited by Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau. 147-171. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009.

————————. "Revisiting the Composition of Ezra-Nehemiah: In Conversation with Jacob Wright's Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah Memoir and Its Earliest Readers." *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 7, no. 12 (2007): 1-36.

————————. "Revisiting the Samarian Question in the Persian Period." In *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, edited by Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming. 265-289. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

————————. "Sex, Religion, and Politics: The Deuteronomist on Intermarriage." *Hebrew Annual Review* 14 (1994): 121-141.

Knowles, Melody D. *Centrality Practiced: Jerusalem in the Religious Practice of Yehud and the Diaspora in the Persian Period*. Archaeology and Biblical Studies. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006.

Koch, Klaus. "Ezra and the Origins of Judaism." *Journal of Semitic Studies* 19, no. 2 (1974): 173-197.

Köhler, Ludwig, and Walter Baumgartner. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament Vol. I*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001.

Koltun-Fromm, Naomi. *Hermeneutics of Holiness: Ancient Jewish and Christian Notions of Sexuality and Religious Community*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Kratz, Reinhard G. *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament*. London; New York: T & T Clark, 2005.

————————. "The Second Temple of Jeb and of Jerusalem." In *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, edited by Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming. 247-264. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

Krishnaswamy, Revathi. *Effeminism: The Economy of colonial Desire*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998.

Kruger, Paul. "The Inverse World of Mourning in the Hebrew Bible." *Biblische Notizen* 124 (2005): 41-49.

Kuhrt, Amélie. "The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25 (1983): 83-97.

————————. "Cyrus the Great of Persia: Images and Realities." In *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East*, edited by Marlies Heinz and Marian H. Feldman. 169-191. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007.

————————. "State Communications in the Persian Empire." In *State Correspondence in the Ancient World: From New Kingdom Egypt to the Roman Empire*, edited by Karen Radner. 112-140. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

————————. "Women and War." *Journal of Gender Studies in Antiquity* 2 (2001): 1-26.

Kutsch, E. "htn." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol V*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. 270-277. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.

Kutsko, John F. *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel*. Biblical and Judaic Studies. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000.

Laird, Donna. *Negotiating Power in Ezra-Nehemiah*. Ancient Israel and Its Literature. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016.

Lang, Bernhard. "nkr." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol IX*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. 425-429. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.

Launderville, Dale. *Celibacy in the Ancient World: Its Ideal and Practice in Pre-Hellenistic Israel, Mesopotamia, and Greece*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010.

LeFebvre, Michael. *Collections, Codes, and Torah: The Re-Characterization of Israel's Written Law*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.

Lemche, Niels Peter. *The Israelites in History and Tradition*. London; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Lemos, T.M. "The Emasculation of Exile: Hypermasculinity and Feminization in the Book of Ezekiel." In *Interpreting Exile: Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, edited by Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritchel Ames and Jacob L. Wright. 377-393. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012.

————————. "'Like the Eunuch Who Does Not Beget': Gender, Mutiliation and Negotiated Status in the Ancient Near East." In *Disability Studies and Biblical*

Literature, edited by Candida R. Moss and Jeremy Schipper. 47-66. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

———————. "Shame and the Mutilation of Enemies in the Hebrew Bible." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 125, no. 2 (2006): 225-241.

———————. "Where There Is Dirt, Is There System? Revisiting Biblical Purity Constructions." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 37, no. 3 (2013): 265-294.

Leuchter, Mark. "Coming to Terms with Ezra's Many Identities in Ezra-Nehemiah." In *Historiography and Identity (Re)Formulation in Second Temple Historiographical Literature*, edited by Louis C. Jonker. 41-64. New York: T & T Clark, 2010.

Levin, Yigal. *A Time of Change: Judah and Its Neighbours in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods*. Library of Second Temple Studies. London; New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2007.

Levine, Baruch. "'Seed' Versus 'Womb': Expressions of Male Dominance in Biblical Israel." In *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 47th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, July 2-6, 2001*, edited by Simon Parpola and Robert M. Whiting. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text corpus Project, 2002.

———————. "Silence, Sound, and the Phenomenology of Mourning in Biblical Israel." *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 22 (1993): 89-106.

Levtow, Nathaniel B. *Images of Others: Iconic Politics in Ancient Israel*. Biblical and Judaic Studies. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008.

———————. "Text Production and Destruction in Ancient Israel: Ritual and Political Dimensions." In *Social Theory and the Study of Israelite Religion: Essays in Retrospect and Prospect*, edited by Saul M. Olyan. 111-140. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012.

Lewis, Theodore J. "Syro-Palestinian Iconography and Divine Images." In *Cult Image and Divine Representation in the Ancient Near East*, edited by Neal H. Walls. 69-107. Boston: ASOR, 2005.

Lipka, Hilary. "Masculinities in Proverbs: An Alternative to the Hegemonic Ideal." In *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, edited by Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit. 86-103. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014.

———————. "Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks: Shame and the Undermining of Masculine Performance in Biblical Texts." In *Being a Man: Negotiating*

Ancient Constructs of Masculinity, edited by Ilona Zsolnay. 271-304. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Lipschits, Oded. "Persian Period Finds from Jerusalem: Facts and Interpretations." *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 9, no. 20 (2009).

Lipschitz, Oded, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming. *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011.

Lipschitz, Oded, and Manfred Oeming. *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

Liverani, Mario. *Israel's History and the History of Israel*. London; Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2005.

Lugones, Maria. "Purity, Impurity, and Separation." *Signs* 19, no. 2 (1994): 458-476.

Macelaru, Marcel V. "Saul in the Company of Men: (de)Constructing Masculinity in 1 Samuel 9-31." In *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, edited by Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit. 51-68. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014.

Macwilliam, Stuart. "Athaliah: A Case of Illicit Masculinity." In *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, edited by Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit. 69-85. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014.

———————. *Queer Theory and the Prophetic Marriage Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*. Sheffield: Equinox, 2011.

———————. "Queering Jeremiah." *Biblical Interpretation* 10, no. 4 (2002): 384-404.

Madreiter, Irene, and Kordula Schnegg. "Gender and Sex." In *A Companion to the Achaemenid Empire*, edited by B Jacob and R. Rollinger. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, Forthcoming.

Maier, Christl M. "The 'Foreign' Women in Ezra-Nehemiah: Intersectional Perspectives on Ethnicity." In *Feminist Frameworks and the Bible: Power, Ambiguity, and Intersectionality*, edited by L. Juliana M. Claassens and Carolyn J. Sharp. 79-97. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017.

Makujina, John "On the Possible Old Persian Origin of the Aramaic שים טעם, 'to Issue a Decree' ". *Hebrew Union College Annual*, no. 68 (1997): 1-9.

Marcus, Michelle I. "Geography as Visual Ideology: Landscape, Knowledge, and Power in Neo-Assyrian Art." In *Neo-Assyrian Geography*, edited by Mario Liverani. 193-202. Rome: Universita di Roma, 1995.

Marsman, Hennie J. *Women in Ugarit and Israel: Their Social and Religious Position in the Context of the Ancient Near East*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009.

Matthews, Victor H. "Marriage and Family in the Ancient Near East." In *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*, edited by Ken M. Campbell. 1-32. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003.

McCarthy, Dennis J. "Covenant and Law in Chronicles-Nehemiah." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44 (1982): 25-44.

McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

McConville, J.G. "Ezra-Nehemiah and the Fulfilment of Prophecy." *Vetus Testamentum* 36, no. 2 (1986): 205-224.

Mendenhall, George E., and Gary A. Herion. "Covenant." In *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol I*, edited by David Noel Freedman. 1179-1202. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Messerschmidt, James W. "Engendering Gendered Knowledge: Assessing the Academic Appropriation of Hegemonic Masculinity." *Men and Masculinities* 15, no. 1 (2012): 56-76.

Messerschmidt, James W., and Michael A. Messner. "Hegemonic, Nonhegemonic, and 'New' Masculinities." In *Gender Reckonings: New Social Theory and Research*, edited by James W. Messerschmidt, Patricia Yancey Martin and Michael A. Messner. 35-56. New York: New York University Press, 2018.

Meyer, I. "Samam." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol Xv*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Heinz-Josef Fabry. 228-248. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

Meyers, Carol L. *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

————. "Women's Religious Life in Ancient Israel." In *Women's Bible Commentary*, edited by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe and Jacqueline E. Lapsley. 354-364. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012.

Mignolo, Walter. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.

————————. *Historias locales/diseños globales: colonialidad, conocimientos subalternos y pensamiento fronterizo*. Sevilla: Akal, 2003.

Milgrom, Jacob. "The Concept of Ma'al in the Bible and the Ancient Near East." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 96, no. 2 (1976): 236-247.

————————. *Leviticus 1-16*. The Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 1991.

Miller, Patrick D., and J. J. M. Roberts. *The Hand of the Lord: A Reassessment of the "Ark Narrative" of 1 Samuel*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008.

Min, Kyung-Jin. *The Levitical Authorship of Ezra-Nehemiah*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series. London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004.

Moffatt, Donald P. . *Ezra's Social Drama: Identity Formation, Marriage and Social Conflict in Ezra 9-10*. London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013.

Moller, Michael. "Exploiting Patterns: A Critique of Hegemonic Masculinity." *Journal of Gender Studies* 16, no. 3 (2007): 263-276.

Molloy, Maureen. "Imagining (the) Difference: Gender, Ethnicity and Metaphors of Nation." *Feminist Review* 51 (1995): 94-112.

Montrose, Louise. "The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery." *Representations*, no. 33, Special Issue: The New World (1991): 1-41.

Moore, Stephen D. *God's Beauty Parlor: And Other Queer Spaces in and around the Bible*. Contraversions. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.

————————. *God's Gym: Divine Male Bodies of the Bible*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Moore, Stephen D., and Janice Capel Anderson. "Taking It Like a Man: Masculinity in 4 Maccabees." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117, no. 2 (1998): 249-279.

Moraña, Mabel, Enrique D. Dussel, and Carlos A. Jáuregui. *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*. Latin America Otherwise. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.

Morgan, David. "Introduction." In *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief*. 1-17. London; New York: Routledge, 2010.

————————. "Material Analysis and the Study of Religion." In *Materiality and the Study of Religion: The Stuff of the Sacred*, edited by Tim Hutchings and Joanne McKenzi. 14-32. London; New York: Routledge, 2017.

————————. "The Material Culture of Lived Religion: Visuality and Embodiment." In *Mind and Matter: Selected Papers of Nordic Conference 2009*, edited by J. Vakkari. 14-31. Helsinki: Society of Art History, 2010.

————————. "Materiality, Social Analysis, and the Study of Religions." In *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief*. 1-17. London; New York: Routledge, 2010.

————————. *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief*. London; New York: Routledge, 2010.

Moughtin-Mumby, Sharon. *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel*. Oxford Theological Monographs. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Myers, Jacob Martin. *Ezra, Nehemiah*. AB. 1st ed. Garden City: Doubleday, 1965.

Na'aman, Nadav. "The 'Discovered Book' and the Legitimation of Josiah's Reform." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, no. 1 (2011): 47-62.

Nandy, Ashis. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*. New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Nicholson, E. W. "The Meaning of the Expression 'Am Ha'arez in the Old Testament." *Journal of Semitic Studies* 10 (1965): 59-66.

Niditch, Susan. *My Brother Esau Is a Hairy Man: Hair and Identity in Ancient Israel*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Niehr, Herbert. "In Search of Yhwh's Cult Statue in the First Temple." In *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, edited by K. van der Toorn. 73-95. Leuven: Peeters, 1997.

Nissinen, Martti. *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World: A Historical Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.

————————. "Relative Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament." In *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity*, edited by Ilona Zsolnay. 340-379. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Noegel, Scott B. "'Literary' Craft and Performative Power in the Ancient near East: The Hebrew Bible in Context." In *Approaches to Literary Readings of Ancient*

Jewish Writings, edited by K. A. D. Smelik and Karolien Vermeulen. 19-38. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014.

Noth, Martin. *The Laws in the Pentateuch, and Other Studies*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967.

Nykolaishen, Douglas J.E. "Ezra 9-10: Solemn Oath? Renewed Covenant? New Covenant?". In *Covenant in the Persian Period: From Genesis to Chronicles*, edited by Richard J. Bautch and Gary N. Knoppers. 371-389. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015.

Økland, Jorunn. "Requiring Explanation: Hegemonic Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Traditions." *Biblical Interpretation* 23 (2015): 479-488.

Olyan, Saul M. *Biblical Mourning: Ritual and Social Dimensions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

————————. *Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Differences*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

————————. "Purity Ideology in Ezra-Nehemiah as a Tool to Reconstitute the Community." *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 35, no. 1 (2004): 1-16.

————————. *Rites and Rank: Hierarchy in Biblical Representations of Cult*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000.

————————. "Ritual Inversion in Biblical Representations of Punitive Rites." In *Worship, Women, and War: Essays in Honor of Susan Niditch*, edited by John J. Collins, T.M. Lemos and Saul M. Olyan. 135-143. Providence: Brown University, 2015.

————————. "Theorizing Violence in Biblical Ritual Contexts: The Case of Mourning Rites." In *Social Theory and the Study of Israelite Religion: Essays in Retrospect and Prospect*. 169-180. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012.

————————. "What Do Shaving Rites Accomplish?". *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117, no. 4 (1998): 611-622.

Oswald, Wolfgang. "Foreign Marriages and Citizenship in Persian Period Judah." *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 12, no. 6 (2012).

Pakkala, Juha. "The Exile and the Exiles in the Ezra Tradition." In *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts*, edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin. 91-102. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010.

————————. *Ezra the Scribe: The Development of Ezra 7-10 and Nehemiah 8*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft. Berlin; New York: W. de Gruyter, 2004.

————————. "The Quotations and References of the Pentateuchal Laws in Ezra-Nehemiah." In *Changes in Scripture: Rewriting and Interpreting Authoritative Traditions in the Second Temple Period*, edited by Hanne von Weissenberg, Juha Pakkala and Marko Marttila. 193-221. Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011.

Parpola, Simo, and Kazuko Watanabe. *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*. State Archives of Assyria. Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University Press, 1988.

Penner, Jeremy. *Patterns of Daily Prayer in Second Temple Period Judaism*. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012.

Pham, Xuan Huong Thi. *Mourning in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

Philip, Tarja. "Gender Matters: Priestly Writing on Impurity." In *Embroidered Garments: Priests and Gender in Biblical Israel*, edited by Deborah W. Rooke. 40-59. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009.

Polaski, Donald C. . "What Mean These Stones? Inscriptions, Textuality and Power in Persia and Yehud." In *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period*, edited by Jon L. Berquist. 37-48. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008.

Polzin, Robert. *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose*. Hebrew Semitic Monographs. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976.

Preuss, Hans Dietrich. "Bô'." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol II*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. 20-49. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.

————————. "zāraʿ." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol IV*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. 143-162. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.

Prior, Michael. *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.

Quijano, Aníbal. "Colonialidad del poder, cultura y conocimiento en América Latina." In *La colonialidad del saber: Eurocentrismo y Ciencias Sociales*, edited by E. Lander. 201-246. Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2005.

Rappaport, Roy A. *Ecology, Meaning, and Religion*. Richmond, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1979.

————————. *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Regev, Eyal. "Priestly Dynamic Holiness and Deuteronomic Static Holiness." *Vetus Testamentum* 51, no. 2 (2001): 243-261.

Rey, M. I. "Reexamination of the Foreign Female Captive: Deuteronomy 21: 10-14 as a Case of Genocidal Rape." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 32, no. 1 (2016): 37-53.

Ringgren, Helmer. "māʿl." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol VIII*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. 460-463. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

Rivera Ayala, Sergio. *El discurso colonial en textos novohispanos: espacio, cuerpo y poder*. Suffolk, U.K.; Rochester, N.Y.: Tamesis, 2009.

Rom-Shiloni, Dalit. "From Ezekiel to Ezra-Nehemiah: Shifts of Group Identities within Babylonian Exilic Ideology." In *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*, edited by Oded Lipschitz, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming. 127-151. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011.

————————. "Socio-Ideological *Setting* or *Settings* for Penitential Prayers?". In *Seeking the Favor of God Vol. 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, edited by Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk and Rodney Alan Werline. 51-68. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.

Römer, Thomas C. "Transformations in Deuteronomistic and Biblical Historiography: On 'Book-Finding' and Other Literary Strategies." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 109 (1997): 1-11.

Rooke, Deborah W. "Breeches of the Covenant: Gender, Garments and the Priesthood." In *Embroidered Garments: Priests and Gender in Biblical Israel*. 19-37. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009.

Rooker, Mark F. *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series. Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1990.

Root, Margaret Cool. *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art: Essays on the Creation of an Iconography of Empire*. Acta Iranica. Vol. 19, Leiden: Brill, 1979.

Rothenbusch, Ralf. "The Question of Mixed Marriages between the Poles of Diaspora and Homeland: Observations in Ezra-Nehemiah." In *Mixed Marriages: Intermarriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period*, edited by Christian Frevel. 60-77. New York: T & T Clark International, 2011.

Satlow, Michael L. *How the Bible Became Holy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

Sawyer, Deborah F. "Biblical Gender Strategies: The Case of Abraham's Masculinity." In *Gender, Religion, and Diversity: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, edited by Ursula King and Tina Beattie. 162-174. London; New York: Continuum, 2004.

Schippers, Mimi. "Recovering the Feminine Other: Masculinity, Femininity, and Gender Hegemony." *Theory and Society* 36, no. 1 (2007): 85-102.

Schmid, Konrad. "The Persian Imperial Authorization as a Historical Problem and as a Biblical Construct: A Plea for Distinctions in the Current Debate." In *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance*, edited by Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson. 23-38. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007.

Schrock, Douglas, and Michael Schwalbe. "Men, Masculinity, and Manhood Acts." *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009): 277-295.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. "Between Movement and Academy: Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century." In *Feminist Biblical Studies in the 20th Century: Scholarship and Movement*. 1-17. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014.

Scott, Joan Wallach. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-1075.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Sérandour, Arnaud. "Les femmes étrangères dans les livres grec et hébraïques d'Esdras: Répudiation ou Exclusion du culte?". *Transeuphratène* 36 (2008): 155-163.

Siedlecki, Armin. *Negotiating Identity: The Portrayal of Foreigners in Ezra-Nehemiah*. Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Publishing, 2010.

Silberstein, Laurence J., and Robert L. Cohn. *The Other in Jewish Thought and History: Constructions of Jewish Culture and Identity*. New Perspectives on Jewish Studies. New York: New York University Press, 1994.

Smit, Peter-Ben. *Masculinity and the Bible: Survey, Models, and Perspectives*. Biblical Interpretation. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

Smith-Christopher, Daniel. "Between Ezra and Isaiah: Exclusion, Transformation and Inclusion of the 'Foreigner' in Post-Exilic Biblical Theology." In *Ethnicity and the Bible*, edited by Mark G. Brett. 117-142. Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1996.

————. "The Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9-10 and Nehemiah 13: A Study of the Sociology of Post-Exilic Judaean Community." In *Second Temple Studies. 2, Temple and Community in the Persian Period*, edited by Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Kent Harold Richards. 243-265. Sheffield, England: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1994.

Smith, Daniel L. *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile*. Bloomington: Meyer-Stone Books, 1989.

Smith, Mark S. "'Your People Shall Be My People': Family and Covenant in Ruth 1: 16-17." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69 (2007): 242-258.

Snijders, J.G. "Zûr/Zār." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol IV*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. 53-57. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.

Solodkow, David. "De caníbales, etnógrafos y evangelizadores: versiones de la Otredad en las primeras cartas del 'descubrimiento' (Cristóbal Colón 1493, Michele de Cuneo 1495, Pero Vaz de Caminha 1500)." *The Colorado Review of Hispanic Studies* 3 (2005): 17-39.

Southwood, Katherine E. "An Ethnic Affair? Ezra's Intermarriage Crisis against a Context of 'Self-Ascription' and 'Ascription of Others'." In *Mixed Marriages: Intermarriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period*, edited by Christian Frevel. 46-59. New York: T & T Clark International, 2011.

————. *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9-10: An Anthropological Approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

————. "The Holy Seed: The Significance of Endogamous Boundaries and Their Transgression in Ezra 9-10." In *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*, edited

by Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming. 189-224. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011.

Sperling, S. David. "Rethinking Covenant in Late Biblical Books." *Biblica* 70, no. 1 (1989): 50-73.

Stavrakopoulou, Francesca. "The Ancient Goddess, the Biblical Scholar, and the Religious Past." In *The Bible and Feminism: Remapping the Field*, edited by Yvonne Sherwood. 495-513. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017.

————. *Land of our Fathers: The Roles of Ancestor Veneration in Biblical Land Claims*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies. New York: T & T Clark, 2010.

————. "Making Bodies: On Body Modification and Religious Materiality in the Hebrew Bible." *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 2, no. 4 (2013): 532-553.

————. "Materialist Reading: Materialism, Materiality, and Biblical Cults of Writing." In *Biblical Interpretation and Method: Essays in Honour of John Barton*, edited by Katharine J. Dell and Paul Joyce. 223-237. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

————. "'Popular' Religion and 'Official' Religion: Practice, Perception, Portrayal." In *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah*, edited by Francesca Stavrakopoulou and John Barton. 37-58. London; New York: T & T Clark, 2010.

Steiner, Richard C. "The Mbqr at Qumran, the Episkopos in the Athenian Empire, and the Meaning of Lbqr' in Ezra 7: 14 on the Relation of Ezra's Mission to the Persian Legal Project." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 120 (2001): 623-646.

Stiebert, Johanna. *Fathers and Daughters in the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

————. "Human Conception in Antiquity: The Hebrew Bible in Contexto." *Theology and Sexuality* 16, no. 3 (2010): 209-227.

Stone, Ken. *Lovers and Raisin Cakes: Food, Sex, and Manhood in Hosea*. Practicing Safer Texts: Food, Sex and Bible in Queer Perspective. London; New York: T & T Clark International, 2005.

————. "Marriage and Sexual Relations in the World of the Hebrew Bible." In *The Oxford Handbook of Theology, Sexuality, and Gender*, edited by

Adrian Thatcher. 173-187. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2015.

————————. *Sex, Honor, and Power in the Deuteronomistic History*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.

Stott, Katherine M. "Finding the Lost Book of the Law: Re-Reading the Story of 'the Book of the Law' (Deuteronomy - 2 Kings) in Light of Classical Literature." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 30 (2005): 153-169.

————————. *Why Did They Write This Way?: Reflections on References to Written Documents in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Literature*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies. New York: T&T Clark, 2008.

Stratton, Kimberly B. *Naming the Witch: Magic, Ideology, & Stereotype in the Ancient World*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

Suderman, W. Derek. "Prayers Heard and Overheard: Shifting Address and Methodological Matrices in Psalms Scholarship." Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of St. Michael's College, 2007.

Sugirtharajah, R. S. *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, colonial, and Postcolonial Encounters*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Sweeney, Deborah. "Walking Alone Forever, Following You: Gender and Mourners' Laments from Ancient Egypt." *NIN: Journal of Gender Studies in Antiquity* 2 (2002): 27-48.

Talmon, Shemaryahu. "The Judean 'Am Ha'ares in Historical Perspective." In *Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, edited by World Union of Jewish Studies., 71-76. Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1967.

Tamez, Elsa. "Quetzalcóatl y el Dios Cristiano: alianza y lucha de dioses." *Vida y pensamiento* 11, no. 1 (1991): 31-54.

Tan, Nancy Nam Hoon. *The 'Foreignness' of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9: A Study of the Origin and Development of a Biblical Motif*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008.

Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Thames, John Tracy. "A New Discussion of the Meaning of the Phrase 'Am Ha'ares in the Hebrew Bible." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, no. 1 (2011): 109-125.

Throntveit, Mark A. *Ezra-Nehemiah*. Interpretation. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1992.

Tosh, John. "The History of Masculinity: An Outdated Concept?". In *What Is Masculinity?: Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, edited by John Arnold and Sean Brady. 17-34. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Trexler, Richard C. *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Political Order, and the European Conquest of the Americas*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Turner, Victor. "Social Dramas and the Stories About Them." *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 On Narrative (1980): 141-168.

Uehlinger, Christoph. "Anthropomorphic Cult Statuary in Iron Age Palestine and the Search for Yahwhe's Cult Images." In *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, edited by K. van der Toorn. 97-155. Leuven: Peeters, 1997.

Van den Eynde, Sabine. "Between Rainbow and Reform: A Gender Analysis of the Term Berit in the Hebrew Bible." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 116 (2004): 409-415.

Vásquez, Manuel A. *More Than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Wagstaff, Bethany "Redressing Clothing in the Hebrew Bible: Material-Cultural Approaches." Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Exeter, 2017.

Wallace Jr, David R. "Mapping Men: Towards a Theory of Material Masculinities." Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Texas at Arlington, 2013.

Washington, Harold C. "Israel's Holy Seed and the Foreign Women of Ezra-Nehemiah: A Kristevan Reading." *Biblical Interpretation* 11, no. 3/4 (2003): 427-437.

————————. "The Strange Woman of Proverbs 1-9 and Post-Exilic Judaean Society." In *Second Temple Studies. 2, Temple and Community in the Persian Period*, edited by Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Kent Harold Richards. 217-242. Sheffield, England: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1994.

Watts, James W., ed. *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch*, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series, vol. no 17. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001.

————————. *Ritual and Rhetoric in Leviticus: From Sacrifice to Scripture*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

————————. "Ritual Legitimacy and Scriptural Authority." *Journal of Biblical LIterature* 124, no. 3 (2005): 401-417.

————————. "The Three Dimensions of Scripture." *Postcripts: The Journal of Sacred Texts and Contemporary Worlds* (2008).

Weeks, Stuart. *Instruction and Imagery in Proverbs 1-9*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Weinberg, Joel. *The Citizen-Temple Community*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series. Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1992.

Weinfeld, Moshe. "bĕrîth." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol II*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. 253-279. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.

————————. "Minhah." In *Normative and Sectarian Judaism in the Second Temple Period*. 122-136. London; New York: T & T Clark, 2005.

Wellhausen, Julius. *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*. Translated by W. Robertson Smith. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994. 1885.

Whitelam, Keith W. *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Wiesehöfer, Josef. "The Achaemenid Empire." In *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium*, edited by Ian Morris and Walter Scheidel. 66-98. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Williamson, H. G. M. "The Aramaic Documents in Ezra Revisited." *Journal of Theological Studies* 59, no. 1 (2008): 41-62.

————————. *Ezra, Nehemiah*. Word Biblical Commentary. edited by David Hubbard and Glenn Barker Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.

————————. "The Family in Persian Period Judah: Some Textual Reflections." In *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina*, edited by William G. Dever, Seymour Gitin, W.F. Albright Institute of

Archaeological Research. and American Schools of Oriental Research., 469-485. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003.

Wilson, Stephan M. *Making Men: The Male Coming-of-Age Theme in the Hebrew Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Winter, Irene. "Sex, Rhetoric and the Public Monument: The Alluring Body of the Male Ruler in Mesopotamia." In *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy*, edited by Natalie Kampen and Bettina Ann Bergmann. 11-26. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Wright, David P. *Ritual in Narrative: The Dynamics of Feasting, Mourning, and Retaliation Rites in the Ugaritic Tale of Aqhat*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2001.

Wright, Jacob. *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah-Memoir and Its Earliest Readers*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft. Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004.

————————. "Seeking, Finding and Writing in Ezra-Nehemiah." In *Unity and Disunity in Ezra-Nehemiah: Redaction, Rhetoric, and Reader*, edited by Mark J. Boda and Paul L. Redditt. 277-305. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008.

Yee, Gale A. "I Have Perfumed My Bed with Myrrh: The Foreign Woman ('Issa Zara) in Proverbs 1-9." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 43 (1989): 53-68.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. *Gender & Nation*. Politics and Culture. London: Sage Publications, 1997.

"Zera." In *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, edited by David J. A. Clines. 141-144. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.

Zlotnick, Helena. *Dinah's Daughters: Gender and Judaism from the Hebrew Bible to Late Antiquity*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

Zsolnay, Ilona, ed. *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity*, Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East. New York: Routledge, 2016.

————————. "The Inadequacies of Yahweh: A Re-Examination of Jerusalem's Portrayal in Ezekiel 16." In *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, edited by S. Tamar Kamionkowski and Wonil Kim. 57-74. New York: T & T Clark, 2010.

————————. "Introduction." In *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity*. 16-31. New York: Routledge, 2016.