A THING NOT DONE IN ISRAEL

by

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(Under the Direction of David S. Williams)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines four separate biblical texts. Scholars have long noted similarities between the "rape" accounts in Genesis 19, Genesis 34, Judges 19, and II Samuel 13. The work herein shows the dialogical interaction between the four scenes. Further, this examination suggests that the scenes create a progressive narrative movement that provides commentary on Israel's kingship. Ultimately, I suggest that the final scene, II Samuel 13, signals the end of Israel's united monarchy.

INDEX WORDS: Genesis 19, Genesis 34, Judges19, II Samuel 13, Dinah, Tamar, Sodom, Israel, Jacob, David, women in biblical literature, rape in biblical literature, Hebrew Bible, Davidic monarchy

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This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Clark Smith.

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I.   Introduction

Similarities between the scenes in Genesis 19 and Judges 19 and the similar

situations surrounding Genesis 34 and 2 Samuel 13 are very well documented. Scenes

set at Sodom (Genesis 19) and Gibeah (Judges 19) depict townsfolk who sexually target

male foreigners passing through their regions. In Genesis 34 and 2 Samuel 13 high-

ranking men sexually objectify the daughters of Jacob and David. The title of this thesis,

"A Thing Not Done in Israel," refers to an expression in Hebrew Bible literature that

correlates to three of these four scenes. This phrase generally describes events that either

a narrator or characters call *nebālāh*. Commonly translated as meaning "foolishness or

senselessness," *nebālāh* appears under dire circumstances. Occurring only thirteen times

in the entire Hebrew Bible, *nebālāh* describes actions or occurrences that result in social

disorder. In Genesis 34, Judges 19 and 2 Samuel 13, *nebālāh* evaluates the social

conditions resulting from sexual encounters that defy standard cultural protocol. With

the addition of Genesis 19, which will be added for the reasons explained below, this

study evaluates possible socio-ideological functions of the Genesis, Judges and 2 Samuel

scenes.

Common subjects for research and interpretation, the individual episodes

themselves are quite well known. Their taboo engagements afford attractively

controversial subject matter for various branches of biblical studies. Sharing

corresponding tonal elements, these texts have sparked the interest of scholars in biblical

literary and source-critical studies. Some literary-critical proposals recognize the four

narratives as *type-scenes*, or part of a "rape" trope. On the separate subject of authorship,

mainstream source-critical scholarship argues that one story influenced the format of its counterpart for the pairs of Genesis 19 together with Judges 19 and the larger Jacob and David narratives containing Genesis 34 and 2 Samuel 13. Conversely, some scholars suggest that one author wrote all of these scenes.[1]

In this thesis I will not be concerned with literary and source criticism. I will avoid literary classifications and questions of authorship altogether. This study considers each scene in view of the others and offers an "inclusive" reading of the four scenes. I acknowledge that the scenes fit within the larger Genesis to Kings narrative framework and posit that they work together in the final redacted form to convey ideological meanings. This is, then, in broad terms, a rhetorical-critical study in the sense that I am concerned above all with the final forms of these texts. Foremost, I am working with the notion that the reader derives meaning from a text based on possibilities that the text allows. Since this is an inclusive reading of four texts within the redacted Masoretic Text (MT), each scene provides a filtering affect for reading the other scenes. Through three chapters I will offer some possible ideological meanings for these scenes.

Chapter two is an evaluation of wrongful or injurious sex in ancient Israelite culture. This section relies on the Deuteronomic family laws, Deuteronomy 21-25, for deriving cultural values by which to evaluate the sexual encounters in the four narrative scenes. Deuteronomy addresses culturally normative modes of social discourse including sexual relations. As such, it establishes a basic sub-text for interpreting the Genesis,

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[1] In his proposed extraction and reconstruction of the remaining portions of the Yahwistic history, Richard Elliott Friedman suggests that one author originally composed all four of these texts. See Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Hidden Book in the Bible* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1998).

Judges, and 2 Samuel accounts. The Deuteronomic cases examined show that sexual

encounters can relate to social interaction. Sexual activities have the potential to exceed

the bounds of private act and can extend into public life. Some of the main themes

emerging from this chapter concern sexual relations relative to gender and hierarchical

expectations, social dominance, and notions of honor and shame.

Chapter three provides a reading of the scenes. Based on a character-centered

analysis, similar to Mieke Bal's *narratology*, which asks: *who acts? who sees?* and, *who*

speaks?, this study reads the texts with select points of interest including narrative action

and emphasis, speech, and identity.[2] Since the method is implicit in the examination of

these texts, I am briefly explaining the points most pertinent to my reading of the

Genesis, Judges and 2 Samuel accounts.

The scenes show variant degrees of action completion that range from incomplete

to fully accomplished. Genesis 19 shows incomplete sexual action. Genesis 34 shows

complete sexual action but barely acknowledges the actual encounter. Both Judges 19

and 2 Samuel 13 show complete sexual action. This reading considers the amount of

detail each text provides about certain actions and determines the level of narrative

significance conveyed through initial action and response.

Largely based on who performs the action and to what degree the desired action is

complete, the exegetical analysis herein works with narrative emphases. Analysis of

narrative emphasis considers elements that direct attention toward or away from

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[2] For a concise explanation of Bal's narratological approach, see Mieke Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 32-36. Although Bal's approach closely approximates my own, I am avoiding her terms in an attempt to prevent false expectation and overall confusion.

characters. For instance, a very basic example of narrative direction and emphasis, Judges 19 tells the story largely from the Levite's position but does not directly indicate his perspective. The chapter opens with his introduction and follows his journey from Ephraim to Bethlehem, then to Gibeah, and finally, back to Ephraim. The unnamed Levite is persistently followed throughout the section while his hosts in Bethlehem and Gibeah fade into the background.

Of further importance, identities of certain characters influence how characters relate to one another within the text or how readers perceive them. Character identity is critical to this reading of the scenes in Genesis, Judges and 2 Samuel. Social standing of characters within these scenes dictates how other characters receive them. Whether persons in these stories are representative or counter-representative of national identity influences the reader's potential understanding of interaction. The *other*, outsiders to the covenantal community, and the *intimate-other*, societal incongruities that still fit within Israel's infrastructure, can indirectly engender critique of a situation by mirroring or magnifying the actions of other characters.

Ideologically, the *other* works as a reference point of how not to act. Examples specific to the texts herein, non-Israelite peoples, particularly Canaanites, are outsiders to Abrahamic covenant and therefore constitute *other*, while women and Levites fall into the *intimate-other* category. *Intimate-other* includes figures who are characterized by marginal status or recurrent states of liminality. For example, situated at cultural and religious extremities, women and Levites are *intimate-others* who can function as indicator figures. Prophetic literature often uses female sexual metaphor to disparage Israel's apostasy. Similarly, actions on behalf of the priesthood also cast positive or

negative light onto a situation, such as Eli and his sons in 1 Sam 2:12-5 in the greater context of the end of the Judges era. The *other* and *intimate-other* present critical reference points for examining the scenes.

Speech is another crucial point for examination in this study's readings. The way characters speak creates narrative tone as much as, if not more, than other narrative elements. Does the text indicate direct speech or do the narrator/other characters report speech on someone else's behalf? Does a character speak at all? Examining instances of speech and speech omission contributes considerably to the readings of the Genesis, Judges and 2 Samuel scenes. Women in biblical literature rarely speak, and the women objectified in these scenes do not speak at all. Only the final scene, 2 Samuel 13, allows the reader to hear a woman's voice. Explicit or implicit silence, as in the cases of the Levite's wife in Judges 19 and Dinah in Genesis 34, contrasts with Tamar's outcry in 2 Samuel 13. Though Tamar is the only woman to speak about her situation, ultimately, objectification quiets her. The subsequent text implies speech, but she does not again speak directly.

The final chapter provides an interpretation of the scenes together as a group. This section examines the scenes' pervasive thematic elements in relation to the greater Genesis to Kings narrative. The scenes' actions, actors, emphases, and outcomes demonstrate an interrelatedness and overall narrative progression when examined in relation to the overall order of the Genesis to Kings narrative. Interrelatedness allows a reading of the scenes together within a larger body of literature while progression creates a climatic point.

The cast of characters and locations in each account seem to acknowledge the others. The interrelation of texts from one scene to another is shown through of the mentioning of select persons or places. The scenes show Canaanite and Canaanite (Genesis 19 and 34), Levi and Levite (Genesis 34 and Judges 19), Jebus and the place formerly called Jebus, Jerusalem (Judges 19 and 2 Samuel 13). Canaanite assailants in Genesis 19 complement the Canaanite ruler who has sexual intercourse with Dinah in Genesis 34. Dinah's brother, Levi, avenges his family in Genesis 34, and in the following scene, Judges 19, the Gibeonites attempt to attack a Levite. The Levite refuses to stay in Jebus, instead he travels on to Gibeah. Tamar's brother, Amnon, attacks her in Jerusalem, the city formerly named Jebus.[3]

These accounts reveal narrative progression through a finessed increase in substantive details. With each scene, significantly more detail is provided than in the previous accounts. Character relationships and narrative emphases mount with each scene. Increasing amounts of narrative detail in each scene provides a sense of rising tensions that reaches a pinnacle with the final scene in 2 Samuel 13. The first scene, Genesis 19, shows the divine messengers striking down all of Sodom before any sexual activity can take place. Genesis 34 only vaguely references the sexual encounter. The

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[3] The interrelatedness seems deliberate. Gen 34 only specifically names two of Dinah's brothers, Simeon and Levi, in the attack against Shechem. Two verses in the account distinguish Simeon and Levi from the rest of Jacob's sons (vv.25 and 30). In the only verbal exchange between Dinah's brothers and Shechem (v. 13-17), the text never points out Simeon or Levi directly, but rather, refers to Dinah's brothers as "the sons of Jacob" *(bᵊnê-Ya'ăqōb)*. Again, in v. 27, the "the sons of Jacob" *(bᵊnê-Ya'ăqōb)* came upon Shechem and plundered the town. Likewise, only two verses in the Jud 19 account reveal the Levite's tribal designation, the introduction (v. 1) and conclusion (Jud 20:4). The body of the text calls the Levite "husband" or "man" *('îš)*, but never refers to him as "Levite."

text reports the encounter between Dinah and Shechem in one short verse and provides no detail of action or motive. Judges 19 shows complete action, but incomplete intent. Like the previous accounts, the scene at Gibeah does not indicate motive or precursory action. The Gibeonites request the Levite, but accept his wife as substitution for sex. Details of the crime are present in this scene, but the reader remains at a distance. 2 Samuel 13 is the only scene that discloses motive and preparatory actions. This scene fully completes action and accomplishes intent. Amnon desires Tamar and conspires with Jonadab in order to create a plan to seduce his sister. The scene explicitly records Amnon's premeditation. Drawing the audience into the bedchamber for Tamar's assault, the final account examined reveals details of the sexual encounter.

2 Samuel 13 also records speech between the victim and her assailant. In Genesis 19, Lot speaks to the men of Sodom, but the divine messengers never address their would-be attackers. Additionally, in Genesis 34 no speech is recorded between Dinah and Shechem. Presumably, Dinah and Shechem speak to each other at some point during their sexual encounter, but the text never reports any dialogue between them. Dinah stays silent throughout the entire scene. Neither the Levite nor his wife ever speak to the men of Gibeah. Through the entire chapter there is no mention of any word the Levite's wife may have uttered. Tamar is the only person who directly addresses her assailant. Tamar pleads with Amnon to stop.

In each scene the relationship between victim and attacker complements the increasing amount of detail. Neither the unidentified messengers nor their host, Lot, share any kinship to their would-be attackers in Genesis 19. In Genesis 34 there is no indication that Shechem and Dinah are acquainted prior to their sexual encounter.

Previously, Jacob arrives in Shechem and purchases land from Hamor's sons (Gen 38:19). The two families share only a proprietary based kinship. The Levite traveler and his wife share an inter-tribal kinship with the unnamed Ephraimite who provides lodging for them. They share an intra-tribal kinship with the Benjaminites who attack them. The Ephraimites and Benjaminites are both part of Israel's tribal confederacy prior to the united monarchy. Amnon and Tamar are siblings, and their encounter provides the most complete account.

The progression of action, speech, and character relationships shows that 2 Samuel 13 is the climax of the four scenes. The scenes have narrative elements that allow an assessment of the dialogical interaction of each text with the others and with the Genesis to Kings narrative. In the final chapter, I argue that Genesis to Kings uses these four scenes to show Israel becoming a society in disarray. This social commentary is accomplished through the overall narrative progression and character identities. Through similar actions these scenes resemble each other, but they are primarily distinguished from one another through character identity. Genesis 19 yields Canaanite against the divine, the *other* assaulting the *other*. Genesis 34 involves a Canaanite ruler and Israel's first generation. The attackers' identities in the Genesis stories are entirely different from those in Judges and 2 Samuel. In Judges 19 Israelites assault their own tribal kin. Where the scenes in Genesis result in the destruction of non-Israelite townships, the scene in Judges ends in a civil war among the tribes of Israel. The Judges 19 section marks the turning point from the Judges period to the monarchical era. In 2 Samuel 13 a member of Israel's ruling class exploits his own weaker sibling. The final scene shows unparalleled nearness in victim and attacker relation. As 2 Samuel 13 is the climatic point in this

series, I suggest that it is possible to read the scene as portending the breakdown in the united monarchy. The sibling relationship of Tamar and Amnon represents Israel attacking its own household, that is, the tribal community, during the time of the united monarchy.

II.   Uncovering Nakedness: Sex and Ancient Israelite Culture

Sexuality in biblical literature occupies varied forms. Perpetuating lineage or prompting ill fate, sexual encounters in Hebrew Bible often indicate advancements in plot and provide means for narrative progression. Sexual reference in birth narratives introduces new characters, establishes paternity and legitimates proliferation. However, biblical literature documents frivolous and functional encounters with very different outcomes. Biblical documentation of sex often presents very functional aspects, emphasizing child bearing as a primary purpose of intercourse. Nevertheless, the most basic act in perpetuating race and lineage is perhaps the most corruptible. The foreboding aspect of illegitimate sexual encounters echoes throughout biblical narrative. Scenes depicting sexual improprieties frequently describe destructive consequences in shockingly brutal terms. Some of the most outstanding occasions of violence in Hebrew Bible occur as the result of sexual misconduct.

Ironically juxtaposed, birth and death bespeak the wages of sex in biblical literature. Genesis 19, Genesis 34, Judges 19, and 2 Samuel 13 depict infamous accounts of debauched intent and exploitative sex. These accounts are written in a voice that uniformly deems their individual sexual encounters as culturally deviant. These scenes transgress social order by challenging and eclipsing hierarchical bounds. Each of these sexual encounters provokes penalty and establishes conditions that ultimately trigger devastation of entire families and communities. This study examines the portentous narrative function of these sexually charged biblical scenes.

The following section intends to strip away some pervasive common sense assumptions about sex and gender in the Bible. Directing emphases toward establishing a basic social background for examining Genesis 19, Genesis 34, Judges 19, and 2 Samuel 13, the first part of this chapter analyzes the common verbal clause that denotes the sex acts in the scenes. This section discusses some problems with using "rape" to label the sexual encounters in these scenes. Other uses of the Hebrew verbal clause, specifically in the Deuteronomic family law (Deuteronomy 21-25), show inconsistencies between contemporary notions of "rape" and range of sexual activity that the clause represents in biblical literature. The sexual acts described in these scenes are severe, but the term "rape" may obscure or overshadow some possible ways to interpret the scenes. Part two of this chapter also uses Deuteronomic family law to derive socially normative expectations of sexuality, gender, and hierarchy. This section determines some possible implications that wrongful or injurious sex may represent in the Genesis, Judges, and 2 Samuel scenes.

i. The Semantic Problem of Translating *'Innah*

The scenes in Genesis, Judges, and 2 Samuel all indicate sexual offenses that spur violent retribution. Almost without exception, these scenes use the verb *'innāh* and communicate similar tonal and descriptive elements about the sexual encounters. Scholars have commonly used the term "rape" to discuss the sexual activities occurring in these particular scenes. Recent studies, particularly by Ellen Van Wolde and Sandie Gravett, note the intricate problem of translating the sexual activities in these four scenes

as "rapes."[4] The complications involve discontinuity between Western Contemporary and Ancient Israelite understandings of gender and sexuality.

Use of the term "rape" often implies violent or forced sexual activity as a criminal act. The scenes in Genesis, Judges, and 2 Samuel definitely posit some form of socially deviant conduct that happens to be sexual. Additionally, these scenes depict instances of violent or otherwise coerced sex. The two factors alone, sex and coercion, do not constitute misdeed from a biblical perspective. An Ancient Israelite framework does not always equate coerced or abusive sex with infraction. To the contrary, biblical perspectives often condone the sexual subjugation of women. In many cases, biblical literature reflects a culture that widely associates sexual conquering with social prominence. Some biblical texts seem to indicate that Ancient Israel anticipated, even pardoned, "rape" under certain circumstances.[5] Therefore, major problems reside in using the term "rape" to discuss sexual perspectives in the Hebrew Bible.

Biblical Hebrew has no single word conceptually analogous to contemporary notions of rape. The word in these scenes often translated as "rape," *'innāh*, does not always indicate forced sex. While *'innāh* provides negative connotations, the term is also used in contexts that indicate consensual sex. One of the main problems with identifying the sexual actions in these scenes as "rape" is that the term carries notions that may obscure biblical perceptions of the offense. While modern readers can identify these

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[4] Ellen Van Wolde, "Does 'Innã Denote Rape? A Semantic Analysis of a Controversial Word" *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002), 528-544 and Sandie Gravett, "Reading 'Rape' in the Hebrew Bible: A Consideration of Language" *JSOT* 28 (2004), 279-299.

[5] As will be discussed below, Deut 22: 28-29 makes possible for a man to go virtually unpunished if he engages in sex with a non-consenting woman, given that the woman is not married or betrothed. Also, Deut 20: 14 condones the practice of taking women as spoil in times of war.

scenes as rapes, such a perception may not accurately acknowledge an Ancient Israelite

understanding of the crimes.

Genesis 34, Judges 19, and 2 Samuel 13 employ a series of verbs conjunctively to

describe the nature of the sexual intercourse in these scenes. A nuanced range of

meaning underlies the language that describes the various sexual encounters. Appearing

with forms of *ydʻ* (Qal: *yādaʻ*) "to know," or *škb* (Qal: *šākab*) "to lie down/ sleep," the

scenes share in common the verb *ʻnh* "to plague or afflict," (Piel: *ʻinnāh.*)[6] Many

translations of these scenes render *ʻinnāh* with *yādaʻ* or *šākab* as physically forced or

otherwise coerced sex. However, translations of these scenes that render *ʻinnāh* as

outright "rape" employ interpretive liberties that, while suitable on some levels, ignore

the verb's use in consensual sex situations. The pairing of more common sexual terms

(*yādaʻ* or *šākab*) with *ʻinnāh* produces a derogatory hendiadys and articulates the

decidedly taboo nature of the sex acts in Genesis, Judges, and 2 Samuel. Identifying the

offense that these verbs indicate requires a basic approximation of their semantic values.

The terms *yādaʻ* and *šākab* are frequently used in biblical literature and often

indicate sexual intercourse. Alone, neither of these terms has a disparaging quality.[7]

Only a few known instances provide particularly illicit use of *šākab* (Jer 3:2, Isa 13:16,

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[6] Genesis 19 is the exception here. This scene indicates only unfulfilled sexual
intentions. In the other scenes a narrator or part of the targeted party describes the
encounter using *ʻinnāh* upon completion of sexual act. All Hebrew translations and
transliterations herein are my own unless otherwise indicated.

[7] *Šākab* can be associated with death and burial in some passages.   However, this
association do not constitute pejorative notions in a sexual context. For arguments
proposing negative meaning associated with *škb*, see Ilona N. Rashkow, *Taboo or Not
Taboo: Sexuality and Family in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis; Fortress Press, 2000)
and Susan Niditch, "Eroticism and Death in the Tale of Jael" in *Gender and Difference in
Ancient Israel*, ed. Peggy L. Day (Minneapolis; Fortress Press, 1989), 43-57.

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Zech 14:2, and Deut 28:30). Originally, *šāgal* was the word used in these passages. The

Masorites found the sexual term *šāgal* so explicit that they expurgated it from the text

and used in its place the less offensive term *šākab*.[8] In the Genesis, Judges, and 2

Samuel scenes *yāda'* and *šākab* function neutrally, simply indicating sexual intercourse.

Independently from *yāda'* and *šākab*, *'innāh* has a broad catalogue of meaning.

When expressing a specific type of sexual contact *'innāh* almost exclusively appears in

contexts with *yāda'*, or is directly paired with *šākab*.[9] Biblical use of *'nh* often suggests

the physical act of lowering, as in prostrating oneself or bringing down another. The

term's appearance indicates undesirable circumstances in biblical literature. The

directional aspect of *'nh* allows figurative use that suggests lowering of social status, such

as humbling or degradation. While *yāda'* and *šākab* are verbs designating the act of

sexual intercourse, *'innāh* has a more adjectival quality than verbal. Intimating a

lowering or reduction, *'innāh* is fit for a pejorative destination. Rather than literally

interpreting *'innāh šākab* as "rape," *'innāh* more likely carries a figurative, reductive

nuance.

Illustrating the semantic problem of *'innāh*, Deut 22:23-29 relates three types of

hypothetical sexual encounters involving unwed women. All cases are considered

criminal. Use of the verb *'innāh* either describes the sexual act or the woman's status

resulting from the encounter. Penalties are based on the betrothal statuses of women.

The significance of the betrothal statuses of the women will be discussed below. For

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[8] For further discussion, see Gravett "Reading 'Rape,'" 289-290, and the Brown-Driver- Briggs entry on *šgl*.

[9] The occurrence of *'innāh* with *yāda'* or *šākab* may not appear contiguously, but is generally situated within the same clause when sexually suggestive.

now, it suffices to know that these cases define women in relation to men. The betrothal

status identifies a woman's legal standing as either belonging to her father or to a future

husband. The first two cases (Deut 22:23-27) involve a betrothed woman having sex

with a man other than her future husband. The case in vv. 23-24 is a consensual sex

situation. Here the woman "did not cry out" (*lō ṣ'ăqāh*). Instead, she is complicit,

possibly even the instigator. Yet '*innāh* describes the action against her, "the wife of his

neighbor" *('innāh et-ēšet rē'ēhû)*. Both the man and woman involved are condemned to

death (v. 24). A little later in the same chapter (Deut 22:28-29) the term '*innāh* is used to

describe the case of sex with a non-betrothed woman, but it does not mention compliance

or refusal. The text simply instructs her sexual partner to render adequate payment and

enter into marriage. The man accused of having sex with her must pay a set bride-price

of 50 shekels and marry the woman without prospect of divorce.[10] Whether the non-

betrothed woman is forcefully coerced or willingly seduced, Deuteronomic law requires

that the woman marry the man who takes her virginity.

Deut 22:23-29 demonstrates offenses that require corporeal punishment or

reparation due to unlawful sex: either a man has not gained parental consent in arranging

marriage, or a man has encroached on another man's sexual property. The use of '*innāh*

in vv. 23-24 and 28-29 does not specifically determine whether the sex act is consensual

on non-consensual. In both cases, the criminal aspect seems to result from the view that

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[10] A counter reading comes from Ex 22:17, which instructs that the man must
compensate the father with an appropriate bride price, but the father may prohibit the
marriage. It is entirely unclear who the Deuteronomic law intends to protect. Possibilities
range from protecting the father from having to support a daughter that no one will
marry; the daughter from potentially from bearing fatherless children or not bearing
children at all; the attacker, or lover, from paying an exorbitant price to marry; or any
potential suitors that might unwittingly marry a non-virgin bride.

the sexual encounter is a violation of another man's rights. In these cases *'innāh* never

indicates criminal action due to rape in the forceful sense of depriving a woman of her

will. In fact, Deuteronomy reflects that consent is not relevant for the woman who is not

betrothed. These cases only question consent in determining blameworthy parties for

engaged or, presumably, married women.

These sections (Deut. 22:23-29) present *'innāh* in two ways. The word implies

the act of unlawful sexual intercourse and describes the woman's status or condition due

to wrongful sexual taking. The passages in Deut 22:23-29 do not use *'innāh* to physically

define the sex act itself. While Genesis 19, Judges 19, and 2 Samuel 13 clearly present

rape-like circumstances, Dinah's account in Genesis 34 does not provide enough detail

for the reader to determine if she is complicit.[11] Like the non-betrothed woman in Deut

22:28-29, Dinah's compliance or refusal does not matter.

The discussion in Deuteronomy 22 limits its concern to juridical matters.

Therefore, the sexual aspects therein primarily describe proprietary losses. On the other

hand, in Genesis 34, Judges 19, and 2 Samuel 13 emphases are reversed and *'innāh*

defines the sexual encounter. Like the individual Deuteronomic cases, the scenes in

Genesis, Judges, and 2 Samuel are not primarily concerned with consent. Translating the

sex acts in Genesis, Judges, and 2 Samuel as "rape" does so at the risk of obscuring the

offense. In a contemporary mindset, discussion of rape typically implies the person

enduring injury as the exploited party and views the person assaulted as the direct victim.

On the other hand, forcing contemporary understandings of rape into the biblical

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[11] For further discussion, see Tivka Frymer-Kensky, "Law and Philosophy: The Case of Sex in the Bible," *Semeia 45* (1989), 100 n.9.

framework generates specious subject awareness. Applying "rape" to an Ancient

Israelite cultural background abstractly views women as divorced from the socio-familial

matrix to which they are subject. As part two of this chapter will show, Deuteronomic

family law contradicts assumptions that women are the sole or even primary victims

according to a biblical perspective. For the cases in Deut 22:23-28, the betrothal statuses

of the women suggest that these laws do not suppose that women have rights over their

own sexuality. Considering female status in ancient Israel, Deuteronomy 21-25 quite

consistently reflects a pervasive social structure that places women's interests as

secondary to a father or husband, depending on marital status. Biblical perspectives seem

to view the woman's father or husband as the person(s) of import in instances of

fornication.[12]

Returning to the semantic discussion, wherein *yāda'* or *šākab* neutrally indicate

sex, *'innāh* coupled with *yāda'* or *šākab* provides an offensive connotation. For an

Ancient Israelite understanding, a translation value of "rape" posits a narrow and

contradictory understanding. In the readings that follow, I will avoid using "rape" to

describe the sexual activity that takes place. As a broad translation value for *'innāh* with

yāda' or *šākab* in the Genesis, Judges, and 2 Samuel scenes, "fuck" seems to more

uniformly fit the verbal clause than "rape." Without assuming or precluding physical

force, this abrasive term articulates the deeply offensive nature of the act and manages to

retain impartial subjectivity.

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[12] Carolyn Pressler, *The View of Women Found in the Deuteronomic Family Laws*
(BZAW 216: New York: W. de Gruyter, 1993).

ii.   Sex and the Social: Gender and Hierarchy

The scenes in Genesis, Judges, and 2 Samuel deal with two types of sexual objectification, male-to-male and male-to-female. This section intends to provide a social background for reading these scenes. The previous section discussed some of the semantic problems with translating the sex acts in Genesis, Judges, and 2 Samuel as rape. Part two is an extension of the previous discussion in the sense that the analysis here elaborates the social nuances contained in occurrences of unlawful sexual encounter in Hebrew Bible. With the exception of 2 Samuel 13, the scenes examined in this thesis do not devote significant detail to the sexual encounter. Instead, the accounts emphasize the effects of wrongful sex. Tensions in these scenes largely reflect implicit understandings of gender and hierarchy. The following analysis considers the Deuteronomic family laws to derive some gender and hierarchical implications imbedded in these scenes. This section suggests that both male-to-female and male-to-male sexual encounters have significance in male-to-male social interaction.

The Deuteronomic family laws assign prescriptions concerning household proprietary interests, including familial and marriage regulations. Deuteronomy acknowledges an established social construct. The passages reinforce hierarchy while protecting family dependents.[13] From an Ancient Israelite vantage point, women live under the dominion of fathers and husbands. Prior to marriage a woman belongs to her father. She is a commodity of sorts until she enters marriage and becomes her husband's

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[13] Despite arguments that claim these laws assert innovative non-hierarchical character of male to female relations, or sex equality altogether, the laws do not grant women new legal status. For further information, see Pressler, *The View of Women*, 1-8.

dependent at her father's financial gain. A woman's exchange from her father to her husband requires payment of an amount that her father determines. Gender stipulations consider sexual consummation the act of lawfully procuring a wife. A woman's virginity belongs to her eventual husband. Through sexual consummation, she becomes the sexually exclusive property of her husband. As Deut 22:13-21 indicates, a husband may accuse his wife of fornication and have her put to death if he suspects she was not a virgin prior to their marriage. A woman engaging in sexual activity without planned or subsequent marriage endangers herself and her family.

Deut 22:13-21 specifies that if a woman's husband calls her virginity into question after marital consummation, the father's responsibility entails bringing to the community elders the bed cloth stained with blood, thereby proving his daughter's virginity. If the woman's virginity is proven, her husband must pay the father for defamation and can never divorce her. Her father will never again assume responsibility for her. This prescription values interests of the males involved over the woman in question. Exoneration privileges the father, not the wife/daughter. If proof is not rendered, then her offense is "to whore the house of her father" (*lizənôt bêt 'ābîhā*) and the males of the community should stone her outside the opening of her father's house. The very place the community executes the woman acknowledges the shame her father incurs. Carolyn Pressler points out that the punishment associates the woman's misdeed with slander of her father's reputation. The head of the house has not guarded his daughter's virginity. Further, the *you* bearing responsibility for carrying out her

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execution, *ûbiʿarǝtā hārāʿ miqqirǝbekā* ("you will separate the evil from you"), shows her offense as an affront to the community.[14]

In her discussion of Biblical emphasis on female virginity, Tikva Frymer-Kensky suggests that the central duty of protecting household honor was the responsibility of males of the family. A central expectation of the male responsibility to maintain family honor includes ensuring that the young women of his family remain chaste.[15] Consequently, safeguarding female sexuality fosters respect within the community. A woman's promiscuity in any form disgraces her father's household. A promiscuous woman and her partner impugn her father's authority and shame her household. The question of coerced sex is immaterial concerning the dishonor levied. The entire household incurs guilt, as it has not rightfully protected the woman's sexuality. Fornication drastically reduces a woman's chances of becoming wed at a respectable bride price. Additionally, an unwed non-virgin shames the men in her family who did not control or protect her. Without virginity intact, an unwed woman causes devaluation in her potential worth and jeopardizes her family's reputation. Preserving female sexuality preserves familial honor.

Fornication undermines a man's right to marry a virgin and challenges Israel's male-dominated social order. Deut 22:21 refers to the case of pre-marital adultery as *nebālāh bǝyiśǝrāēl*. As Anthony Phillips notes, *nebālāh* describes an act of disturbance

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[14] Pressler, *The View of Women*, 30-31.

[15] Victor Harold Matthews, Bernard M. Levinson, and Tikva Simone Frymer-Kensky, *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (JSOTSup 262; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 84-85.

that breaks relationships.[16] *Nebālāh* often serves as presage to destructive consequences, especially in biblical narrative.[17] In cases of adultery, the social threat results from Israel's patrilineal society.[18] Obscuring paternity threatens hierarchy. A man's ability to legitimate his progeny cannot be overestimated as a critical component to maintaining social order, at least ideologically, in Ancient Israel.

Concerning the social implications of sex, Ken Stone examines sexual objectification in the Hebrew Bible.[19] Supplying anthropological data along with Mieke Bal's narratological approach, Stone's analysis suggests that sex in the Deuteronomistic History serves as a means to showcase enervation in male-to-male social relations. Stone argues that sexual encounters recorded in biblical narrative reflect cultural notions of sex as making or breaking male-based kinships. Sex is a public matter insofar as it affects social interaction between men in a male dominated social order.

One well known example that Stone examines as signifying the relationship between the sexual and the social occurs in 2 Sam 16:21-22.[20] As a part of an attempt to usurp his father's throne, Absalom has sex with David's wives in order to assert dominance and challenge the stability of his father's ruling status. This action breaches the implicit social contract on multiple levels. In a normative cultural understanding,

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[16] Anthony Phillips, "Nebalah: A Term for Serious Disorderly and Unruly Conduct," *Vetus Testamentum* 25 (1975), 237-241.

[17] See Josh 8:15.

[18] Pressler, *The View of Women*, 42-43.

[19] Ken Stone, *Sex, Honor and Power in the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 234: Sheffield; Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

[20] Ibid., 119-127.

Absalom violates David's integrity through sexual objectification of his wives. Since

David is both husband and king, Absalom's actions eclipse both patriarchy and hierarchy.

His insult suggests that David is domestically and professionally deficient.

Absalom's misuse of David's wives indicates an instance of a private act

influencing public interaction. In its varied forms fornication has social repercussions

because it affects relationships between males. Encroaching on another man's sexual

property not only undermines the rights of males to preserve female sexuality, but also

challenges leadership abilities within a given community. Borrowing a term from Stone,

sex in Biblical literature reflects a network of "homosocial" affairs, that is, male-to-male

social relations. Male to female sexual objectification asserts the dominance of one male

over another male in homosocial interaction.

The significance of sex and the social extends beyond heterosexual interaction.

Biblical literature clearly views homosexuality as abhorrent, calling for exile or execution

of males engaged in homosexual activity.[21] Stone suggests that negative biblical

perspectives of homosexual relationships at least partially result from an understanding

that one man must give up his natural role as the "sexual subject," the male, and adopt the

role of "sexual object," the female. Levitical terminology, *et-zākār lō tišəkab mišəkəbê
iššāh*, "you will not lay [with] a man [as] one laying [of] a woman," indicates an aspect

of feminization implicit in homosexuality. More than confusing physiological or gender

distinctions, homosexuality disrupts hierarchy.[22] A man who functions as a sexual

object confuses the distinction between male and female social statuses. Hierarchically, a

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[21] Lev 18:22, 29.

[22] Stone, *Sex, Honor, and Power*, 76.

man assuming the role of sexual object appropriates female objectivity. Subjecting a man to the sexual status reserved for women undermines his role as active citizen. Symbolically, acting against a man as if he were a woman strips away the right to domestic rule. Further, the Levitical prescription for exile indicates that homosexual intercourse removes the man's rights to civic participation at all. A sexually submissive man gives up his right as property owner and becomes the property owned. Cultural understandings of homosexuality particularly illumine Genesis 19 and Judges 19. These scenes show men as the desired sexual objects. Often read as attempts to sate sexually debauched appetites, the perpetrators in these scenes more likely intend to assert their social dominance. The attempt to feminize male targets entails an ideological significance steeped in social interaction.

The honor/shame studies by Frymer-Kensky and Stone underscore a critical precept to the exegetical study to follow. A reading of the selected Genesis, Judges, and 2 Samuel scenes with the intention of uncovering literary purpose should not presuppose that the texts deem a woman the primary victim. Women function within, but are not isolated from, a network of fathers, husband, sons, and brothers. Female sexuality stands in relation to the husband or father. In any form, a woman's promiscuity largely concerns the losses of her husband, father, and brothers. The analysis herein first considers the woman in relation to the men in her family and then considers men in relation to social interaction. Further, this thesis evaluates socially disruptive repercussions in the Genesis, Judges, and 2 Samuel scenes as relative to each other and to the larger Hebrew Bible narrative corpus.

The Deuteronomic family laws (Deut 21-25) posit socially regulated responses to cases of "real life" sexual impropriety. These cases approximate a basic set of cultural values and admit normative understandings of gender and hierarchy. Genesis 19, Genesis 34, Judges 19, and 2 Samuel 13 all have a narrative function. None of the persons involved in these scenes exhibits qualities of ordinary Israelites. The overall cast of characters includes Abraham's nephew, Lot; Divine messengers; Canaanites; Jacob's daughter and sons; a Levite; the tribe of the first Israelite king; and David's own sons and daughter. Consequently, these scenes inflate the implications of gender and hierarchy.

All of the sexual encounters result in direct social upheaval. Genesis 19 and Genesis 34 end with the destruction of entire towns. The Judges 19 sexual account provokes a civil war between the tribes of Israel and brings an end to the Judges era. 2 Samuel 13 provides the first act of interfamilial violence and discord in David's monarchy. With the exception of Genesis 19, all of the instances of sexual impropriety are called *nebālāh*. Deut 22:21 refers to the shame sexual impropriety brings to a family as *nebālāh bəyiśrāēl*. The phrase commonly rendered as a "foolishness or senselessness in Israel," or "a thing that is not done," *nebālāh* indicates threats that extend beyond the perpetrator and into the core of social structure.[23] The word indicates a viable threat to social structure and describes acts that oversteps the established bounds of hierarchy.[24] For Deut 22:21, *nebālāh* applies to a breakdown in socio-familial relations. Applying the

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[23] Phillips, "Nebalah," 241.

[24] Although I will retain the common lexical entries, "foolishness or senselessness," for translating *nebālāh*, neither option seems suitable considering the dire circumstances that the word describes in the above mentioned texts. *Nebālāh* has a consonantal form identical to the word for corpse, *nəbēlāh.* Given the striking similarity between *nebālāh* and *nəbēlāh*, a translation of *nebālāh* as "decay or rottenness" might more accurately convey the term's use.

term to the amplified social situations in Genesis, Judges, and 2 Samuel shows a broader

scope of consequence. The range of possible social implications of overstepping the

bounds of hierarchy is tremendous when applied to the narrative scenes in Genesis,

Judges, and 2 Samuel.

II.   A Thing Not Done in Israel

The previous chapter examined the Deuteronomic family laws (Deuteronomy 21-25) in order to derive some socially normative expectations of sex and social interaction in Ancient Israelite culture. This section applies the analysis of sex and the social from the previous chapter to the selected readings in Genesis, Judges, and 2 Samuel. The scenes are read as two separate sets. In narrative sequence, the first and third scenes (Genesis 19 and Judges 19) depict men targeting other men and the second and fourth scenes (Genesis 34 and 2 Samuel 13) show men targeting women. Due to thematic similarities, the following examination treats the instances of the male-to-male scenes occurring at Sodom and Gibeah and the male-to-female scenes involving Dinah and Tamar as separate pairs.

All of the accounts show deviations from anticipated modes of social conduct. The individual scenes reveal similar types of power relations. The cultural values of unlawful sex reveal social relations dealing with dominance and oppression. As the previous discussion has shown, sex can function as a means for challenging or asserting male-dominance and, thus, rouses notions of honor and shame. Though at times only visible from the outcome, the scenes primarily reveal male understandings of sex and social concerns of men in male-based social interactions. All of the scenes show members of reinforced hierarchy challenging the proprietary rights of other males and disrupting the distinction between public and private domains.

The attempted sex acts at Sodom and Gibeah are instances of male-to-male enervation. In both scenes, men target other men for forced sexual relations. These

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scenes can be interpreted as more homosocial than homosexual. The attempts to turn

men into sexual objects challenge rights to civic participation and land ownership. The

scenes with Dinah and Tamar show indirect male-to-male enervation. Genesis 34 and 2

Samuel 13 result in male social conflict through the objectification of women. Sexual

activity involving Dinah and Tamar disrupts social order because the women are

possessions belonging to their fathers and brothers. As such, their sexual encounters also

challenge proprietary rights.

i.   Sodom and Gibeah

The scenes in Genesis 19 and Judges 19 depict events that not only challenge the

rights of individual characters, but also challenge the reader's notion of community. The

Deuteronomic readings in the previous chapter show normative social structures that

expect active male citizens to function as law-restorers. Common to the Ancient Near

East, community reprisal answers unlawful sexual activity. Deut 22:13-27 shows cases

of private sex encounters warranting public response. A slandered bride's father brings

evidence of her virginity to community elders (Deut 22:15). All the men of her town

stone her if the elders find the woman guilty of the charges levied (v. 21). Deuteronomic

prescription reads "you shall destroy (*b'r*; lit., burn) the evil from you." Cases involving

corporal punishment for persons guilty of committing sex crimes require community

response. Elders and other active male citizens assume the primary duty of ridding evil

from the community. Events at Sodom and Gibeah undermine normative expectations of

community responsibility. Providing instances of inverted behavior, Genesis 19 and

Judges 19 turn conventions of social interaction upside-down. The communities of

Sodom and Gibeah claim no responsibility for ridding evil, but rather, function as the

source of danger. These scenes reverse anticipated social roles and bring into full public view acts that are normally kept private.

The accounts in Genesis 19 and Judges 19 withhold premeditative elements. The reader must intuit the preparatory actions of the communities at Sodom and Gibeah from miniscule precursory references prior to the disclosure of their actual intent in the scene. Are the inhabitants vigilantly waiting for foreigners to sojourn through so that they have persons to victimize? Is this behavior habitual? The only indication of premeditation is that the locals have observed foreigners in their territory and gather together for assault.

The sexual behavior in the scenes at Sodom and Gibeah begin at nightfall. While both are composed in a similar voice, they offer different circumstances and varied degrees of violence. Primary points of distinction between the scenes include identities of assailants and their targets, and the degree of sexual violence. The interaction at Sodom occurs between Canaanites and non-Israelites, while the Judges 19 scene takes place exclusively between Israelites. Both scenes end with the destruction of entire communities, but the scene at Sodom leaves sexual action incomplete. Incomplete action in Genesis 19 counters violent fulfillment in Judges 19.

Genesis 19 begins with Lot immediately greeting two enigmatic travelers that come to Sodom. Lot is unaware that these are the same men that Abraham has met in the previous chapter. The men first appear in Genesis 18. While visiting with Abraham, the men reveal their purpose for journeying to Sodom. Divine messengers accompanying YHWH, the men have heard about the iniquities of Sodom and have come to render judgment (vv. 16-23). Lot, a foreigner to the city, is sitting at the entry gates of Sodom when he first encounters two men (Gen 19:1). After some urging, Lot convinces the men

to take rest with him (vv. 1-3). Before the travelers have a chance to lie down for the

night, the men of Sodom surround Lot's house demand that Lot send the men outside (v.

5). They request to "know" the travelers (*yd'*). Lot's response seems to indicate that the

men's request has sexual connotations. He pleads with the men of the city to take his

virgin daughters instead (vv. 5-8). The men refuse to take Lot's daughters and threaten

him with severe punishment if he does not hand the travelers over (v. 9). Rescuing Lot,

the divine messengers strike the men of Sodom with blindness and before they can do

any bodily harm (vv. 10-11). In a dialogue the divine messengers reveal to Lot their

reason for traveling to Sodom. To avoid impending danger, Lot must take his family and

flee the city (vv. 12-14). The subsequent action entails Sodom's destruction (vv. 24-26).

The following reading of Genesis 19 concentrates on the factors that distinguish

Lot from the men of Sodom. Considering the possibility that the scene depicts members

of reinforced hierarchy perpetrating violence, this section includes an analysis of inverted

community behavior. Common language between Lot's interaction with the travelers and

the community's interaction with Lot points out Lot's distinction from the members of

Sodom's community. Of particular interest are the varying contexts in which the verbal

root *pṣr* is found. This root describes Lot's initial act of hospitality toward the travelers.

A little later in the scene *pṣr* describes the way the men of Sodom threaten Lot.

Gen 19.1 opens the scene at Sodom with dialogue between Lot and the divine

messengers. The verbal encounter is brief, but telling. The travelers arrive in the city,

and Lot immediately greets them, offering the men lodging. Often read as emphatic

hospitality, Lot's insistence that the travelers enter his home perhaps indicates his

awareness of the criminal behavior of the Sodomite men. Lot is the story's focal point.

The scene's narrative action largely reveals Lot's doings while concealing the acts of the potential assailants. The travelers initially decline Lot's offer, but the narrator indicates that Lot "presses them exceedingly" *(wayipəṣar-bām mə'ōd)*, and the travelers consent (v.3). Lot's "pressing," from the verbal root *pṣr*, does not appear as spoken dialogue. The text omits whatever Lot actually said to convince the travelers.

The scene quickly shifts from hospitality to inhospitality. Surrounding Lot's house, the men of Sodom suddenly appear without any explanation for arrival. In his legal analysis of Gen 19.1-9, Scott Morschauser points out the potential political nature of designating the mob in Sodom as comprised of the men "from young *(na'ar)* and old *(zāqēn)*, all the people *('ām)* from the extremities [of Sodom]."[25] Instead of reading the scene as if an entire male population rises up against Lot's house, the text may indicate action on behalf of the governing body.[26] Morschauser notes that "youth" and "elder," also *na'ar* and *zāqēn*, can signify distinctions between civic governing councils in the Ancient Near East.

The men demand that Lot turn over the travelers, so that they may "know *(yadā')* them." Lot's refusal to comply mimics his own initial interaction with the divine messengers. The detail that Lot somehow verbally presses the travelers, in Gen 19.3, comes back into the text when Lot refuses the mob. The initial speech summarized as "*wayipəṣar-bām mə'ōd*" reappears in v. 9 as physical coercion with the phrase "*wayipəṣərû bā'îš bəlôt mə'od.*" As Lot "presses in them [the messengers] exceedingly"

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[25] Scott Morschauser, "Hospitality, Hostiles and Hostages: On the Legal Background to Genesis 19.1-9," *JSOT* 27 (2003), 467-468.

[26] Morschauser's study proposes that the mob's intent is not sexual. Although his overall argument contradicts the presumptions of my reading, his consideration of potential action by Sodom's governing body aids this thesis' discussion.

so do the men of Sodom "press… in Lot exceedingly." Lot "presses" the travelers to protect them, but the men of Sodom "press" Lot in order to do harm. Lot's "pressing" of the divine messengers and Sodom's "pressing" of Lot magnifies the different intentions. Protecting his guests from the community, Lot stands as an individual doing right in a community gone wrong. His status as a foreigner further demonstrates Lot as "individual" and "other." Where normative cultural expectations anticipate the community righting the wrongs of the "individual," the scene at Sodom, and later Gibeah, defies this expectation. In this scene, and likewise in Judges 19, the "individual" attempts to right the wrongs of the community.

The intended violence is foiled. The first scene examined in this study provides the least action. Action is left incomplete as the assailants are struck blind and Sodom destroyed. The text almost entirely omits premeditation and utterly erases Lot from textual concerns at the chapter's end.

In Judges 19, a group of travelers encounter terror while wandering through a neighboring Israelite-controlled territory in Benjamin. The scene directs attention to one person, an unnamed man. Details about the man are few. He is from the tribe of Levi and resides in Ephraim. When the story opens, the Levite and his wife have separated. She has left him to return to her father's house in Bethlehem (vv. 1-2). Taking a servant along with him, the Levite initially travels to Bethlehem to retrieve his wife (v. 3). Through the section detailing his visit to Bethlehem all seems well for the Levite (vv. 3-9). The man's father-in-law treats him hospitably, and the Levite reunites with his wife. Nothing goes awry in his journey until the Levite begins his trip home. Having spent too

much of the day visiting with his father-in-law, the Levite and his party begin their journey back to Ephraim at night.

A native Ephraimite residing in Gibeah offers the group of travelers lodging. The Levite and his companions are only briefly in the company of their host before encountering violence. At this point in the text (Judg 19:22-24), the encounter is reminiscent of Genesis 19. An unspecified number of townsfolk arrive at the Ephraimite's house. Requesting that the host send out his Levite guest, the Gibeonites plan to "know him", *yd'*, that is, they want to have sex with the man (Judg 19:22). The Ephraimite refuses to send out his guest and offers his own daughters and the Levite's wife instead. Like Lot in Genesis 19, the Ephraimite is not a native to his territory of residence and offers women as sexual substitutes (vv. 23-24). Unlike the Genesis 19 story, sexual action is complete. The Levite pushes his own wife out to the men (v. 25). Accepting the Levite's wife, the mob acts without restraint. They sexually assault the woman until she is near death and then simply discard her (vv. 25-26). On the next morning, the Levite finds his wife's body outside the opening of his host's house (v. 26). Returning to Ephraim with her body in tow, the Levite cuts his wife's corpse into twelve pieces. He sends her remains out to the tribes of Israel as a call for retribution (vv. 28-30). Following the call for war, action entails a battle that nearly destroys the tribe of Benjamin. All the tribes of Israel rally together and demand that Benjamin send out the guilty persons of Gibeah. When the Benjaminites refuse to comply, civil war ensues (Judg 20:12-48).

This reading of Judges 19 examines the narrative as divided into two basic parts. Two very different types of encounters create conflict between the first section in

Bethlehem (vv. 3-10) and second section in Gibeah (vv. 15-28). Main points of

consideration for this reading entail an analysis of the contradictions between the two

distinct sections (vv. 3-10, 15-28). This includes a discussion of the details describing

the sexual assault (vv. 25-26), and use of the verb *ḥzq*, which is part of the similar

language that links the sections.

In the first section, the Levite journeys to Bethlehem to find his wife, in the

second section, he stays in Gibeah on his return home. The route from Bethlehem to

Ephraim takes the travelers almost straight through Canaanite-controlled Jebus. The

Levite refuses to stay in the foreign city and, instead, travels on about four more miles to

Israelite-controlled Gibeah (vv. 10-15). The place that the Levite refuses to stay, Jebus, is

later renamed Jerusalem, and is the site where Amnon attacks his sister in 2 Samuel 13.

The narrative detail that connects Judges 19 and 2 Samuel 13, the Levite's refusal to stay

in Jebus, stands out as it is situated between the two conflicting sections (vv.3-10, 15-28).

Alone among the other pieces examined in this study, Judges 19 does not

specifically name anyone. This particular story manipulates the reader's sense of

sympathy. The characters have questionable merit. With the exception of the

community at Gibeah, characters found in this story are both good and bad. The chapter

almost immediately introduces the Levite's wife as unfaithful, saying that she "whored

against him" *(tizəneh ʿālâw)*, and returns to her father's house (v. 2). Either the Levite

banished her from his home or she voluntarily left; this detail goes unstated.

For whatever reason the woman left, her husband pursues her "to speak upon her

heart," (v. 3). Upon seeing the Levite arrive in Bethlehem, his father-in-law immediately

rejoices *(śmh)* and fortifies *(ḥzq)* his guest (vv. 3-4). The days passed from the time of

the Levite's arrival to the time of his departure are noted along with his father-in-law's repeated request for the Levite to stay (vv. 4-9). After remaining in his father-in-law's home for three days, the Levite's host urges him to further prolong the visit. Finally, after five days in Bethlehem, the Levite resists his father-in-law's imploring and journeys onward toward Ephraim (v. 10).

Factors influencing the overtly hospitable demeanor of the Levite's father-in-law go unstated. The reader knows that the Levite has come to "speak to her [his wife's] heart," presumably to win her back into his care. However, nothing indicates that the Levite's father-in-law is aware of this intention. The initial charge that the Levite's wife has fornicated rouses the suspicion that her father's kindness may conceal cunning. Perhaps her father fears that the Levite is trying to retrieve his daughter with malicious intent. Mosaic and Deuteronimic law assert the husband's right to condemn an unfaithful wife to death.[27] The suggestion that a genuine fear for his daughter's life may dictate his behavior is not at all out of proportion considering the Levite's grotesque involvement in her demise.

Thorough investigation of motivating factors for any of the acting characters in the story goes beyond the parameters designated here in this study. Given the woman's ultimate end in this story, her father's attempts to stall act as subtle portent. Efforts to delay the departure may indicate an unwillingness to see his daughter head off to an uncertain future. Regardless of her father's true aim, his hospitality toward the Levite contrasts with the hostility in vv. 22-26. Whatever induces the woman's father excessive offering of kindness, the people in Gibeah compete in their display of contempt. In

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[27] Lev 20:10-12; Deut 22:22.

Bethlehem, the Levite remains comfortably for several days, while, in Gibeah, he dwells no more than a few hours before he encounters violence.

It is important to note that, on the return journey, the Levite rejects his servant's suggestion to stop for the evening at Jebus, as they would be entering Canaanite-controlled territory. Rather, they travel on arriving in Israelite-controlled Gibeah (vv. 10-15). The attempt to avoid perceived danger in Jebus shows the Levite's distrust of the non-Israelite other. What the Levite does not know is that he and his companions face danger at the hands of an Israelite tribal community to which he does not belong. The Levite's territorial kin, an Ephraimite residing in Gibeah, is the only person to extend hospitality.

In Bethlehem, the Levite is immediately welcomed, but in Gibeah no one greets his party. The townsfolk of Gibeah altogether shun him, and the single person who provides lodging does so only after the Levite offers assurance that he will not be burdensome. Terse dialogue between the Levite and an elder *(zāqēn)*, the Ephraimite, first illumines the discontinuity between the occurrences at Bethlehem and Gibeah (vv. 16-19). After waiting an unspecified time for a lodging invitation, a passerby, a native Ephraimite residing in Gibeah, offers evening shelter. The elder's questioning of the Levite, ("Where are you going and from where do you come") appears customary (v. 18). On the other hand, the Levite's answer reflects befuddlement and a painfully long wait. He complains that no one has extended hospitality and offers contrite assurance that he has enough food for his entire party (v. 19). The Levite is reduced to stammering, ill at ease about being able to supply his own provisions. He deems himself a burden before he ever sets foot into any one's home.

The travelers come to the Ephraimite's house where an angry mob demands to have sex with the Levite (vv. 20-22). The main course of action occurs after nightfall and text indicates no premeditation on the assailants' behalf. Unlike the men of Sodom who are struck down before they claim a victim, the men of Gibeah fully complete their intended course of action. No divine aid prevents their actions. The tribe of Benjamin depraves the innocent travelers to whom they should by all accounts extend hospitality. The brutal actuality of the crime poses a striking divergence between the Judges 19 incident and its corresponding episode in Genesis. Considering the typical laconic prose style of the Hebrew Bible, the account at Gibeah offers horrendous details. When the Levite forces his wife out to the men, they relentlessly assault her.

The scene paints a vividly stark picture. Among the other scenes it is unmatched in brutality. "They knew *(ydʻ)* her, and abused *(ʻll)* her all the night until the morning. And they sent her out *(šlk)* when dawn rose" (vv. 25-26). The word for "abuse," ʻ*ll* (Hithpael: *yitʻaləlû*), bears mentioning. This verb is found in some biblical texts to denote gleanining or picking off fruit.[28] The iterative use of this verb suggests that the men of Gibeah repeatedly pick the woman over until there is no life left in her. The townsfolk abuse the Levite's wife through long hours only to leave her dead at the entryway to her host's home. The account withholds her time of death and does not indicate any sign of her husband's mourning. Her husband, who originally pushed her out to the mob, finds her the next morning and unapologetically commands her to get up. The woman is silent (v. 28). When she does not answer and does not move, the Levite

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[28] Lev 19:10; Deut 24:10; Jer 6:9.

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lays her upon the back of a donkey. He travels back to Ephraim with her body and dismembers her into twelve parts (vv. 28-30).

Filled with repetitious speech, the economy of Judges 19 affords a scant yet effective inventory of suggestive detail. Common language connects the Levite's incongruous encounters at Bethlehem (vv. 3-10) and Gibeah (vv. 15-28). His callous involvement with and reaction to his wife's death (vv. 25 and 29) recalls his arrival in Bethlehem (v. 4). The same verbal root *(ḥzq)* that indicates his father-in-law's hospitality in Bethlehem conversely describes the Levite's violent actions in Gibeah. Upon Levite's arrival in Bethlehem, his father-in-law extends graciousness. The text notes that he "fortified the Levite," *yaḥăzĕq bô* (v. 4). The root *ḥzq* demonstrates the father-in-law's kindness, but its connotations are reversed later in the text. After the Levite's arrival in Gibeah, he performs two primary actions. On both occasions he acts violently toward his wife. His actions are also described with the root *ḥzq*. The Levite grabs his wife, *yaḥăzēq bəpīlagšô*, to push her out the door and grabs her, *yaḥăzēq bəpīlagšô*, for dismemberment (vv. 25 and 29). The Levite commits violence against his wife that contrasts with her father's acts of kindness.

This chapter's discussion of Genesis 19 and Judges 19 began with observation that these scenes share numerous similar elements. For instance, male-to-male sexual objectification dominates both scenes. Since Genesis 19 precedes Judges 19 in the Genesis to Kings arrangement, the event at Sodom shapes interpretation for the Levite's encounter at Gibeah. The placement of Genesis 19 provides a filtering affect for viewing the events at Gibeah. Although the persons involved and places of occurrence change, the theme persists. The similarities are obvious and the differences are troubling.

Among the commonalities between these scenes, both of these stories challenge the reader's notion of community. Turning attention once again to the subject of community, the following section puts the scenes in their larger narrative contexts and summarizes the possible social implications of each.

Genesis 19 involves only peripheral figures, Abraham's nephew, Lot, and Lot's Canaanite neighbors. With no one of Abrahamic ancestry directly active in the story, the Sodom scene is the most detached from its initial audience. This account includes only people removed from the Abrahamic covenant circle. Although Lot is a close relative, he is not directly tied to the covenant of the Israel that his uncle forged. The attempted sexual crime against Lot's visitors in Genesis 19 is a matter of foreigner against foreigner. The intended victims are unidentified messengers of God, guests under Lot's supervision. Prior to the scene in Sodom, the previous chapter depicts the journeymen traveling with the intent of bringing destruction to Sodom. In Genesis 18 the men appear to Abraham at Mamre and take rest at his residence on their way to Sodom. The men's appearance in Genesis 18 provides the second time that Isaac's birth is foretold. First found in Gen 17:15-19, pre-figuration of Isaac's birth forenames the future heir to Abraham's covenant with YHWH. Isaac's impending birth is reiterated by the travelers in Gen 18:9-15. The promise of birth directly contrasts with the revelation of impending destruction. Abraham's presence surrounds the scene at Sodom (18:1-33, 19:27-28). The scene at Sodom in Genesis 19 closes with Abraham looking upon the destruction (19:27-28).

Contrary to the similar account in Genesis, both the attackers in Judges 19 and their prey are within the bounds of the Israelite national polity and are of Abrahamic

descent. The shift in character identities from Canaanite and non-Israelite in Genesis 19 to Israelite and Israelite in Judges 19 may indicate a growing sense of depravity within the Israel's own community. The corruption of Canaanite outsiders ultimately extends into the Israel. Perpetrators change in identity from covenant outsiders in Genesis 19 to covenant keepers in Judges 19. Further, the Levite represents a tribe consecrated to God. The unidentified Levite is substituted for the unidentified heavenly messengers in the Genesis episode. The account in Judges 19 occurs during pre-monarchical Israel. Alternation between apostasy and Yahwistic covenantal conformity occurs throughout Judges. The background for Judges 19 consists of the tribal confederacy struggling with its own religious and political identity. Calamity ensues when Israel forgets the covenant with YHWH and worships Canaanite gods. Accompanying apostasy, Canaanites overtake Israelite settlers. As the book draws to a close, Israel's own self-debasement replaces Canaanite subjugation of Israelite tribes. The scene in Judges 19 marks the end of the Judges period and the beginning of Israel as a monarchical state.

ii. Dinah and Tamar

Accounts in the previous scenes examined, Genesis 19 and Judges 19, obscure the identities of perpetrators and their intended victims. With the exception of Lot in Genesis 19, personal backgrounds for individuals involved in these accounts are entirely missing. To the contrary, accounts in Genesis 34 and 2 Samuel 13 clearly state character identities. Involving the daughters of Jacob and David, the accounts in Genesis 34 and 2 Samuel 13 occur within the larger household narratives of these two men. The fathers of the women in these accounts are both, in some sense, ideological personifications of Israel's national

identity. Dinah's father, Jacob, is Israel. The families of her brothers form the twelve tribes of Israel. Tamar's father becomes the model for messianic expectation during the Second Temple era. David's kingship marks the golden era of Israel's united monarchy. Commentary on these households is commentary on Israel. This reading of Genesis 34 and 2 Samuel 13 first, examines each scene individually, and, then, considers portions of Jacob and David's household narratives together.

In relation to the other scenes examined in this study, Dinah's story in Genesis 34 correlates most closely with Tamar's account in 2 Samuel 13. Both women have prominent fathers and both experience sexual encounters with men in ruling-class positions. Dinah's encounter with Shechem, son of the overlord *(nəsî')* in the region Shechem, correlates to Tamar's encounter the would-be heir to the Davidic throne. These scenes complement one another, but their contrasting points reveal bitter irony. In Genesis 34, Shechem wishes to marry Dinah and compensate Jacob's family. In 2 Samuel 13, Amnon throws Tamar out and refuses to make any amends with her. 2 Samuel 13 provides contradiction for many of the elements listed in Genesis 34.

Dinah is visiting in the region of Shechem when she meets a man also named Shechem (Gen 34:1-2). The sexual liaison involving Dinah is altogether nonspecific. Whether Dinah is complicit in her sexual encounter goes unstated. When Jacob and his sons hear about the encounter between Dinah and Shechem, they are outraged (vv. 5 and 7). Shechem's father, Hamor, requests that Jacob allow Shechem and Dinah to marry. Jacob sons tell Shechem that he can marry their sister on the condition that all the men of his city become circumcised. Jacob's sons act with cunning (vv. 8-17). When the men of

Shechem are all still in pain from their circumcision, Dinah's brothers, Simeon and Levi, attack the city's vulnerable inhabitants, slaying all the men (vv. 24-29).

Genesis 34 is the first scene after Jacob's reconciliation with his brother, Esau (Genesis 33). With the conflict between Jacob and Esau ended, Dinah's encounter initiates the next generation of turmoil within Jacob's house. Apparently, Jacob would have allowed marriage between Dinah and Shechem. Jacob is appalled when learns that his sons have attacked the city (v. 30). He fears that his sons' recourse has put his family at odds with other Canaanites in the region. Moreover, his sons' actions undermine Jacob's authority. Genesis 34 initiates the tension between Jacob and his sons that reaches its peak with the story of Joseph's ostracism in Genesis 37.

Genesis 34 builds its story upon a network of socio-familial underpinnings. Emphasizing the implicit power structure surrounding sexual encounter, the scene concentrates on male-based relationships. After the actual act of intercourse, the story deals primarily with characters in regard to overall hierarchical status. The text first introduces ruling elite in the town of Shechem, Hamor and his son Shechem (vv. 6, 8-12). Action then shifts to Jacob and his sons (vv. 7, 13-17). Bearing in mind the homosocial modes of discourse, this analysis focuses attention on three main points of action: the sexual encounter (vv. 1-2); negotiations between the families (vv. 6-17); and the retributive slaughter of all the town of Shechem (vv. 25-29).

The scene devotes very little concern to the interaction between Dinah and Shechem. While visiting in town one day, Dinah catches Shechem's eye. The terse language describes the sexual meeting in a single verse. The young man sees *(r'h)* Jacob's daughter, he takes *(lqh)* her, and then he has sex *('nh škb)* with her (v. 2). The

text does not indicate any premeditation. Their encounter may be spontaneous or it may

be planned. With no dialogue spoken between Dinah and Shechem at any time, the story

overlooks their relationship as inconsequential. The scene only vaguely establishes that

the couple engages in inappropriate sexual activity and hurries on to report the main

sequence of events, that is, the interaction between Dinah's family and the men of

Shechem. Dinah's role provides the basis for establishing conflict between the story's

main symbolic figures, Israel and Canaan. After the encounter that introduces turmoil,

Dinah fades into the background. All figures pertinent to the story speak except Dinah.

Her voice remains muted throughout. Restricting detail about the sexual exchange

emphasizes its resultant effects.

Two major themes play out from the initial sexual encounter. Once again, these

themes embody honor and authority. Leaving the care of home, Dinah has "gone out"

from the safety of her father's house (v.1).[29] Subsequently, Jacob "heard" about their

encounter (v.5). With the two key words, "she [Dinah] went out", *tēṣē'* (*yṣ'*), and "he

[Jacob] heard" *šāma'* (*šm'*) the reader can immediately intuit the chapter's main tensions.

No male authority sends Dinah out. Dinah left of her own volition. Rumor of her

encounter spreads quickly. News reaches Jacob before Hamor has the chance to speak

with him (v. 5). Shechem and Dinah's private act rebuffs Jacob's authority and invites

public humiliation.

Although her brothers are working in the field, Jacob's whereabouts go unstated.

The reader has no idea what Jacob was doing or why Dinah was left unattended. Thus,

when the Canaanite prince and Dinah have sex, Jacob's authority comes under fire. A

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[29] Frymer-Kenskey, *Gender and Law*, 87.

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father alone may consent for his daughter.[30] Dinah has no right to assert her own

sexuality. Acting out on her own accord, Dinah's initial trip and the resultant encounter

questions Jacob's ability to rule his own family. Consequently, the town slanders Jacob's

household reputation.

The scene's main section unfolds with barter negotiations for intermarriage of

Canaanites and Jacob's household. Having heard about Dinah's situation, Jacob is

waiting for his sons to arrive from the field when Shechem's father, Hamor, approaches

him (v. 6). Dialogue begins with Hamor requesting that Jacob allow Shechem and Dinah

to marry and progresses with the central actors, Shechem and Dinah's brothers, speaking

to each other (vv. 8-17). No evidence indicates that Shechem intended to wrong Dinah.

To the contrary, Shechem becomes inexplicably drawn to Dinah after their encounter and

legitimately seeks marriage. Reportedly, "his soul (*napəshô*) clung in Dinah, daughter of

Jacob, and he loved the girl (*na'ărāh*) and spoke upon the heart of the girl" (v. 3-4).

Shechem willingly presents himself as Dinah's suitor. He and Hamor offer payment for

reparation in the amount that Jacob determines (vv. 8-12). Shechem's plea to marry

Dinah removes the question of promiscuity qualifying her as unmarriageable.

In light of Shechem's willingness to marry Dinah, the cause for the brothers'

unwillingness to accept an amicable relationship with Shechem remains ambiguous.

Dinah's brothers may likely fear themselves unmarriageable. Shechem's encroachment

reflects their inadequacies. If so many brothers cannot protect one sister, how can they

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[30] The Deuteronomic family laws reflect the authority of a father or husband over a woman's sexuality, cf., Deut. 22:13-21, 28-29. These laws define a woman in relation to her father or husband, and never indicate that a woman, particularly a virgin, is free to assert her own sexuality. The Deuteronomic law deviates from Ex 22: 17 which gave the father even more control over his daughter's affairs. Frymer-Kensky also argues the point of male ownership of female sexuality, see *Gender and Law*, 87.

protect their own wives and children? Tikva Frymer-Kinsky suggests that two methods

would restore Jacob's familial honor. The men could either accept a large brideprice or

conduct a raid to reestablish borders.[31] Dinah's enraged brothers skirt their father's

authority and react with unrestrained brutality.

Not only does rumor of Dinah's encounter shame Jacob's household, but

Shechem's exploit also asserts his political dominance in the region. His father's

subsequent request for intermarriage between Jacob and the Canaanite clan shows how

quickly the domestic conquest could turn into political subjugation. Hamor's dialogue,

first to Jacob's household (vv. 9-10) and then to his own people (vv. 21-23), indicates

that intermarriage would result in Israel falling under Canaanite hegemony. Hamor

suggests that Jacob and his sons give Dinah to them and "…our daughters' you will take

to you" (vv. 9-10). To his own people Hamor also requests intermarriage, saying "their

daughters' we will take to us and our daughters' we will give to them." But in these

verses Hamor further adds that Jacob's household, will "dwell with us to become as one

people" (vv. 21-23).

The quick turn from private encounter to public concern does not mean that the

text dismisses the sexual nature of the offense. The very method Dinah's brothers use to

gain revenge, circumcision, cuts the appendage that brought initial shame to Jacob's

household. Sexual and social implications work together in a delicate balance. The

revenge very clearly reflects the sexual nature of Shechem's offense. The rest of the

chapter emphasizes the dealings between Jacob's sons and the Shechemites. Instead of

exacting punishment against a blameworthy individual, Dinah's brothers extend their

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[31] Frymer-Kensky, *Gender and Law*, 90.

revenge to all the males in Shechem. They exact disproportionate revenge against an entire city. Brothers Simeon and Levi rebel against their father and smite all of Shechem for one man's action. Dinah's brothers even take the town's women as spoil, reversing Shechem's initial act (vv. 25-29).

Many recent perspectives deem Shechem's destruction as an egregious wrong. Ellen van Wolde terms the retribution an "ink black page" in Jacob's history.[32] This view divorces the text from its housing. It fails to recognize the political significance imbedded in the suggestion for intermarriage between Israel and Canaan. From a biblical perspective, Hamor's suggestion to intermarry and become "one people" with the Canaanites should terrify the initial audience. It is most important at this point to reiterate that Jacob is not some common man in Israel's past. The Genesis to Kings narrative traces its national birth from Jacob's household. Jacob and his sons *are* Israel. Much of Genesis, including this section, documents a purported sequence of events critical to the development of Israel's national identity. The birth narrative that originates the tribes of Israel begins in Gen 29: 32-30: 25, but is not completed until Benjamin's birth in 35: 16-18. Genesis 34 is textually situated within the period of national birth. The text is not just significant in terms of narrative placement relative to the births of the sons of Jacob. Genesis 34 provides the first account in which Jacob's sons are active. Consequently, this scene marks a point of nascence in the development of Israelite national identity. Israel's first generation cannot adopt Canaanite practice wholesale, to do so would jeopardize an entire people at its emergence. The harsh reprisal against Shechem's offense saves Israel from disappearing into Canaan.

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[32] van Wolde, "*'Innah*" 530

Dinah's sexual objectification is one of many elements that relate Jacob's house to the Davidic house. The order of narrative arrangement enables a reading that filters the events of David's house through the events in Jacob's house. In the succession of Israelite kings, 2 Samuel 13 provides the first account about the deeds of someone born into the Davidic monarchy. The previous episodes (2 Samuel 11-12) grant a portentous tone for reading the series of interfamilial conflict that begins with 2 Samuel 13. In the time of year that kings lead their troops in battle, David remains in Jerusalem. Instead of commanding his men on the battlefield, David seduces the wife of one of his soldiers. The woman, Bathsheba, becomes pregnant from their encounter. When David's attempt to conceal his paternity fails, he makes sure that her husband, Uriah, is killed in battle. In response to David's acts of committing adultery and murder, the prophet Nathan delivers the "two men in a city" oracle against him. Nathan disguises his speech about David's crimes in the form of non-specific legal case. David is enraged to hear about the wealthy man who had taken away some poor man's sole possession, and, unwittingly, he indicts himself of crimes against Uriah. In the speech that follows, Nathan condemns David saying, "the sword will never part from your house" and YHWH "will raise up trouble against you from within your own house." The scene in 2 Samuel 13 is the first instance of violence that erupts in David's household.

The illegitimate child of David and Bathsheba dies at birth, but Bathsheba becomes pregnant again. The child born to David and Bathsheba is the future heir to David's throne. Solomon is called the name Jedidiah once (2 Samuel 12:25). A variation of the name David, *Yədîdəyāh* means "beloved of YHWH." This alternate name could indicate that Solomon will rule after David. At this point in the text, Solomon is the

newest child born into the Davidic monarchy. The birth narrative of David's eventual

successor is situated directly against the only account of David's eldest and would-be

heir.

2 Samuel 13 has four main characters, a father, two brothers, and a sister.

Amnon, David's son, is infatuated with his half-sister, Tamar. Apparently, Amnon is so

taken with Tamar that his attraction drives him to illness (v. 2). When the reader first

meets Amnon, he is laying in bed, downtrodden over the fact that he cannot have sex

with his own sister. All the scene's action takes place in Amnon's room. Amnon never

leaves his bed.

With the exception of the sexual assault, all of Amnon's actions are filtered

through other characters. That is, Amnon uses other persons in the text in order to get

what he desires. Amnon only acts directly when he attacks Tamar (v. 14). In order to

exploit Tamar, Amnon enlists the help of his father, David and a friend, Jonadab.

Jonadab comes up with the plan for Amnon to seduce Tamar. At Amnon's request, David

sends Tamar to bake cakes for her ill brother (vv. 5-7). Unknowingly, David is

instrumental in his own daughter's manipulation. She immediately complies with the

commands of her father and brother. Her direct action contrasts with Amnon's pervasive

inaction (vv. 7-9).

When Amnon finally gets Tamar alone, he forces her to have sex with him (v.

14). Deut 22: 28-19 states that marriage should follow sexual intercourse in similar cases

of premarital sex with non-betrothed women. Instead, Amnon casts Tamar out when he

is finished with her (vv. 15-17). Tamar's full brother, Absalom, consoles her, while her

father does nothing (vv. 20-21). Two years pass before Absalom avenges his sister. He

requests that David and all of his brothers come to celebrate a feast with him. David

refuses to go along with his son. Absalom then suggests that David at least send Amnon.

When Amnon is intoxicated, Absalom has his men slay him. Absalom then flees and

remains gone for three years (vv. 23-29, 38). Absalom's attempt at usurping David's

throne then follows (2 Samuel 15-18).

In addition to examining the sexual encounter, this reading of 2 Samuel 13

focuses on the sequence of events leading up to Tamar's assault. Of the four scenes

examined here, this is the only scene that discloses premeditation and preparatory detail.

Once Tamar comes to visit Amnon, she prepares food in his sight (v. 8). This passage

includes the specific details of Amnon lying on his bed as he watches Tamar knead

dough. Concerning the sexual encounter, primary points of examination are drawn from

a comparative reading of 2 Samuel 13 with Genesis 34, 37-39. Using Genesis 37-39 as a

subtext for reading Tamar's assault, this analysis also emphasizes the similar accounts of

interfamilial violence in Jacob and David's household narratives. Joseph's ostracism

(Genesis 37) and his sexual objectification (Genesis 39) are particular points of interest.

One of the central elements linking Genesis 37 and 2 Samuel 13 is the garment that both

Joseph and Tamar are wearing at the time of their assaults, the *kĕtōnet passim*. Situated

between Genesis 37 and 39 is the sexual encounter involving Judah and his daughter-in-

law, who is also named Tamar.

Unlike any of the aforementioned scenes, 2 Samuel 13 provides nearly equal

emphasis on both victim and attacker. The scene begins by naming its primary

characters, Absalom, David, Tamar and Amnon. Immediately the text discloses critical

details. Three elements create conflict: Amnon's desire; his sibling relationship to

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Tamar; and Tamar's virginity (vv. 1-2). Presumably Amnon's own attraction unsettles him, not entirely out of guilt or embarrassment for his incestuous desire, but because Tamar is a virgin. Tamar's virginity indicates her status as David's property under her brothers' protection. Amnon cannot legally marry Tamar, and any attempt to seduce her challenges his father's authority, shaming both David and Absalom.[33]

The exchange between Amnon and Jonadab fully reveals motive and premeditation (vv. 3-6). Sickened with lust, Amnon finds consolation through cunning suggestion. Amnon's scheming with a non-active co-conspirator, Jonadab, manufactures a ploy that lends opportunity for seducing Tamar. The text details Amnon and Jonadab's machinations through direct dialogue. Jonadab suggests that Amnon request that his father send Tamar to bake cakes for him.

The scene plays out with a voyeuristic tone that provides more detail than any of the other episodes. In his analysis of 2 Samuel 13, Mark Gray points out the voyeuristic nature of Tamar's obedience to her father's command that she prepare food in her brother's sight.[34] Tamar's act of kneading dough (v. 8), *'et habbāṣēq watālāš*, has links to sexual and social improprieties in prophetic literature. According to Gray, "this verse is replete with *double entendre* and sexual innuendo which help cultivate a fetid atmosphere redolent of peril for Tamar."[35] Kneading dough as Amnon looks on shows Tamar as the direct subject performing a compulsory action. The sequence shows

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[33] Lev 18.9, 11, 20.17 and Deut 27:22 indicate that Ancient Israel prohibited incestuous relationships, even with half-siblings.

[34] Mark Gray, "Amnon: A Chip Off the Old Block? Rhetorical Strategy in 2 Samuel 13.7-15: The Rape of Tamar and the Humiliation of the Poor," *JSOT* 77 (1993), 39-54.

[35] Gray, "Amnon" 44-45.

Amnon wearing a guise of illness, waiting in bed and watching Tamar as she unwittingly prepares for their encounter.

Having prepared bread for her supposedly ill brother, Tamar goes in to serve him. He refuses to eat while his attendants stand near and sends everyone away except Tamar (vv. 9-10). He urges her close to him and seizes her saying "lie with me, my sister" *(šikəbî ʿimmî ʾăḥôtî)*. Tamar's response, her first directly spoken words, acknowledges dismay. She pleads for her brother to stop but he does not listen (vv. 10-14). Only the reader hears Tamar. Amnon refuses Tamar's supplication. He coerces her in front of an audience of readers. The transformation is sudden and daunting. Tamar faces an attacker alone in a room that was filled with attendants just moments prior. The detailed narration of their sexual encounter provides a point of innovation for the scenes examined here. Other scenes provide only vague details of the sexual encounters. In this scene, the reader knows Tamar's struggle, hears her cry, and bears witness to the overpowering. The dialogue between Tamar and Amnon in v. 12 is explicit, "She answered him, 'No, my brother, do not force me *(təʿannēnî)*; for in Israel this foolishness *(nəbālāh)* is not done.'" Tamar makes an appeal to Amnon on the basis of customary Israelite law. The very person responsible for upholding the law, Amnon, defies it. With the room cleared at Amnon's command, a great shift in political power and family dynamics has occurred. The entire order of their household has changed. Amnon is no longer Tamar's brother and potential protector, his action asserts dominance over David and Absalom.

The final scene examined here, 2 Samuel 13, occurs between a brother and sister. The person that Tamar should be able to trust as protector exploits his position of power over her. The unthinkable abrogation of trust combined with hint of incest and the

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victim's cry makes this a dreadfully unsettling episode. This is the only scene in which the victim addresses her assailant. It is the only scene in which the victim's shame is explicitly expressed. All the women in these scenes are sexual objects. Properties taken at a whim, objectification mutes their voices as they are coerced into unsolicited sexual acts. Tamar's cry breaks all their silences. She is the voice of virtue shouting to no avail against malicious and destructive foolishness. The man charged with protecting Tamar's virginity steals it.

The explicitly invasive account of Tamar's violation distinctly contrasts to Genesis 34. Dinah's actual encounter is altogether inscrutable. Unlike Dinah, who presumably does not know her attacker prior to the encounter, Tamar has a longstanding relationship with Amnon. Complementing the closeness of their sibling relationship, the text intimately exposes her exploitation. With suggestive language the story makes the audience privy to the voyeuristic details of Amnon's arousal and Tamar's coercion. When Amnon is finished with Tamar he removes her with the phrase "send this *(z'ōt)* out from me" (v. 17). Amnon's contempt for Tamar starkly contrasts with Shechem's inexplicable ardor for Dinah "Amnon hated *(sn')* her [with] an exceedingly great hate *(sn')*. For greater was the hate *(sn')* which he hated *(sn')* her than the love *('hb)* which he loved *('hb)* her" (v. 15). *Sn'* is used in Deuteronomy as part of technical language for divorce.[36] Amnon divorces his sister before legitimately marrying her. Where Shechem seeks to compensate for the damages to Dinah's family through marriage, Amnon uses his sister for sex and gives his own household nothing but shame in recompense.

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[36] Deut 22:13, 24:3, see Pressler, *The View of Women*, 23.n 4.

After her brother forces Tamar into sexually submitting to him, the narrator

makes deliberate mention of a seemingly superfluous detail concerning her attire (v. 18).

At first blush this may seem a strange detail for concern. The king's son has just forced

his own sister to have sex with him, and the narrator includes a description of her outfit.

However, the garment often translated as a robe with long sleeves, *kĕtōnet passîm*, is an

extraordinarily rare coupling of terms occurring elsewhere biblically only as Joseph's

famed "coat of many colors." The garment Tamar wears in 2 Samuel 13 is the same

garment that Joseph is wearing when his brothers attack him in Genesis 37.

Genesis 37 provides the introduction to a section often termed the Joseph novella.

Its primary thematic element details the height of interfamilial calamity occurring within

the house of Jacob. This piece centers largely on the figure of Joseph, his expulsion from

Canaan and ultimate rise to prominence in Egypt. Acknowledging the deeds of Israel's

progenitors, Genesis 37-50 provides the background for events that help establish

national identity. This section works as prologue to the fulfillment of the ominous divine

proclamation to Abraham in Gen 15.13 that his descendents will be enslaved *('bd)* and

oppressed *('nh)* in a land that is not their own.

The opening segment in Genesis 37 depicts Jacob presenting his favorite son with

a unique cloak. Soon after he has put on this garment, Joseph finds himself at odds with

jealous brothers (v. 4). Joseph's brothers rise up against him in malevolent rage and tear

off the special garment that their father gave him, the *kĕtōnet passîm* (v. 23). In

compliance with Reuben's urging to let Joseph live, the brothers toss Joseph into a pit.

Later they return to the site without Reuben and, at Judah's charge, the brothers sell

Joseph into slavery (vv. 22-28). Ridding themselves of Joseph, the brothers tear his

garment and spatter it with sheep's blood (v. 31). They contrive a persuasive mock-up of

bloodshed that Jacob later intuits as evidence of a bestial attack that has claimed Joseph's

life. In a tragically ironic reversal, the remaining sons place in their father's hand the

same symbolic token that Jacob had given Joseph to represent his status as favored son.

The brothers return to their father the torn, blood-covered *kĕtōnet passîm* as the only

remnant of his beloved son (vv. 32-33).

Use of the *kĕtōnet passîm* creates narrative tension in Genesis 37, but it also

provides an element for linking Joseph's and Tamar's accounts. The detail in 2 Sam

13.18-19 plainly depicts a bereft Tamar tearing her garment, the *kĕtōnet passîm*, in

shame. Her sign of mourning echoes the very act of violence Joseph's brothers against

him. The detail that Tamar's garment signifies her virginity further builds the parallel

between the children of David and Jacob. Tamar's sexual encounter with Amnon is her

first. The reference to her virginity inherently suggests hymenal rupture. Consequently,

blood is shed. Tamar's sexual encounter mirrors Joseph's brothers tearing his garment

then dipping it into blood and his subsequent near-encounter with exploitative sex. As

Joseph's brothers force him into exile, Amnon claims Tamar's virginity and casts her out

without regard. Amnon's contempt forces Tamar from her father's keeping. Israelite

judicial proceedings deem Tamar no longer David's property and Amnon refuses to take

her in marriage. Like Joseph, Tamar's brother exiles her from home.

In Gen 37:26-28, Judah is the brother named primarily responsible for exiling

Joseph. The next chapter, Genesis 38, continues with Judah before returning to the Joseph

story. The episode in Genesis 38 provides some of the most blatant links between Jacob

and David's households. The similarities between Genesis 38 and 2 Samuel 11-13 are

too numerous to discuss here. Select points of interest include sexually charged themes involving women named Tamar. In Genesis 38 Judah withholds from his daughter-in-law, Tamar, the right to childbirth. Tamar's husband, Er, dies before Tamar can bear children (v. 7). Judah's orders his next oldest son, Onan, to raise children with Tamar in his brother's name. Onan also dies (vv. 8-10). With both Er and Onan dead, Judah refuses to allow his only remaining son to provide children for Tamar (v. 11). Dressing as a prostitute, Tamar disguises her appearance and seduces Judah (vv. 12-19). Ruth 4.18-22 declares that David is the direct descendent of Perez, a twin son born of Judah and Tamar's sole encounter. The Tamars of Genesis 38 and 2 Samuel 13 contrast with each other when these narratives are considered together. In Genesis, Tamar vindicates herself, claiming the right to childbirth that Judah formerly withheld from her. This Tamar is victor, prevailing over inequity. She stands in direct contrast with Samuel's Tamar, the hapless victim.

Returning to the Joseph novella, the next scene in Genesis 39 shows the protagonist enjoying success in Egypt. Joseph becomes a highly regarded resident servant to Potipher, the captain of Pharaoh's guard (vv. 3-6). Joseph's rapidly growing prominence is short-lived as Potipher's wife wrongfully accuses Joseph of sexual advances (vv. 7-20). Potipher's wife attempts to exploit her position of power over Joseph. She seizes him by the cloak and demands him to have sex with her (v. 12). Her command, "lie with me" *(šikəbāh 'immî)* is a phrase almost identical to that which Amnon says to Tamar (2 Sam 13:11). Refusing her advances, Joseph slips out of his garment and flees the house (v. 12). Joseph's ability to escape the situation provides notable distinction to Tamar. Tamar is also seized and hears the same command as

Joseph, "lie with me." Unlike Joseph, Tamar cannot flee, and she faces the consequences. Amnon overpowers her despite her bitter pleas urging him to stop.

From this point on in the Davidic narrative a progressive movement details the spiraling destruction of family bonds. This directly contrasts with the Jacob narrative that presents an interlude to the interfamilial dissonance with Joseph's ostracism. A displaced woman, Tamar takes refuge in her brother Absalom's house (vv. 20-22). Absalom consoles his sister, biding his time while plotting machinations against Amnon. After careful premeditation, Absalom invites all of his brothers to a feast where he takes revenge (vv. 23-29). Absalom's thoroughly contemplated revenge and execution after a two-year stay directly contrasts David's refusal for action. Incensed over the matter, David oddly refuses administering just punishment against his daughter's attacker (v. 21). David looks on Tamar's exploitation and turns his head from the matter. His entire household is falling down around him, and David does nothing.

Here another parallel between David and Jacob should be examined. Jacob also resists retaliatory measures when his daughter, Dinah, is wronged in Genesis 34. Jacob values peaceable relations with the Shechemites more than vengeance when the region's ruling elite exploits Dinah. When Jacob's sons hear that Shechem has been with Dinah and requests marriage with their sister they grant consent, however, deceitfully (vv. 13-17). Led by Simeon and Levi, the brothers plot revenge not just on the perpetrator, Shechem, but on the entire village. Insisting on circumcision for all males in the region, the brothers wait until Shechem winces in pain and then take advantage of the incapacitated state (vv. 25-29). Dinah's brothers smite the entire community, indiscriminately plundering the peoples' goods and retrieving their sister. Absalom's

actions are reminiscent of Dinah's brothers' actions. Absalom instructs his servants to wait until Amnon is thoroughly intoxicated and then smite him. Like Simeon and Levi, Absalom manufactures an opportune time to take revenge. Jacob chastises his sons, claiming that the Canaanites and Perizites might come against them all for this retaliation (Gen 34: 30). Jacob makes it clear that his motives for inaction are based in fear and an attempt to amend the wrong in a more appropriate manner. Damage control is perhaps the very reason David will not penalize Amnon. As David's oldest son and would-be successor, David may view Amnon's sexual advances as a sign of political rebellion. David's inaction points to a viable fear of an uprising. Uprising is exactly what follows, but not led by Amnon.

After Absalom kills Amnon, he desires David's throne. In order to devise his revolution, Absalom pretends that he is reconciled with David (2 Sam 15:33). Driven by his success at Amnon's assassination, Absalom organizes an army and campaigns within Israel to gain support to overthrow his father (2 Sam 15:1-13). He travels to Hebron, mimicking David's rise to power in 1 Sam 30:21-30. Residing there Absalom gains support, and his rebellion grows in strength and number. David flees Jerusalem, fearing that Absalom will overtake him and his commanders (2 Sam 15:13). Absalom comes into the city and, claiming the throne symbolically, has sex with David's wives on the palace roof in view of the whole city (2 Sam 16:20-22). Absalom's action directly fulfills Nathan's oracle against David in chapter 12: "I will take your wives before you and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this very sun." Taking David's wives adds yet another notable feature to the register of thematic commonalities between Jacob and David's households in Genesis and 2 Samuel. Gen

35:22 obscurely mentions an incident between Reuben and Bilhah, one of his father's wives. The trespassing against his father that Absalom performs in usurpation, Reuben commits without any indication of provocation in this oddly terse account.

Beginning with Genesis 34, elements of Jacob's house correspond closely with elements of Tamar's encounter in 2 Samuel 13. The first explicitly common element shared between Jacob and David occurs with Dinah's encounter in Shechem and her brothers' revenge (Genesis 34). Next, and not stated as directly related to Dinah's account, Reuben has sex with one of Jacob's wives (Genesis 35:22). Interfamilial animosity begins again with Jacob's sons' violence against Joseph (Genesis 37). The Judah and Tamar scene abruptly interrupts Joseph's exile (Genesis 38). Genesis 37 and 38 mark points of departure for Jacob's household narrative. 2 Samuel 13 marks a reference point for themes similar to Jacob's household in Genesis. After the brothers exile Joseph, the Judah and Tamar incident is the end point for the interfamilial violence theme that runs throughout Jacob's household. In distinct contrast, Tamar's violation is the initial point for interfamilial rebellion following David's misconduct in 2 Samuel 12. Absalom's retaliation in response to Tamar's ordeal serves as reminder of Dinah's encounter at Shechem (2 Sam 13:24-29, Gen 34:25-29). Absalom's later symbolic sexual claim to the throne hearkens back to Reuben's liaison with Jacob's wife (2 Sam 16:20-22, Gen 35:22). Reuben comes to Joseph's aid when his brother's attack him, just as Absalom does for Tamar when Amnon assaults her (Gen 37:22, 2 Sam 13:20-22). The elements in Genesis point forward to the account of Tamar in 2 Samuel 13. These correspondences do not symmetrically align, but rather textually direct attention to

David's Tamar.[37] The three consecutive scenes of Genesis 37-39 all share distinct

commonalities with 2 Samuel 13. However, 2 Samuel 13 entirely reverses the outcomes

of Genesis 38 and 39.

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[37] See chart ii on 62: Similarities between Jacob and David's household narratives.

IV.   Conclusion

Genesis 19, Genesis 34, Judges 19, and 2 Samuel 13 demonstrate similar narrative styles. The episodes maintain qualities of individual accounts that can be read and examined in individual contexts. However, these four scenes also relate to their audience a general sense of continuity and interdependence apart from explicitly sexual themes. The scenes can be read as a single progressive movement articulating notions of unlawful property seizure perpetrated by and against persons of varied social status but reinforced by an implicit hierarchical structure. Overall contextual similarities between the scenes at Sodom/Gibeah and exploitations of Dinah/Tamar allow treatment of the scenes as pairs within the larger Genesis to Kings narrative. With graduating nuance these scenes move from a state of incompletion in Genesis 19 to a state of fully enacted and completely divulged events in 2 Samuel 13. This final incestuous scene is the apex, announcing an unparalleled abrogation of family ties that upsets solidarity within the Davidic household.

Although each scene has an individual textual place and circumstance, all take place at moments critical to Israel's national identity. Occurring during the covenantal series in Abraham's narrative (Gen 12-24:9, 25:1-10), the scene at Sodom (Genesis 19) falls between the foretelling of Isaac's birth and its fruition. Dinah's encounter with Shechem (Genesis 34) takes place amid Jacob's return to Canaan, within the birth narrative that originates the twelve tribes. Judges 19 occurs during the alternating pattern between worship of Canaanite gods and Yahwistic covenantal conformity. Amnon's

attack on his sister in 2 Samuel 13 mars the infancy stages of a rapidly growing

monarchal empire. Since all take place during nationally critical times in their

surrounding narrative entities, these scenes relate political significance. The following

section offers possible interpretations of the readings.

The introduction to this thesis notes the interrelatedness of these scenes and the

overall progressive pattern that the scenes demonstrate when read in the narrative order

of Genesis to Kings. Each scene provides more detail than the previous scene. As detail

increases so does the relationship between victim and attacker. The scenes progress from

a state of incomplete action with little detail and no kinship between victim and attacker

in Genesis 19 to a state of fully accomplished sexual intent with copious detail and a

sibling relationship between victim and attacker in 2 Samuel 13. Having the most detail

and closest relationship between victim and attacker, 2 Samuel 13 provides the climatic

point.

As the scenes are read, a total change in character identity occurs. Genesis 19 and

34 show Canaanite attackers while Judges 19 and 2 Samuel 13 show Israel attacking

Israel. Similarities between Genesis 19 and Judges 19, and Genesis 34 and 2 Samuel 13

create a mirroring affect that replaces Canaanite attackers in the first two episodes with

Israelites in the later half. The shift in character identity may demonstrate an ideological

shift in Israel's character and a collapse of national identity. The character transition first

occurs during the Judges period. In addition to an outbreak of civil war, Judges 19 marks

the shift from the Judges period to the beginning of a standing kingship in Israel. The

narrative pattern of Judges shows an alternation of Canaanite peoples subjugating

Israelites and Israelites being delivered from Canaanite control. The closing chapters of

Judges, ch. 19-21, show the tribe of Benjamin subjugating its own tribal kin. The tribe that commits the crime in Judges 19 also produces Israel's first king. Saul is a Benjaminite. Reading these scenes as a group within the unified Genesis to Kings narrative allows for the interpretation that, as the overall text progresses, Israel is increasingly becoming a state in disarray.

The final encounter takes place during the golden-era of Israel's monarchy. Gradually, as all the scenes progress, the reader is increasingly brought into view of the sexual action. The reader goes from being completely removed from the "foolishness in Israel," to standing alongside Tamar in its midst.[38] Following Tamar's attack, a pivotal shift in the Davidic dynasty occurs. The scene depicting a brother attacking his weaker sibling within the monarchal setting precedes the eventual break between the unified monarchy and tribal family. Amnon's role is twofold. He is both brother/protector and Israelite ruler/protector. Amnon's transgression against his own sister may signify the exploitation of sibling tribes on behalf of the Davidic line. If so, these scenes provide insight into a perceived state of dissolution that ushers in the demise of the united monarchy.

Some of the pervasive themes in these stories include unlawful property seizure, notions of honor and shame, mixing of private and public domains, and exploitation of power by persons in positions of reinforced hierarchy. All of these themes emerge in the Genesis 19 and 34, Judges 19, and 2 Samuel 13 scenes. Additionally, all of these themes can function as social commentary on the kingship. This is particularly true when these scenes are read in respect to 2 Samuel 13, which shows the would-be heir to the Davidic

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[38] See note 24, p. 24-25.

throne exploiting his position of power over a weaker sibling. 1 Sam 8:10-18 warns of the "ways of the king." According to this passage a king will exploit his hierarchical position of power and take the properties of private citizens for public use. The scenes examined in this study directly correspond to breeches of individual proprietary rights. In terms of biblical narrative, wrongful seizure of property perpetrated on behalf of the king's office most clearly begins with Solomon (1 Kgs 5:13). Solomon's tactic of taxation and conscribed labor, which his successor follows, is largely credited for inciting the break between northern and southern tribes (1 Kgs 12:6-15). The tumultuous consequences of 2 Samuel 13 make possible Solomon's acquisition of the throne.

On a final note, the previous discussion on the correlations between David and Jacob's household narratives furthers the argument that these scenes might signal forthcoming national demise. Consistently, David's actions remind the reader of Jacob. The men share similar household situations until the end of David's life. On his deathbed, Bathesheba tricks David into giving her son, Solomon, the throne. The scene in 1 Kgs 1.1-35 reminds the reader not of Jacob, but of Jacob's father. In Genesis 27, Rebekkah contrives a plan to fool Isaac into giving Jacob Esau's birthright. The final scene in David's life reminds the reader not of Jacob, the father of twelve tribes, but of Isaac, the father of two sibling nations.

i.   Overall Narrative Progression of Scenes

	Genesis 19	Genesis 34	Judges 19	2 Samuel 13
Motive / Precursory Action	None indicated	None indicated	None indicated	Premeditative considerations fully revealed
Action	Incomplete	Complete no detail	Complete vivid detail	Complete dialogue between victim and attacker
Attacker	Canaanite	Canaanite	Israelite	Israelite
Victim	Abrahamic relation	Abrahamic descendent	Israelite	Israelite
Victim/Attacker Relationship	None	None	Kin United under tribal confederacy	Siblings
Destruction	Full divine destruction of town	All males of town destroyed	Partial tribal destruction	Only attacker
Post hoc / Subsequent Detail	Lot, divine messengers disappear from the text	Dinah disappears; her family is followed through the end of Genesis	Levite disappears from text Civil war Benjaminite becomes first king	Interfamilial war Successors removed, Solomon made king
Chronological Interrelatedness		Simeon and Levi named avengers	Levite targeted Turn away from Jebus	Jerusalem (Jebus) site of Tamar's assault

ii.   Similarities Between Jacob and David's Household Narratives

Genesis 34:	Genesis 37:	Genesis 35:	Genesis 38:
Dinah and Prince of Shechem *yišikab 'ōtāh* *yə'annehā* Such a thing/ foolishness *(nebālāh)* is not done in Israel Brothers take revenge	Joseph attacked by brothers *kĕtōnet passîm* torn; blood shed Genesis 39: Seduction attempt by woman exploiting her position of power over him *šikəbāh 'immî*	Reuben sleeps with Jacob's concubine	Judah Tamar interruption Bat-Shua Death of two sons Tamar seduces her father-in-law David is traced from this point
2 Samuel 13:	2 Samuel 13:	2 Samuel 16:	2 Samuel 12:
Tamar and Amnon *yə'annehā yišikab 'ōtāh* Such a thing/ foolishness *(nebālāh)* is not done in Israel Absalom exacts revenge	Tamar attack by brother Seduction attempt/ exploiting position of power over her *šikəbî 'immî 'ăḥôtî* tears garment of virginity (*kĕtōnet passîm*)	Absalom sleeps with David's concubines	David Bat-Sheba 2 Samuel 13 & 18: Death of David's two eldest sons

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