

Productive and Disordered Bodies

Judges 19–21 as a Somatic Society

M.L. Case



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For my parents

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	David Noel Freedman (ed.), <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> (New York: Doubleday, 1992).
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
ANEP	James B. Pritchard (ed.), <i>Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament</i> (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954).
AQ	<i>Anthropological Quarterly</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BARev	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BDB	Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907).
BHK	R. Kittel (ed.), <i>Biblia hebraica</i> (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1937).
BHQ	<i>Biblia hebraica quinta</i>
BHS	<i>Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia</i>
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
CAD	Ignace I. Gelb <i>et al.</i> (eds.), <i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1964–).
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CDA	<i>A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian</i>
CT	<i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum</i>
DH	Deuteronomistic History
EA	<i>Encyclopedia of Anthropology</i>
HALOT	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
HN	<i>Handbook of Neuropsychology</i>
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>

<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JFSR</i>	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
<i>JIBS</i>	<i>Journal for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies</i>
<i>JAWS</i>	<i>Journal of International Women's Studies</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JP</i>	<i>Journal de Psychologie</i>
<i>JPSV</i>	Jewish Publication Society Version
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSSR</i>	<i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i>
<i>KB</i>	Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner (eds.), <i>Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros</i> (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1953).
<i>KJV</i>	King James Version
<i>L&L</i>	<i>Law & Literature</i>
<i>MAQ</i>	<i>Medical Anthropology Quarterly</i>
<i>MT</i>	Masoretic Text
<i>NEA</i>	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
<i>NIB</i>	The New Interpreter's Bible
<i>NICOT</i>	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NRSV</i>	New Revised Standard Version
<i>OTL</i>	Old Testament Library
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>WBC</i>	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>ZAH</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Althebräistik</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

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1

INTRODUCTION

Judges 19–21 relates the story of the rape¹ and death of the Levite's *pīlegeš*² (ch. 19) and the resulting civil war between the Benjaminites and the other

1. While I recognize that 'rape' is a modern concept with no direct parallel term in biblical Hebrew, I use the term here as a shorthand for the sexual assault of the *pīlegeš* to make the event understandable to the modern reader. There has been much scholarship on the presence of rape in the Hebrew Bible. See, for instance, Susanne Scholz, *Sacred Witness: Rape in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010). For a recent study which does label the events of Judg. 19 as rape, see Leah Rediger Schulte, *The Absence of God in Biblical Rape Narratives* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017).

2. The Hebrew term *pīlegeš* traditionally has been translated as 'concubine', an anachronistic term laden with baggage, though a more accurate translation of 'secondary wife' is gaining wider acceptance. I choose simply to transliterate this term throughout my study. I discuss this term in detail in Chapter 4.

Some scholars choose to give the *pīlegeš* a name. Following the biblical standard of names providing meaning and insight into the character, these names often indicate the scholar's interpretation of the *pīlegeš* or the pericope as a whole. For instance, Mitzi Smith names her 'Ēnmishpat in Hebrew, meaning 'there was/is no justice'; see Mitzi J. Smith, *Insights in African American Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), p. 102. For an overview of scholars who name her, as well as a nuanced discussion of the act of naming, see Esther Brownsmith, "'Call Me by your Name": Critical Fabulation and the Woman of Judges 19', *JIBS* 4.2 (2022), pp. 5-26.

In contrast, Elizabeth Backfish argues that the named female characters in Judges exemplify correct actions in Israel: acquiring land, leading the community, or fighting enemies. Unnamed characters, on the other hand, such as the *pīlegeš* in Judg. 19, represent what Israel should not be doing or the consequences of incorrect action. Hence, the lack of name for the *pīlegeš* has significance; see Elizabeth H.P. Backfish, 'Nameless in the Nevi'im: Intertextuality between Female Characters in the Book of Judges' in Shelley Birdsong, J. Cornelis de Vos, and Hyun Chul Paul Kim (eds.), *Reading Gender in Judges: An Intertextual Approach* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2023), pp. 71-88.

Rhiannon Graybill argues against attempting to give the *pīlegeš* a voice, which is another common practice among feminist scholars. As she reminds us, '*Speaking as or speaking on behalf of can be acts of violence. And we should not demand that the Levite's concubine speak*' (emphasis in original); see Rhiannon Graybill, *Texts after Terror* (London: Oxford University Press, 2021), p. 167.

tribes of Israel (ch. 20), who are then reconciled through the exchange of women as wives for the defeated Benjaminites (ch. 21).³ Much of the scholarship on these chapters has focused on the apparent social disorder depicted in the period before the monarchy, claiming that the appendices to Judges (chs. 17–21) portray a society that has descended into chaos, a descent from which only the establishment of the (Davidic) monarchy can rescue the Israelites.⁴ In contrast, I argue that Judges 19–21 actually describes the success of premonarchic biblical Israelite society in overcoming their intertribal conflicts. Despite lacking the unifying effect of a king, the fully functioning social order as depicted in Judges is founded on the regulation of bodies at all levels of society: correct regulation of bodies, such as providing hospitality to foreign bodies or limiting who has sexual access to female bodies, results in social harmony, while improper regulation, such as the lack of hospitality to foreign bodies or free sexual access to female bodies, occasions social disorder. Such a focus on bodies as the foundation of society, an approach sociologist Bryan Turner describes as investigating a society as a ‘somatic society’, highlights the ability of the premonarchic Israel depicted in Judges to overcome their conflicts. Thus, Judges does not end with a hopeless state of a society in chaos, but rather

3. Some scholars view this focus on exchanging women as androcentric or sexist because of an assumed lack of agency of the women involved. See T.M. Lemos, *Marriage Gifts and Social Change in Ancient Palestine: 1200 BCE to 200 CE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 110; and Michaela Bauks, ‘Women in the War Narratives of the Prestate Period (Joshua–Judges)’, in L. Juliana Claassens and Imtraud Fischer (eds.), *Prophecy and Gender in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2021), pp. 173–92. As I will discuss throughout this study, however, the women exchanged as wives in Judg. 21 play a vital role in both the society depicted and the resolution of the story, making them essential actors. I will discuss the agency of these women in Chapter 2.

4. See, for example, Charles Fox Burney, *The Book of Judges with Introduction and Notes* (London: Rivingtons, 2nd edn, 1920); J. Alberto Soggin, *Judges: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), p. 305; Robert G. Boling, *Judges* (AB, 6A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), p. 277; Tammi J. Schneider, *Judges* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), pp. 245–85; Victor H. Matthews, ‘Judges’, in Gale A. Yee, Hugh R. Page Jr and Matthew J.M. Coomber (eds.), *Fortress Commentary on the Bible: The Old Testament and Apocrypha* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), pp. 329, 345–48; Richard D. Nelson, *Judges: A Critical & Rhetorical Commentary* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 339; and Nathan Hays, ‘Family Disintegration in Judges 17–18’, *CBQ* 80 (2018), pp. 373–92.

Scholars often use the monarchic refrain (‘In those days, when there was no king in Israel, every man did what was right in his own eyes’. [Judg. 17.6; 21.25]) to support their claim of a pro-monarchy focus to the appendices. I will discuss both the monarchic refrain and the so-called appendices to Judges in more detail below.

All translations are my own, unless indicated otherwise.

with the peace of renewed kinship loyalties achieved through the correct control of bodies.⁵

In this introductory chapter, I will first provide a brief summary of the pericope under investigation in this project.⁶ I then discuss Judges 19–21 as a unit, including its position in the appendices to Judges and the various redactional layers. Next, I outline some previous scholarship in biblical studies relevant to my study: the exegesis of this pericope and how the concept of the body has been used in analyzing the Hebrew Bible. I conclude this introductory chapter with a few notes about the project, including the historicity of this text, methodology, and an outline of the rest of the chapters.

The [Anti-]Benjaminite Novella

At the beginning of this text, which I title *The [Anti-]Benjaminite Novella*, a Levite residing in Ephraim has a falling out⁷ with his *pīlegeš*, who runs back to her father's house in Bethlehem in the territory of Judah.⁸ The Levite eventually follows her with his servant (*naʿar*) to bring her back, but her father keeps his son-in-law there for four days with celebrations.⁹ On the fifth day, though the Levite lingers with his father-in-law until late in the day, he and his *pīlegeš*, along with his servant, set off for their home in Ephraim. After debating where to stop overnight, they eschew the Jebusite town of Jebus (Jerusalem), and instead travel to the Israelite town of Gibeah in Benjamin. As no one offers them hospitality in Gibeah, they prepare to spend the night in the square.

5. Leslie Hoppe argues that the Deuteronomistic History as a whole ‘shows that Israel can and has existed and prospered without a king’, though this pericope ‘present[s] the priesthood in the period of the Judges as religiously and morally bankrupt’; see Leslie J. Hoppe, ‘The Strategy of the Deuteronomistic History: A Proposal’, *CBQ* 79 (2017), pp. 14, 7.

6. My full translation of Judg. 19–21 can be found in Appendix A.

7. The Hebrew uses the verb *znh*, ‘to play the harlot’ or ‘to commit fornication’, while one version of the Septuagint reads the passive of *orgizō*, ‘to be angry’. ‘Playing the harlot’ places blame squarely on the woman’s shoulders, while ‘to be angry’ allows more space for her husband’s (unspecified) actions to contribute to the *pīlegeš* leaving. I discuss this term in more detail in my notes to my translation in Appendix A.

8. Lillian Klein suggests that the *pīlegeš* is young, noting her designation as *naʿārā* (Judg. 19.3–6, 8–9), which Klein interprets as ‘girl’. As I discuss in Chapter 4, however, this term is primarily a status marker, with age only tangentially connected; see Lillian R. Klein, ‘A Spectrum of Female Characters in the Book of Judges’, in Athalya Brenner (ed.), *A Feminist Companion to Judges* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), p. 29.

9. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, the father focuses on his son-in-law, not his daughter, whom the text does not include in the account of the festivities.

At this point, the story resembles the tale of the two messengers sent to Lot in Sodom (Gen. 19). Similar to Lot, a stranger (*gēr*) in Sodom, providing shelter to the messengers (Gen. 19.2-3), in Judges 19 an old man from Ephraim, a stranger (*gēr*) in Benjaminite Gibeah, provides shelter to the Levite and his entourage (Judg. 19.20-21).¹⁰ That same night, however, a group of men comes to the Ephraimite's house and demands the presence of the Levite so that they may 'know' (*ydc*) him, a Hebrew Bible euphemism for having sex (Judg. 19.22; see also Gen. 19.5). The Ephraimite offers instead his virgin daughter and the Levite's *pīlegeš*. In the end, the Levite throws his wife out to the men to satisfy them.¹¹ At this point the two stories drastically diverge: while the messengers from God save Lot's daughters in Genesis (Gen. 19.10-11), the woman in Judges is raped and abused throughout the night by the men of Gibeah (Judg. 19.25). Afterward, she manages to crawl back to the threshold of the old man's house, where she collapses (Judg. 19.26).¹²

When she does not rise at his command in the morning, the Levite takes her home, chops her into twelve pieces, and sends them to the twelve tribes (Judg. 19.29-30).¹³ As we learn in Judg. 20.1-7, these pieces summon the tribes of Israel to a council at Mizpah, where the Levite relates the story of his night in Gibeah, though he neglects to mention his own nefarious role in the events by throwing his *pīlegeš* out to the men to save his own skin.¹⁴

10. I discuss the *gēr* in ancient Israelite society in Chapter 3 and the significance in the story of the old man's status as a *gēr* in Chapter 4.

11. There is some uncertainty in the text as to which man throws the *pīlegeš* out to the Gibeahites. See my discussion of this question in Chapter 4 n. 70.

12. Julie Faith Parker suggests that the *pīlegeš* moves to the doorway due to the association of the household with women; thus, the woman's crawl can be read as 'a final act of self-determination in a futile attempt to find help or safety'; see Julie Faith Parker, 'Re-memembering the Dismembered: Piecing Together Meaning from Stories of Women and Body Parts in Ancient Near Eastern Literature', *BibInt* 23 (2015), pp. 177.

13. As I discuss in both the notes to my translation and in Chapter 4, interpreters have long debated the exact moment when the *pīlegeš* dies, which the biblical text does not specify.

Graybill encourages us to sit with this ambiguity, as sexual violence is often fuzzy, messy, and icky. There are several plot points in Judg. 19 that remain ambiguous, such as why the *pīlegeš* left her husband, who threw her out to the men of Gibeah, and when she dies. An unhappy reading of this pericope, which Graybill advocates, leaves room for these ambiguities. She is especially critical of scholars who conflate her rape and death. Rape is not murder, and conflating the two lets the murderer, whether the men of Gibeah or the Levite, off the hook; see Graybill, *Texts after Terror*, pp. 10, 154-60.

14. While the Levite presents himself as being in grave danger when retelling the events, Susan Haddox notes that, unlike Lot in the parallel story in Gen. 19, the Levite is never at much risk in Judg. 19. Brandon Hurlbert refers to the Levite as an untrustworthy narrator. See Susan E. Haddox, 'Bizarro Genesis: An Intertextual Reading of Gender and Identity in Judges', in Shelley L. Birdsong, J. Cornelis de Vos, and Hyun

After hearing his tale, the Israelites decide to destroy the entire town of Gibeah for their actions, but the Benjaminite tribe chooses to protect its close kin in Gibeah and fight against the rest of the tribes of Israel in a civil war (Judg. 20.8-14).¹⁵

The battles go well for the Benjaminites for the first two days, but on the third day, the rest of the Israelites set a trap for the Benjaminites (Judg. 20.29-46).¹⁶ This snare results in the complete destruction of Gibeah and all the rest of Benjamin—men, women, and children—save six hundred men (Judg. 20.47). With the Benjaminites almost completely extinct, a further problem is laid out in ch. 21: the rest of the tribes of Israel have made a vow at Mizpah that none of them will give their daughters in marriage to the Benjaminites (v. 1). Because of this oath, without available wives for the remnant, the tribe of Benjamin will soon completely disappear.¹⁷

The Israelites need to be creative in order to both keep their oath and provide wives for their Benjaminite brethren. They first look for any group that did not muster for the battle against Gibeah and discover that no one came from the town of Jabesh-Gilead. In retaliation for failing to muster, the Israelites utterly destroy Jabesh-Gilead, with the exception of four hundred virgins, whom they give as wives to the Benjaminites (Judg. 21.8-12).¹⁸ Still lacking enough women to satisfy all the men of Benjamin, the Israelite elders give permission to the Benjaminites to kidnap virgin girls dancing in a yearly festival at Shiloh. Though these women are likely members of

Chul Paul Kim (eds.), *Reading Gender in Judges: An Intertextual Approach* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2023), p. 31; and Brandon M. Hurlbert, 'Cut & Splice: Reading Judges 19 Cinematically', *BibInt* 30 (2022), pp. 143.

Note that in Judg. 19.30 the 'thing' referred to when the dismembered body parts are sent out to muster all of Israel remains ambiguous. The Levite must relate the events to the Israelites, suggesting the 'thing' to which they respond initially is the dismemberment alone, not the lack of hospitality and rape/death of the *pīlegeš*.

15. As I discuss in Chapter 4, Gibeah is a city in Benjamin, so by refusing to muster for battle with the rest of Israel, the Benjaminites choose their intratribal ties over their intertribal ties.

16. This trap closely resembles Israel's battle strategy against the city of Ai in Josh. 8. In both cases, the Israelites initially are defeated in battle. After God promises to deliver their enemies into the hands of the Israelites (Josh. 8.1; Judg. 20.28), they plan an ambush. Both ambushes involve using a small force to draw their enemies away from the city, at which point another force takes control of the city and destroys it by fire. John Gray suggests that these similarities indicate the hand of a redactor who adapted this and other earlier stories into his version of Judges. See John Gray, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1967), p. 188.

17. In Chapter 3 I discuss the marriage practices of ancient Israelites, specifically their preference for endogamy, or marriage inside the group. Because of this preference, the Benjaminite remnant does not have the option to marry non-Israelites.

18. The killing of all other people in the city ensures that no fathers/brothers protest the marriage of their virgin daughters/sisters to the Benjaminites.

the tribes of Israel, since they are being stolen and not given freely by their fathers, no oath has been violated (Judg. 21.19-23).¹⁹ After providing wives for the Benjaminite remnant, all the Israelites, including those from Benjamin, go home to their own territory and return to their daily lives, which had been interrupted by the civil war (Judg. 21.24).

Judges 19–21 as a Unit

Scholars typically refer to chs. 17–18 and 19–21 as the ‘appendices’ to Judges. This designation reflects the different nature of these chapters compared to the main body of the text (Judg. 3.12–16.31), structured by a continuous cycle of apostasy, oppression, deliverance, and a return to YHWH.²⁰ In addition, the main body centers around the figures of indi-

19. See my discussion of the virgins’ affiliation with Israel in Chapter 5.

20. For example, see Martin Noth, ‘The Background of Judges 17–18’, in Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter J. Harrelson (eds.), *Israel’s Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* (New York: Harper, 1962), pp. 68–85; Burney, *The Book of Judges*, p. xxxvii; Gray, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth*, pp. 152–58; J. Alberto Soggin, *When the Judges Ruled* (London: Lutterworth, 1965), p. 64; Soggin, *Judges*, pp. 4–5; Karl Budde, *Die Bücher Richter und Samuel: ihre Quellen und ihr Aufbau* (Giessen, Germany: J. Ricker, 1890), pp. xii–xv; George Foot Moore, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1895; repr. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958), pp. xxix, 403–404; Andrew D.H. Mayes, *Judges* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), pp. 13–18; and Boling, *Judges*, pp. 30–38. Isabelle Hamley suggests that labeling these chapters as appendices is dismissive, assigning these pericopes less value than the main body of Judges. While that is certainly possible, the act of categorizing these chapters as appendices does not automatically undervalue them. See Isabelle Hamley, ‘What’s Wrong with “Playing the Harlot”? The Meaning of זֶנֶה in Judges 19:2’, *TynBul* 66 (2015), pp. 41–42, 49; and Isabelle Hamley, ‘“(Dis)remembered and Unaccounted For”: פִּילַגֵּשׁ in the Hebrew Bible’, *JSOT* 42 (2018), p. 426.

In contrast, Timo Veijola argues that these chapters are an integral part of the main body of Judges and naturally bring the cycle of apostasy, oppression, and deliverance to a close. Veijola attributes Judg. 17–21, along with the main body of Judges, to DtrH, the earliest exilic redactor according to the Smend school, as I discuss in n. 42. See Timo Veijola, *Das Königtum in der Beurteilung der deuteronomistischen Historiographie: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1977), pp. 27–29. Similarly, Marc Brettler argues that Judg. 16 offers no conclusion formula, and thus cannot be viewed as the ending of the book. He also notes the ways chs. 17–21 are connected to the main body of the text, such as the comment about eleven hundred pieces of silver in 17.2. Since this is an unusual number in the Hebrew Bible, Brettler suggests this mimics the money given to Delilah by the Philistines in Judg. 16.5. See Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Book of Judges* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 80–81, 109–10. Marvin Sweeney notes that the theme of intermarriage ties Judg. 3.7–16.31 and Judg. 17–21. See Marvin A. Sweeney, ‘David Polemics in the Book of Judges’, *VT* 47 (1997), pp. 523–25.

Other scholars agree with this argument that Judg. 17–21 illustrates a logical progression from the main body. See, for example, J. Clinton McCann, *Judges* (IBC, 7;

vidual judges, charismatic leaders chosen by YHWH to deliver the Israelites from the hands of their various oppressors. The final five chapters instead focus on tales concerning two tribes, the Danites (chs. 17–18) and the Benjaminites (chs. 19–21), with a Levite character also prominent in each pericope. These two stories primarily contain anonymous characters, as compared to the named judges found in the main text, such as Deborah (chs. 4–5) and Samson (chs. 13–16). Judges 17–18 tells the story of Micah, but all the other characters—his mother, the Levite he installs as his household priest, and the Danites—remain unnamed. Likewise, the characters in chs. 19–21 are almost all anonymous.²¹ Another unique element in Judges

Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1989), pp. 10–11. Lillian Klein suggests that while multiple redactors edited Judges, the final form is a coherent whole organized through narrative form: exposition, main narrative, and resolution. See Lillian R. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), p. 11. David Beldman reads these chapters as the ending of Judges through which one can make sense of the entire book, suggesting that chs. 17–21 are an example of analepsis, i.e. flashback or retrospection, as these final chapters are set early in the time period of the Judges. See David J.H. Beldman, *The Completion of Judges: Strategies for Ending in Judges 17–21* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017), pp. 68–71. Likewise, Cheryl Exum, Tammi Schneider, Robert Polzin, Barry Webb, and Robert H. O’Connell examine the whole book as a unified literary document. See J. Cheryl Exum, ‘The Centre Cannot Hold: Thematic and Textual Instabilities in Judges’, *CBQ* 52 (1990), pp. 410–31; Schneider, *Judges*, p. xiii; Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History, Part One* (New York: Seabury, 1980); Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reader* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987); and Robert H. O’Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges* (Leiden: Brill, 1996). While Serge Frolov is highly critical of interpreting Judges as one discrete book, he acknowledges that literary criticism has the best claim to this argument. See Serge Frolov, ‘Rethinking Judges’, *CBQ* 71 (2009), p. 27; and Serge Frolov, *Judges* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), pp. 25–29.

21. The only named character in these final three chapters is the priest Phinehas, grandson of Aaron (20.28). Scholars have noted, however, that his name here does nothing more than serve the purpose of placing this story in the third generation after the Exodus. As George Foot Moore indicates, the chronological placement for these stories would thus have been at the beginning of the book of Judges because by the end of the period of the judges, more than two generations have passed since Aaron. See Yairah Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (trans. Jonathan Chipman; Leiden: Brill, 1999), p. 348 n. 41; and Moore, *Judges*, p. 433. While some scholars use the chronological misplacement to argue for their later addition to the main text of Judges, we must also ask whether the author/editor(s) of Judges may have had other reasons for placing the stories at the end of the text. Beldman, for example, suggests the author/editor deliberately placed these early stories at the end of Judges to connect the ending of the story to the beginning (Judg. 2.10). See Beldman, *The Completion of Judges*, pp. 129–31. This question of the placement of these chapters is especially pertinent when we consider the inclusion of the monarchic refrain by the editor(s), as discussed below.

17–21 is the so-called monarchic refrain (17.6; 18.1; 19.1; 21.25), which will be discussed more fully below.²²

Andrew D.H. Mayes argues that ch. 19 is originally an independent story, ending with the notice now found in 21.25, to which chs. 20–21 are later added. This chapter, along with Judges 17–18, serves as the original ending to the book. Judges 19 is a local story akin to the rest of the stories of Judges, unlike chs. 20–21, which expands to national proportions. The monarchic refrain, indicating the need for the centralized leadership of a king because of the lawlessness of the premonarchic Israelite society, functions better with Judges 19. In this local story, the ending remains wholly negative, though unresolved, with the Israelites noting, ‘Nothing has been done or has been seen like this from the time the Israelites came up from the land of Egypt until today. Put your minds to it; take council and speak’ (19.30). If Mayes is correct and 21.25 (‘In those days, when there was no king in Israel, every man did what was right in his own eyes’) directly followed the Israelites’ comment, the book of Judges ended entirely in chaos.²³

Other scholars have noted a possible compositional separation between ch. 19 and chs. 20–21, such as Sara Milstein, who argues the opposite of Mayes. Looking at the Saul complex in 1 Samuel 1 and 11, Milstein suggests that an early form of the Benjaminite War unit (20.14–48; 21.14–25) is included at the beginning of the complex. This initial version, which includes the birth narrative of Saul in 1 Samuel 1 (later transformed into Samuel’s birth narrative) is essentially pro-Saul. Later, Judg. 19.1–20.13 is added to transform the complex to an *anti*-Saul account by implicating Gibeah as the impetus for the civil war.²⁴

Despite these arguments for the original separation of various sections of Judges 19–21, I suggest that the final form of these chapters should be understood as a discrete, cohesive unit. Yet, as we will see, these chapters indicate the hands of at least two separate authors/editors, if not more. In

22. For a recent overview of the editorial layers to both these chapters and the book of Judges overall, see, for example, Cynthia Edenburg, *Dismembering the Whole: Composition and Purpose of Judges 19–21* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), pp. 9–77; and Deryn Guest, *YHWH and Israel in the Book of Judges: An Object-Relations Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 64–88.

23. Andrew D.H. Mayes, ‘Deuteronomistic Royal Ideology in Judges 17–21’, *BibInt* 9 (2001), pp. 254–55. See also Hans-Winfried Jüngling, *Richter 19: Ein Plädoyer für das Königtum* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), pp. 244–84; and Sarah Schulz, *Die Anhänge zum Richterbuch: Eine kompositionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung von Ri 17–21* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016), pp. 48–52.

24. See Sara J. Milstein, *Tracking the Master Scribe: Revision through Introduction in Biblical and Mesopotamian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 174–206. Milstein clarifies some of the more elusive anti-Saulide details in Sara J. Milstein, ‘Saul the Levite and his Concubine: The “Allusive” Quality of Judges 19’, *VT* 66 (2016), pp. 95–116.