The Body

LIVED, CULTURED, ADORNED



Essays on Dress and the Body
in the Bible and Ancient Near East
in Honor of

NILI S. FOX

edited by
Kristine Henriksen Garroway
Christine Elizabeth Palmer
Angela Roskop Erisman

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Nili S. Fox. Courtesy of *The Cincinnati Enquirer*/Jeff Swinger

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Hebrew Union College Press

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Foreword

Joan Pines

I am pleased to participate in this meaningful *Festschrift* in honor of Nili S. Fox by writing this foreword. As I prepared to write, I reflected on my journey that led me to know Nili, witness her commitment to the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), and understand her impact on her students since she joined the faculty of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC–JIR).

My path to the SGS and Nili began in 2002 when I spoke with HUC-JIR president, David Ellenson about my past involvement in the Reform Jewish movement and my desire to do more nationally. He suggested joining the HUC-JIR Central Region Board of Overseers. Acting on his advice turned out to be a transformative decision in my life. At that time, I had a basic knowledge of HUC-JIR's mission to teach rabbis, cantors, educators, nonprofit workers, and scholars. As I became involved, I discovered more about the vibrant learning community, the impressive world-class faculty, and the passionate students on the Cincinnati campus.

My interest in the SGS, which is dedicated to educating scholars of all faiths, grew. I learned that this remarkable program attracts PhD candidates of many faiths from all over the world. They study with an outstanding faculty, attend classes with rabbinical students, learn about the Jewish roots of Christianity and the influence of Judaism on other religions, and deepen their religious commitments and knowledge.

In 2015, my family and I decided it was the right time to make a gift to reflect my commitment and passion to the mission

of HUC-JIR. I sought guidance from the dean of the Cincinnati campus at the time, Jonathan Cohen. He suggested that I concentrate on the SGS due to my interest in interfaith relationships and higher education. This recommendation struck a chord with me because I know education is more than a means of escaping dire social conditions. It enriches the spirit and opens our eyes to all the possibilities of life. It also offers us opportunities to join others in healing our world so that all humankind may receive the benefits of what life has to offer.

As I continued in this direction, I spent time with Nili, who was then the director of the SGS, and she won me over! Nili impressed me with her warmth, graciousness, commitment, and knowledge. She shared the pleasure and joy she felt teaching and mentoring her students and the happiness she experienced on that exciting day when they achieved their goal of becoming PhDs. I realized how fortunate the students were to have Nili as their teacher, mentor, and cheerleader. All that I discovered during this gift planning process made a positive and profound impression on me. The decision was thus made to devote our financial support and efforts to the SGS, which eventually became the Pines School of Graduate Studies (PSGS).

As I became more involved with the PSGS, I enjoyed the opportunity to interact with the students. I attended classes, panel discussions, and social events, and I witnessed their growth as they progressed through their years of study. I realized that these students were undeniably inspired and motivated by Nili's concentrated attention and dedication to their achievement. As is evident in the collection of essays in this publication, Nili has had a lasting impact on the alumni who benefited from the exceptional education, resources, and mentorship she provided.

As I thought more about the content of this foreword, I focused on the passion, devotion, and love Nili poured into her work and provided her students. I talked about this with my friend and rabbi, Harold Kudan. He does not know Nili, but, as I described her commitment to educating, mentoring, and guiding the PSGS students, he said that there is a Hebrew word he could easily apply to Nili—*ḥesed*. I had not thought of this, but, as I engaged with

the idea, I realized how this one word is so emblematic of Nili. In its broadest sense, *ḥesed* can be understood as love, loving-kindness, and fidelity. It is seen as the most consistent, all-embracing act of faith that implies the giving of one's self to help another without regard to compensation. In a sense, at Judaism's core is the significance of developing human beings whose principal trait is *ḥesed*. Nili is a living model of *ḥesed.*

I am grateful for the opportunity to write the opening portion of this book, and I am thankful to Nili for all she has done for the PSGS and its students. I hope you enjoy this *Festschrift* in honor of my dear friend, Nili S. Fox.

Joan Pines *is immediate past chair of the HUC-JIR Central Region Board of Advisors, and emeritus member of the National Board of Governors. The Joan and Phillip Pines School of Graduate Studies (PSGS) at HUC-JIR was named with a transformational gift from the Phillip and Joan Pines Charitable Foundation in November 2015. Joan remains an active member of the HUC-JIR community by maintaining strong relationships with PSGS students, administration, and faculty.*

Abbreviations

AHw	*Akkadisches Handwörterbuch.* Wolfram von Soden. 3 vols. Wiesbaden, 1965–1981
ANEP	*The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament.* 2nd ed. Edited by James B. Pritchard. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament.* Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969
AuOrS	*Aula orientalis. Supplementa*
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.* Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–2006
CAL	*Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*, http://cal.huc.edu
CANE	*Civilizations of the Ancient Near East.* Edited by Jack M. Sasson. 4 vols. New York, 1995. Repr. in 2 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006
CIS	*Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum.* Paris, 1881–
COS	*The Context of Scripture.* Edited by William W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2002
DCH	*Dictionary of Classical Hebrew.* Edited by David J. A. Clines. 9 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 1993–2004
DLE	*Dictionary of Late Egyptian.* Edited by Leonard H. Lesko and Barbara S. Lesko. 4 vols. Berkeley: B.C. Scribe, 1982–1989

DNWSI	*Dictionary of North-West Semitic Inscriptions.* Jacob Hoftijzer and Karen Jongeling. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1995
DUL²	*A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*. Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín. Translated by Wilfred G. E. Watson. 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill, 2015
DULAT	*A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*. Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín. Translated by Wilfred G. E. Watson. Leiden: Brill, 2003
EncJud	*Encyclopedia Judaica*. Edited by Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum. 2nd ed. 22 vols. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007
ePSD	*The Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2006. http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/
ER	*Encyclopedia of Religion*. Edited by Lindsay Jones. 2nd ed. 15 vols. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005
ETCSL	*Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature*, https://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramiac Lexicon of the Old Testament.* Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999
Jastrow	Marcus Jastrow. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*. 2 vols. London: Luzac, 1903
KAI	*Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*. Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig. 2nd ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966–1969
KBo	*Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi*. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1916–1923; Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1954–

KTU	*Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit*. Edited by Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995
RIMA	*Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods*
RINAP	*Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period*
RlA	*Reallexikon der Assyriologie*. Edited by Erich Ebeling et al. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1928–
SAAB	*State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*
TAD	*Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*. Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1986–1989
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by John T. Willis et al. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006
WÄS	*Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*. Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow. 5 vols. Leipzig: Hinrichs; Berlin: Akademie, 1926–1931. Repr., 1963

Contributors

Sarah Dorsey Bollinger is Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Evangelical Theological Seminary in Myerstown, Pennsylvania. She also serves as curator of the David A. Dorsey Museum of Biblical Archaeology and as a faculty mentor for Sioux Falls Seminary/Kairos University.

Hélène Dallaire is Earl S. Kalland Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Denver Seminary. She has authored several books, including *Joshua* in the Expositor's Bible Commentary (Zondervan, 2017) and *The Syntax of Volitives in Biblical Hebrew and Amarna Canaanite Prose* (Eisenbrauns, 2014) and is the coeditor of *"Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?": A Grammatical Tribute to Professor Stephen A. Kaufman* (Eisenbrauns, 2017).

Jeffrey Duerler is an online Adjunct Instructor of Hebrew Bible at Alliance Theological Seminary in metropolitan New York, and he serves as Senior Pastor of LifeSpring Community Christian Church near Cincinnati, Ohio. He has devoted himself to bringing the fruit of scholarly study of Scripture to local faith-based communities.

Nancy L. Erickson is Executive Editor of Biblical Languages, Textbooks, and Reference Tools at Zondervan Academic. She is coeditor of *Windows to the Ancient World of the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honor of Samuel Greengus* (Eisenbrauns, 2014) and coauthor of *Basics of Akkadian* (forthcoming).

Angela Roskop Erisman is Regional Director and Associate Faculty at the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research. She is the author of *The Wilderness Itineraries: Genre, Geography, and the Growth of Torah* (Eisenbrauns, 2011), which won the Manfred Lautenschläger Award for Theological Promise, as well as *The Wilderness Narrative: Religion, Politics, and Biblical Interpretation* and *Numbers* in the New

Cambridge Bible Commentary series (both Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

Kristine Henriksen Garroway is Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible at the Los Angeles campus of HUC-JIR. She has published books and articles on children in the ancient world including *Children in the Ancient Near Eastern Household* (Eisenbrauns, 2014), *Growing Up in Ancient Israel: Children in Material Culture and Biblical Texts* (SBL, 2018), and coedited with John W. Martens, *Children and Methods: Listening To and Learning From Children in the Biblical World* (Brill, 2020).

Kyle R. Greenwood is Administrative Director of the Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership at Development Associates International. He is Associate Faculty of Old Testament at Denver Seminary and Adjunct Associate Professor of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary.

David Ilan is the Director of the Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology at HUC-JIR in Jerusalem, codirector of the Tel Dan expedition, and editor of the journal *NGSBA Archaeology*.

Jordan W. Jones is Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies at Regent University. He is the author of *She Opens Her Hand to the Poor: Gestures and Social Values in Proverbs* (Gorgias, 2019).

Jason Kalman is Professor of Classical Hebrew Literature and Interpretation at HUC-JIR, Cincinnati and a research fellow in the Department of Old and New Testament Studies, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of the Free State, South Africa. Most recently he is the author of *The Book of Job in Jewish Life and Thought* (HUC Press, 2021).

Michael C. Lyons serves as an associate pastor in Cincinnati, Ohio, and teaches as an adjunct professor at HUC-JIR, the University of Cincinnati, and Columbia International University. Michael is also a fellow in the St. Basil Fellowship for the Center for Pastor Theologians.

Benjamin J. Noonan is Associate Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Columbia Biblical Seminary of Columbia International University. He is the author of *Advances in the Study of Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic: New Insights for Reading the Old Testament* (Zondervan Academic, 2020) and *Non-Semitic Loanwords in the Hebrew*

Bible: A Lexicon of Language Contact (Eisenbrauns, 2019) as well as the coeditor of *"Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?": A Grammatical Tribute to Professor Stephen A. Kaufman* (Eisenbrauns, 2017).

Carl Pace is the Senior Pastor at Zion United Church of Christ in North Canton, Ohio. Carl has taught Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern studies at various institutions in Ohio, including Ohio State University, Ohio Wesleyan, Walsh University, Malone University, and Grace College and Seminary. He now enjoys giving back to the faith community and beyond by sharing the quality education he received under HUC-JIR faculty like Nili Fox.

Christine Elizabeth Palmer is adjunct faculty at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, where she teaches Hebrew Bible and leads archaeological study trips to Israel and Jordan. Her work on dress was recently published alongside Nili Fox's in *Fashioned Selves: Dress and Identity in Antiquity* (Oxbow, 2019). She is currently authoring a commentary on Leviticus (Crossway, forthcoming).

Guy Ridge has taught courses on ancient religion, history, and languages at Xavier University, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, and HUC-JIR.

Kenneth C. Way is Professor of Old Testament and Semitics at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University. He is the author of *Donkeys in the Biblical World: Ceremony and Symbol* (Eisenbrauns, 2011), *Judges and Ruth* in the Teach the Text Commentary Series (Baker, 2016), and *For Us, but Not to Us: Essays on Creation, Covenant, and Context in Honor of John H. Walton* (Pickwick, 2020).

Introduction

The Body as It Is Lived, Cultured, and Adorned

Kristine Henriksen Garroway, Christine Elizabeth Palmer, and Angela Roskop Erisman

Dressing and adorning the body is a prominent motif woven within the writings of the Hebrew Bible. The body appears in the earliest consciousness of relationship with God and community (Gen 3:7, 21), both naked and covered, intimating that dress is more than a functional necessity; it is an act invested with social and theological meaning. Throughout the variety of literary genres in the Bible, dress marks ethnicity, signals social status, and constructs and defines gender identities. Actions performed upon dress can be legally binding: they can effect marriage and divorce, inheritance and disinheritance, as well as ordination to and abdication of office.

Recent years have seen burgeoning interest in the dressed body within the social sciences as affording a unique angle from which to explore sociocultural phenomena. Dress and embodiment studies in the Hebrew Bible now join this fast-flowing current in recognition of their ability to communicate meaningfully about religious beliefs and practices. In their pioneering article, which defines dress theory, Joanne B. Eicher and Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins have proposed an all-encompassing approach to dress that goes beyond textiles and footwear to include ornamentation and

body modifications such as cosmetics, hairdressing, depilation, body piercing, tattooing, and even scented breath. They propose that dress be defined as "an assemblage of body modifications and/or supplements displayed by a person in communicating with other human beings."[1] This definition recognizes socially constructed meanings in how the body is presented in the multiplicity of relationships it inhabits: kinship, ritual, economic, and political. The essays in this volume explore these relationships as they are brought to bear upon the biblical text.

The clothed and adorned body has been at the forefront of Professor Nili S. Fox's scholarship for the past decade, making Nili—as she asks her students to call her—a leader in the field. In her hallmark approach, she draws on theoretical models from anthropology and archaeology, and she locates the text within its native cultural environment in conversation with ancient Near Eastern literary and iconographic sources. Her interdisciplinary method illuminates the world of the Bible by generating new questions and probing new perspectives on the practice of religion and the construction of identity in the ancient world. What follows is an overview of her influential work on the topic of the body dressed and adorned.

Dress is more than a material object. It is a means to understand how society constructs and performs identity, both individual and collective. Nili looks at how dress fashions identity in "Biblical Sanctification of Dress: Tassels on Garments."[2] A garment's hem is a visible extension of the self and, as such, may serve as one's proxy in transactions considered legally binding, such as the formation and dissolution of the marriage bond. The biblical injunction to fashion tassels on the edges of one's garment appears to make use of an existing Israelite practice marking ethnicity.

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1 Joanne B. Eicher and Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins, "Definition and Classification of Dress: Implications for Analysis of Gender Roles," in *Dress and Gender: Making Meaning in Cultural Contexts*, ed. Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher (New York: St. Martin's, 1992), 15.

2 Nili S. Fox, "Biblical Sanctification of Dress: Tassels on Garments," in *Built by Wisdom, Established by Understanding: Essays on Biblical and Near Eastern Literature in Honor of Adele Berlin*, ed. Maxine L. Grossman (Bethesda: University of Maryland Press, 2013), 91–109.

Biblical law imbues this practice with religious meaning so that tassels become both a reminder to perform the commandments associated with religious identity, as well as a deterrent to straying from the covenant (Num 15:38–41). Covenant faithlessness in biblical thought is likened to harlotry. Affixing tassels to the very part of the garment where marriage covenants were enacted invests the sartorial symbol with meaning that calls to mind the marital bond of Israel's covenant for the wearer and the community alike.

In "Gender Transformation and Transgression: Contextualizing the Prohibition of Cross-Dressing in Deut 22:5," Nili takes on the sociological topic of gender and power relations from the perspective of dress.[3] Gendered garb prohibiting cross-dressing in the biblical text is unique in the ancient Near East. Boundaries communicated and enacted through dress speak not only to an ordered society, but also to the belief that the identity of the wearer is woven into dress. Fabrics worn close to the body are thought to retain the person's essence; the specific prohibition for a female not to wear gendered accoutrements that belonged to a male therefore demonstrates a lack of tolerance for the transference of male gender roles to females in a gender-dimorphic society.

Identities are negotiated not only through dress but also through modifications of the body. Nili surveys practices relating to slave markings in Egypt and Mesopotamia in "Marked for Servitude: Mesopotamia and the Bible."[4] From a reversible hair style as a single curled lock to an irreversible corporal marking such as branding and tattooing, inscribing the body materializes a servant's bond to the temple deity. Reading through the warp and weft of cultural practices shared among Israel and its neighbors, Nili elucidates the nature of slave markings in biblical law (Exod 21:5–6) and sheds new light on the practice.

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3 Nili S. Fox, "Gender Transformation and Transgression: Contextualizing the Prohibition of Cross-Dressing in Deut 22:5," in *Mishneh Todah: Studies in Deuteronomy and Its Cultural Environment in Honor of Jeffrey H. Tigay*, ed. Nili Sacher Fox, David A. Glatt-Gilad, and Michael J. Williams (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 49–71.

4 Nili S. Fox, "Marked for Servitude: Mesopotamia and the Bible," in *A Common Cultural Heritage: Studies on Mesopotamia and the Biblical World in Honor of Barry L. Eichler*, ed. Grant Frame et al. (University Park, MD: CDL, 2011), 267–78.

Tattoos are another way to permanently inscribe the skin, the largest canvas of the body that can be modified in communication with the world. Nili takes on the prohibition of body marking in Lev 19:28 in "Biblical Regulation of Tattooing in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Practices."[5] Contextualizing the law in its broader cultural and biblical milieu, she demonstrates how positive references to tattooing of the name or sign of YHWH are found in exilic texts where they function as a mark of divine protection. The Leviticus prohibition speaks to a priestly ideology of controlling the body to display faithful allegiance to YHWH by ensuring that body marking is limited exclusively to the worship of Israel's deity.

The internal canvas of human emotion and its embodied performance features as one of the earliest explorations of Nili's interest in the body. In "Clapping Hands as a Gesture of Anger and Anguish in Mesopotamia and in Israel," she proves that the lived reality of bodily practices is informed by culture and experienced differently across time and place.[6] The gesture of clapping depicted in the texts and visual art of the ancient Near East can represent different emotions depending on the social or ritual context. While clapping often carries a positive emotion, lexical study of biblical occurrences shows that different terms behind the gesture signal whether it expresses joy or anguish in its embodied performance. Although emotions may be universal, their expression is culturally shaped.

The material artifact of the body is explored in two articles on figurines, "The Striped Goddess from Gilat: Implications for the Chalcolithic Cult" and "Of Rattles and Rituals: The Anthropomorphic Rattle from the Nelson Glueck Collection at the Cincinnati Art Museum."[7] Two distinctive cult objects from different time

5 Nili S. Fox, "Biblical Regulation of Tattooing in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Practices," in *Fashioned Selves: Dress and Identity in Antiquity*, ed. Megan Cifarelli (Oxford: Oxbow, 2019), 89–104.

6 Nili S. Fox, "Clapping Hands as a Gesture of Anger and Anguish in Mesopotamia and in Israel," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 23 (1995): 49–60.

7 Nili S. Fox, "The Striped Goddess from Gilat: Implications for the Chalcolithic Cult," *Israel Exploration Journal* 45 (1995): 212–25 and Fox and Angela R. Roskop,

periods styled as female bodies hold clues to ritual performance. The body of the Gilat figurine is adorned with red stripes that suggest tattooing or body painting; the color red, associated with blood, is multivalent, symbolizing forces of both life and death. Could this goddess have presided over life-cycle ceremonies of birth, death, and rebirth? The unprovenanced anthropomorphic clay object from the Nelson Glueck collection at the Cincinnati Art Museum also appears to be a goddess in artistic continuity with Edomite material culture. Based on archaeological parallels, Nili and her (at the time student) coauthor Angela Roskop Erisman propose that the figurine is a rattle used in ritual contexts, as it is commonly observed that musical instruments depict female deities. The female body is the key to the object's interpretation: rattle-type instruments shaped like a goddess are played by women who imitate the goddess as part of cultic celebrations and funerary rites.

This present volume adds to the emerging discussion on dress and the body with original research by Nili's students. The essays pay tribute to her academic interests by presenting the multiple facets of the clothed and adorned body in the Hebrew Bible. They bear testimony to her interdisciplinary approach and her inspirational teaching. Blending methodologies from archaeology, anthropology, and biblical studies, the essays offer a fresh perspective on enduring texts through the lens of the body as it is lived, cultured, and adorned.

The Body Lived

Kenneth C. Way's chapter sees the body take center stage in the literary strategy of the book of Judges. The vivid physicality in narrative description draws attention to a reversal in the corporeal fortunes of Israel, from subjecting enemy bodies to slaughter and mutilation, to themselves suffering violence and symbolic national dissolution in a concubine's dismemberment. Ideological reflec-

"Of Rattles and Rituals: The Anthropomorphic Rattle from the Nelson Glueck Collection at the Cincinnati Art Museum," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 70–71 (2000): 5–26.

tions on relationships of power and ethnic identity are communicated through the rhetorical use of the bodies of self and other.

Jordan W. Jones probes power dynamics as fashioned and perpetuated through bodily comportment. Gesture is richly communicative in a society whose members have been acculturated into its language. The lived-in body is socialized into submission before superiors as expressed by the hand-on-mouth gesture pervasive in the ancient Near East. Written texts and visual programs modeling embodied deference act bidirectionally both to document idealized practice and to create it, demonstrating that social hierarchies are culturally produced and reproduced as they are performed in the body.

The phenomenology and societal repercussions of the body made vulnerable through starvation is the subject of Michael C. Lyons's research. Literary sources from Ramesside Egypt and the Bible prove that fragile bodies make for fragile societies. The body's lived experience incarnates a metaphor of conflict and upheaval that brings to the fore a ruler's ability to impose order and ameliorate distress. In such a context, the image of YHWH as nourisher and provider speaks meaningfully to the human experience.

Hélène Dallaire considers the corporeal expression of emotion in the biblical vignette of Joshua at the Valley of Achor. Emotions of anguish and lament are embodied in postures of abasement, vocalized in groans, and materialized in the tearing asunder of dress. The body's communication in the public display and enactment of grief is its own language, one that continues to resonate with contemporary relevance.

Jeffrey Duerler, taking a phenomenological approach, considers the body as the site through which the world is experienced and judged. He challenges a Western visual bias by demonstrating the significance of olfaction in ancient societies for discernment and social control. Ancient Near Eastern texts on the perception and experience of smell are further illuminated by ethnographic studies to conclude that an individual body can be present to other bodies with its own atmosphere.

The Body Cultured

The ideological construction and presentation of the ruling body is the subject of Kyle R. Greenwood's inquiry. Comparing the cultural production and public display of material images of kingship in two Assyrian pedestals, he brings to bear evidence from both royal annals and the material artifacts to recover the lost identity of the king depicted in the unnamed pedestal.

What if the body in society is at someone else's disposal? Guy Ridge looks at the practice of pledging the bodies of slaves as loan collateral in the Neo-Assyrian period. Extrapolating from the treatment of individual bodies to the implications for the body politic, he redefines our understanding of slavery beyond a purely economic phenomenon to a bodily being-in-the-world, inviting the reader to further reflect on the lived experience of pawned bodies throughout time.

Sarah Dorsey Bollinger focuses on a particular aspect of the body in identity formation: hair manipulation in the Nazirite vow. This body modification is effective to both produce and express a transformation of status because hair is a metonym for the self. Consecrated hair creates a visible and public identity across class and gender to grant the Nazirite a temporary ritual status equal to that of the high priest. A holy coiffure carries the clout of the bodily requirements of priestly ordination.

Whereas Nazirite hair manipulation expresses agency, hair depilation performed upon the Levites as a dedication rite may signal subservience and humiliation, as argued by Nancy L. Erickson. Hair removal and temporary denuding is a marking of the body attended by a collection of negative associations, including that of the marginalized individual and the foreigner. Reversible body modifications can impose abiding social and ritual hierarchies that become lived realities.

Bodies in the world of ancient Israel are not limited to human bodies but include those of material artifacts. David Ilan presents the aesthetics of the Lady of Gilat and asks how archaeological context aids in the interpretation of the figurine's embodied affect. A figure fashioned from the clay of the earth represents the cycles of the earth and tells a story through its materiality that

touches on shared human experience. Could this figure embody ritual passages that human bodies in society followed in enactment?

The Body Adorned

Dress and adornment have the power to elevate the body by their covering or debase it by their removal. On one end of the spectrum, Benjamin J. Noonan's essay tackles the debate on the nature of Joseph's garment, the כתנת הפסים. Through philological, iconographic, and literary avenues, he arrives at the conclusion that this tunic was a richly variegated garment signaling status and inheritance, and that Joseph's investiture was nothing less than the bestowal of a firstborn status. The materiality of adornment is performative and has far-reaching implications along social and kinship networks.

On the other end of the spectrum, Carl Pace reveals the inherent vulnerability of identity fashioned through dress. Dressing the body is not merely a display of identity but has agency in its creation and de-creation. When garments are seized and destroyed or retained and controlled in biblical texts, power is effectively exercised over the other because dress functions as a surrogate of the self.

Dress is the most visible aspect of a person's presentation to others, making it easily invested with meaning. Kristine Henriksen Garroway deftly leads us to consider the unseen household members who fabricate Joseph's garment and the invisible bonds of reciprocation in gift-giving culture. Dress materializes relationships and obligations as it is exchanged, as it also brings to light the intangibles of nurture, investment, and even the essence of the giver.

Christine Elizabeth Palmer writes on the ritual use of dress, exploring how the twelve signet seals mounted on the high priest's ceremonial garments are performative in covenant remembrance. The precious stones that represent the tribes evoke a continual embodied remembrance in the sanctuary through the person of the high priest. The priest's physical body acts as a memorial and

his sacral fabrics as the repository of the community's collective memory.

Finally, Jason Kalman uses the object of the sandal to trace the unfolding reinterpretation of a symbol in the literature of the Jewish community through time. The sale of Joseph by his brothers (Gen 37:28) is framed in later traditions as the exchange of his enslaved body for sandals of status. From the *Testament of Zebulon* to the Aramaic targumim, early rabbinic midrashim, and medieval liturgical poetry, the sandal is an apt metaphor for a sociohistorical commentary on how textual sources are updated and recontextualized to retain meaning in each successive generation.

It is our hope that this volume will contribute to the growing scholarship on dress and the body and, in so doing, honor our mentor, advisor, teacher, and friend.

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The Body Lived

Chapter 1

Consider Her: Body-Talk as a Literary Strategy in the Book of Judges

Kenneth C. Way

The composer of the book of Judges has much to say about bodies and their adornment.[1] Consider, for example, the detailed descriptions of ambidextrous Benjaminites (Judg 3:15–16, 21; 20:16), costly clothing (Judg 5:30; 8:26; 14:12–13, 19; 17:10), precious jewelry (Judg 8:24–26), unshorn warriors (Judg 5:2; 13:5; 16:22), and obscene gestures (Judg 16:25). YHWH's spirit uniquely "puts on" Gideon (Judg 6:34), and Gideon may implicitly dress with the אפוד (Judg 8:27). Samson's physique remarkably has no description, but his haircut — like his base behavior — may tragically identify him with the Philistines (Judg 16:17–20). Even YHWH's physical form is manufactured and manipulated at the shrines of Micah and the Danites (Judg 17:3–4; 18:30–31).

This study is offered as a tribute to my Doktormutter, Professor Nili S. Fox, who has permanently marked me in countless constructive ways through her wisdom and gentle approach to pedagogy and mentorship. Fittingly, I wrote this essay on body-talk during the season of my cancer (AML) treatment and recovery, when I was already preoccupied with corporal concerns and was contemplating the meaning of my own body alterations, including hair loss, tattoos (seriously, for radiation!), transplant of bone marrow stem cells, nerve damage, and chronic graft-versus-host disease with cosmetic challenges and dramatic changes to my skin, eyes, weight, and strength.

1 I use the term "composer" to refer to the Deuteronomist(s), redactor(s), editor(s), narrator(s), or poet(s) who purposefully produced the present form of the narrative that we call the book of Judges.

While enemies' bodies — to the exclusion of Israelite bodies — are mutilated, mocked, subjugated, and slain in the first half of the book (Judg 1:6–7, 17; 3:17, 21–22, 24, 29; 4:21–22; 5:26–27, 30; 7:25; 8:6, 15, 21), Israelite bodies are sacrificed, raped, altered, mocked, maimed, murdered, dismembered, and exterminated in the second half of the book (Judg 8:7–8, 16, 17; 9:5, 18, 24, 53–54; 11:30–31, 39; 12:5–6; 16:19, 21, 25, 27, 30–31; 19:24–29; 21:10–23). I suggest that the composer employs these copious corporal descriptions as a structuring device to communicate a theological point about Israel. References to the human body are selectively reported and arranged in the narrative to show the disturbing degradation and rampant corruption of Israel, which is increasingly identified with the surrounding nations. The motif of body-talk is a literary strategy that demonstrates the theme of Israel's "Canaanization" in the book of Judges.[2]

The bodies in Judges can be individuals or groups; sometimes an individual body may even represent a corporate entity (e.g., Samson as Israel), or a series of individual bodies can represent a single corpus (e.g., the total of twelve judges as Israel's tribal constitution).[3] In any case, the body serves as a choice medium for communication: it speaks; it is revelatory.[4] In Judg 1–8, the

2 The term "Canaanization" was coined by Daniel I. Block, *Judges, Ruth*, New American Commentary 6 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 58, 73, 75, 143–44, 250, 473, 583–86. It describes how Israel spiraled downward in their cycles of sin, oppression, and deliverance to the extent that they became indistinguishable from their surroundings. Block identifies the composer's "central thesis: Israel is in a sorry state of spiritual decline. With the abandonment of the covenant deity, YHWH, and the adoption of Canaanite cultic practices and theology came the absorption of prevailing moral and social values — in short, the Canaanization of Israelite society. The narrator's call is a prophetic call for renewal and recommitment to the covenant God; it is a reminder of the continuation of YHWH's gracious saving acts in history"; see Daniel I. Block, "The Period of the Judges: Religious Disintegration Under Tribal Rule," in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 52.

3 Kenneth C. Way, "The Meaning of the Minor Judges: Understanding the Bible's Shotest Stories," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 61, no. 2 (2018): 284.

4 Brian R. Doak, *Heroic Bodies in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 1, 12, 59, 66, 78, 94–95, 186. Also consider how humanity, as royal image, may function as a medium of divine revelation in Gen 1:26–27 (Doak, *Heroic Bodies*, 15). Of course, the idea that the human body can function as a means of divine revelation is familiar to Christian theologians through the doctrine of the incarnation.

composer employs *enemy* bodies, while in Judg 8–21, the composer displays *Israelite* bodies, all for the purpose of demonstrating a downward spiraling trajectory in Israel's religious life. This trajectory is also evident in the way Israel conceives of YHWH's body in the latter half of the book.[5] YHWH's body is Canaanized by Israelites, and Israelites are Canaanized as they take the corporal places of their enemies.[6]

Enemy Bodies (Judges 1–8)

The prologue of the book of Judges (1:1–3:6) opens with a gruesome description of corporal mutilation. After the tribes of Judah and Simeon smite ten thousand (or ten contingents of) Canaanites and Perizzites at a place called Bezek, they capture the nameless leader ("the lord of Bezek") and treat his body the way he infamously treated previously defeated kings.[7] They cut off the large digits of his hands and feet (ויקצצו את־בהנות ידיו ורגליו), and he dies sometime thereafter in Jerusalem (Judg 1:6–7). Retributive acts of physical mutilation in the aftermath of battle are well attested both in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Judg 8:7; 16:21; 1 Sam 11:2;

5 That YHWH has bodily form(s) in the Hebrew Bible is the premise of a growing corpus of literature. See, e.g., Stephen L. Herring and Garth Gilmour, "The Image of God in Bible and Archaeology," in *Between Israelite Religion and Old Testament Theology: Essays on Archaeology, History, and Hermeneutics*, ed. Robert D. Miller II (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 63–86; Mark S. Smith, "The Three Bodies of God in the Hebrew Bible," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 134, no. 3 (2015): 471–88; and Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

6 By Israel's Canaanization of YHWH's body, I am referring to idolatry — i.e., Israel's tendency to conceive of and approach YHWH in the ways that other nations relate to their gods rather than in the ways YHWH reveals in the Torah through the covenant (see Judg 2:11–3:6).

7 In such military contexts (see Judg 3:29; 4:6, 10, 14; 5:8; 7:3; 8:10; 12:6; 15:11, 15–6; 20:2, 10, 15, 17, 21, 25, 34, 44–46; 21:10), it may be preferable to interpret high, rounded numbers — in multiples of one thousand — hyperbolically or to translate the term אלף as "contingent" or "company," which would consist of far fewer than a thousand men; see David M. Fouts, "Numbers, Large Numbers," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*, ed. Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 750–54; James K. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 153–59; and John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *IVP Bible Background Commentary on the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 215, 220, 250, 274, 275.

2 Sam 4:12; Ezek 23:25) and in ancient Near Eastern texts.[8] Also illustrated throughout the martial iconography of Egypt and Assyria, such acts were intended not merely to punish and incapacitate but especially to humiliate the enemy.[9]

Another important reference to violence against enemy bodies is implicit in Judg 1:17, where the tribes of Judah and Simeon apply the ban (חר״ם) to the city of Zephath (called "Hormah" as a result). This fits with the general theme of chapter 1, where Israel fights against external enemies. In chapter 2 the composer also reminds us that YHWH "would deliver them from the hand of their enemies" (הושׁיעם מיד איביהם, Judg 2:18).[10] Midway through the narrative, this theme of Israel's war with external enemies is revisited and then reversed in the Gideon cycle (in Judg 6:33–7:25 and 8:1–21, respectively; see below for my elaboration of the Gideon cycle). Then, at the very end of the book, in the second part of the epilogue (Judg 19:1–21:25), the theme of chapter 1 (Israel's battle with external enemies) is mirrored so that Israel's military fight is against *internal* enemies (i.e., civil war). The application of the ban (חר״ם in Judg 1:17; 21:11; cf. 20:48; 21:16) and the attention on corporate Israel (Judg 1:1–2:5; 20:1–21:25) are some of the noteworthy literary connections between the opening and closing sections of the book.[11]

In the body of the book of Judges (3:7–16:31), the most detailed and sustained amount of body-talk is undoubtedly displayed in the Ehud cycle (Judg 3:12–30) featuring the gruesome assassination of the enemy king Eglon, who is stationed at Jericho (presumably

8 See, e.g., "Kurkh Monolith," trans. K. Lawson Younger, Jr., *COS* 2.113A:262 and "Ninurta-Kudurrī-uṣur–Suḫu Annals #2," trans. K. Lawson Younger, Jr., *COS* 2.115B:280.

9 For humiliation, see Tracy M. Lemos, "Shame and Mutilation of Enemies in the Hebrew Bible," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 125 (2006): 225–41. For martial iconography, see illustrations and discussion in *ANEP*, pls. 340, 348 and Daniel I. Block, "Judges," in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament*, ed. John H. Walton, 5 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 2:108, 162–63.

10 All biblical translations are by the author, unless indicated otherwise.

11 For additional literary connections, see David J. H. Beldman, *The Completion of Judges: Strategies of Ending in Judges 17–21*, Siphrut 21 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017), 94–96 and Kenneth C. Way, *Judges and Ruth*, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 13–14.

the referent of "the city of palms" in Deut 34:3; Judg 1:16; 3:13; 2 Chr 28:15). The name Eglon (עגלון), meaning "Calf-man" or "Calfish/Calfy," need not be understood pejoratively as animal names are common in Semitic languages, but the composer may imply a double entendre, as the name can allude to the enemy king as a "calf readied for slaughter," especially when considered along with other possibly sacrificial allusions in the account (e.g., ויקרב את־המנחה, "he presented the tribute" in Judg 3:17 and חלב, "fat" in Judg 3:22).[12] With his double-mouthed dagger concealed on his *right* thigh (Judg 3:16), the ambidextrous Benjaminite Ehud approaches the Moabite king under the cover of compliant tribute-bearing (Judg 3:15, 17).[13] Although Eglon is often regarded as "very fat" (Judg 3:17, NRSV), the opposite meaning is likely intended here. The term בריא occurs fourteen times in the Hebrew Bible and never denotes obesity but instead refers to health, prosperity, or attractive appearance (see esp. Ps 73:4 and Dan 1:15; the Septuagint even renders the word as ἀστεῖος, "handsome" in Judg 3:17). The composer thus informs us that the oppressor Eglon is not an easy target but a "beefy," "imposing," or "strapping" man, which explains why he would have little need for guards (cf. the description of Moabite soldiers as שמן, "vigorous" in Judg 3:29) and heightens the dramatic impact of YHWH's deliverance through Ehud. Likewise, the reference

12 On the sacrificial allusion, see Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 39. On animal names, see additional discussion and examples in Jack M. Sasson, "Ethically Cultured Interpretations: The Case of Eglon's Murder (Judges 3)," in *Homeland and Exile: Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bustenay Oded*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 130, ed. Gershon Galil, Mark Geller, and Alan Millard (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 573–74 n. 9, 590; Jack M. Sasson, *Judges 1–12*. Anchor Yale Bible 6D (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 224, 249, 483–84 n. 3; Way, *Judges and Ruth*, 36; Kenneth C. Way, *Donkeys in the Biblical World: Ceremony and Symbol*, History, Archaeology, and Culture of the Levant 2 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 175.

13 Regarding Ehud as ambidextrous, the phrase typically translated "left-handed" (אטר יד־ימינו, Judg 3:15) is rendered more precisely as "bound right hand/arm." It does not describe a predisposition from birth but a skill acquired by deliberately restricting use of the right hand in order to train the left hand for tactical military purposes (cf. Judg 20:16; 1 Chr 12:2). As a specially trained assassin, Ehud is therefore the only judge who is demonstrably *not* left-handed. Incidentally, Jael is described with a right-handed disposition (Judg 5:26), unless the poet is simply using stock figures for the parallelism.

to the "fat" (חלב) closing over the blade (Judg 3:22) should be understood as the internal fat that protects the abdominal organs (see esp. 2 Sam 1:22 and Isa 34:6–7). When Ehud returns with his "secret/divine word" for the king's ears only, he thrusts his dagger *through* — not just into — the king's gut, strategically using his left hand (Judg 3:20–21).[14] The term often rendered "belly" (בטן) refers to the lower abdomen, and it is possible that Ehud's calculated thrust was angled upward to sever the aorta and result in "almost immediate incapacitation."[15]

The final clause in verse 22 (ויצא הפרשׁדנה), which is omitted by the Septuagint (Rahlf's A), is extremely difficult to interpret because the word הפרשׁדנה occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible, and its meaning remains uncertain (although I suspect it is an anatomical term with directional *heh*). While the masculine singular subject of the verb ויצא has been creatively supplied as "dung/refuse/entrails," or even as Ehud — exiting the murder scene toward both *hapax legomena* — הפרשׁדן and המסדרון (Judg 3:23; presumably an architectural term with directional *heh*)[16] — it is more likely that the masculine subject is the blade (להב, not the fs חרב), that would have exited Eglon's back.[17] This opens a new possibility that Ehud's calculated thrust could sever Eglon's spine, also bringing immediate incapacitation.

After Ehud locks the doors and walks straight out of the palace, the Moabite servants infamously think their king is relieving himself (Judg 3:24). The expression "he is covering his feet/legs" (מסיך הוא את־רגליו) is clearly a euphemism for defecation, whereby one's garments could provide privacy by concealing what happens in the seated position (cf. 1 Sam 24:3). The composer probably employs fecal body-talk in this story to elicit disgust

14 For the same collocation (ב+תקע), see Judg 4:21; 16:14; Isa 22:23, 25.

15 Lawson G. Stone, "Eglon's Belly and Ehud's Blade: A Reconsideration," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128 (2009): 659.

16 Baruch Halpern, *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 40, 44, 56–58, 69 n. 3.

17 See the NLT footnote on Judg 3:22 ("Or *and it came out behind*").

toward Israel's enemies.[18] It is important to point out that this scenario is humorously *imagined* by the courtiers and is not in reality what *is* happening.[19] There is no extrabiblical evidence to demonstrate that latrines were located in/under throne rooms before Hellenistic times, and it is more likely that the imagined scenario would involve the use of a chamber pot.[20] Nevertheless, it is prudent to resist the popular scholarly emphasis on scatological readings of this story, especially for verse 20 (על הכסא) and for the subject of the final clause in verse 22. Finally, with help from the Ephraimites, about ten thousand Moabite bodies, "all vigorous and valiant men" (כל־שמן וכל־איש חיל), are "subdued" (כנ״ע) under Israel's "hand/power" (יד) at the fords of the Jordan (Judg 3:29–30).[21]

The prose account of Deborah and Barak (Judg 4:1–24) opens with YHWH selling the Israelites into the "hand/power" (יד) of Jabin who reigns at Hazor, and it closes with God subduing — or, by paronomasia, "Canaan-ing" (?) — Jabin, king of Canaan (ויכנע אלהים ביום ההוא את יבין מלך־כנען), while the "hand/power" (יד) of the Israelites presses hard against him until they cut him off (Judg 4:2, 23–24).[22] It is the woman's "hand/power" (יד, Judg 4:9, 21; 5:26), however, that delivers the fatal blow to the enemy's body

18 Thomas Staubli, "Feces: The Primary Disgust Elicitor in the Hebrew Bible and in the Ancient Near East," in *Sounding Sensory Profiles in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Annette Schellenberg and Thomas Krüger, Ancient Near East Monographs 25 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019), 119–43.

19 Sasson, "Ethically Cultured Interpretations," 584, 590; Sasson, *Judges 1–12*, 238, 239.

20 Sasson, "Ethically Cultured Interpretations," 584–86, 590; Sasson, *Judges 1–12*, 238–39. It has been suggested that kraters of the two-handled variety might have served as chamber pots in biblical times (David Ilan, personal communication).

21 The verb כנ״ע is used four times for Israel's foreign oppressors in Judges (3:30; 4:23; 8:28; 11:33), but, ironically, Israel is progressively "subdued" by itself in the second half of the book where, coincidentally, Israel is thematically Canaanized. The composer employs יד as a *Leitwort* in a number of key phrases in this cycle (Judg 3:15, 21, 28, 30), and the term is employed extensively and variously throughout the Judges narrative (ninety-two times total). On the use of יד in Judg 4, see J. Gordon Harris, Cheryl A. Brown, and Michael S. Moore, *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*. Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012) 176.

22 For further discussion on the appearance of the name "Jabin" in biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts, see Way, *Judges and Ruth*, 45.

when Jael drives the tent peg straight through Sisera's temple and into the ground beneath (ותתקע את־היתד ברקתו ותצנח בארץ, Judg 4:21). The phrases and scene in verses 21–22 echo the assassination of Eglon (Judg 3:21–25) and foreshadow the demise of Abimelech (Judg 9:52–55).[23] The poetic account of this story (Judg 5:1–31) adds that Jael "hammered Sisera, crushed his head, smashed and pierced his temple" (והלמה סיסרא מחקה ראשו ומחצה וחלפה רקתו, Judg 5:26). This ignominious description of Sisera's death is reminiscent of Egyptian depictions of the pharaoh smashing the heads of his enemies.[24] The victorious image of Jael standing over her vanquished foe (Judg 4:21; 5:26–27) is juxtaposed and contrasted with the anxious image of Sisera's mother in verses 28–30. The motif of a woman peering through her window is commonly associated with opulence, power, and security (see 2 Sam 6:16; 2 Kgs 9:30–32). But, ironically, the image is invoked here to show the imminent reversal of fortune for Sisera's mother.[25] She tells herself that her son's delay is due to finding and dividing the spoil of conquered women and dyed embroideries for adornment (Judg 5:29–30). Her crass term, "a womb or two" (רחם רחמתים), is likely a pejorative designation for women who are viewed as plunder.[26] This remark — surprisingly from a woman — implies that Canaanite military victories involved the routine raping of captive women as the means of commandeering vanquished bodies. The poem appropriately concludes in verse 31 with an imprecation on YHWH's "enemies" (אויבים) — like the Canaanites, Jabin, the city of Meroz, Sisera, and Sisera's mother — and a blessing on YHWH's "friends" (אהבים) — like the willing longhairs (בפרע פרעות בישׂראל, Judg 5:2), participating tribes, and individuals like

23 Doak, *Heroic Bodies*, 80–81, 84–85.

24 K. Lawson Younger, Jr., *Judges, Ruth*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), 203.

25 For additional discussion of this motif, see Susan Ackerman, *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen: Women in Judges and Biblical Israel* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 155–62. For an ivory example from Nimrud, see *ANEP*, pl. 131.

26 Similar vocabulary is employed in the ninth-century-BCE Mesha stele (lines 16–17), in which Moabites kill Israelite רחמת at Nebo; see Shmuel Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), 391, 393, 394, 409.

Deborah, Barak, and the ethnic foreigners Shamgar and Jael.[27]

The Gideon cycle (Judg 6:1–8:32) is the structural centerpiece of the book of Judges.[28] The first half (6:1–7:25) continues the theme of violence against enemy bodies, and the second half (8:1–32) takes a turn by introducing the theme of violence against Israelite bodies while continuing to describe violence against enemy bodies. Chapter 8 is thus a transitional piece in the book that portrays Gideon more negatively than the two preceding chapters.[29]

The Gideon cycle begins with YHWH giving Israel into Midian's strong, oppressive "hand/power" (יד, Judg 6:1–2; cf. 8:22; 9:17), but YHWH delivers by giving the enemy into Israel's/Gideon's "hand/power" (יד, Judg 6:36, 37; 7:2, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15; 8:3, 6, 7, 15). When the Midianites and their eastern allies encamp in the Jezreel Valley, God does something unusual with Gideon's body: "Now the spirit of YHWH wore Gideon" (ורוח יהוה לבשׁה את־גדעון, Judg 6:34). The verb here (לב״ש in *qal*) probably means not "to clothe" (typically expressed in *hiphil*) but "to put on" or "to possess."[30] YHWH's spirit is therefore not enveloping Gideon;

27 On the foreign ethnicity of Shamgar and Jael, see Way, *Judges and Ruth*, 43–44, 109. The term פרעות in Judg 5:2 most likely means "locks/hair" (cf. NRSV: "when locks are long in Israel") rather than "leaders" (cf. NLT, NKJV). The practice of soldiers leaving their hair unshorn during wartime may also be expressed in Ugaritic and may inform the portrayal of Samson as a long-haired Nazirite; see Doak, *Heroic Bodies*, 92; Mark S. Smith, *The Memoirs of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 24; Mark S. Smith and Wayne T. Pitard, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle. Volume 2: Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU/CAT 1.3–1.4*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 114 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 373, 648, 651, 694–95; cf. "The Blessing of Nisaba by Enki," trans. William W. Hallo, *COS* 1.163:532 n. 11; Num 6:5; Deut 32:42; Judg 13:5; 16:17; Amos 2:11.

28 For extensive literary analysis, with figures and tables, see Kenneth C. Way, "The Literary Structure of Judges Revisited: Judges as a Ring Composition," in *Windows to the Ancient World of the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honor of Samuel Greengus*, ed. Bill T. Arnold, Nancy L. Erickson, and John H. Walton (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 254–55; and Way, *Judges and Ruth*, 3–5, 58–59, 65, 72–73.

29 Chapter 8 recounts Gideon's moral/spiritual demise because it shows him to be a self-absorbed leader who fails to properly apprehend divine kingship. The previous themes of Gideon's doubt and fear are totally absent in this chapter, and the previous themes of his arrogance and desire to control God (see Judg 6:36–40; 7:18) are dominant in chapter 8.

30 Nahum M. Waldman, "The Imagery of Clothing, Covering, and Overpowering," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 19 (1989): 161–70. The same verbal form (לבשׁה, with spirit as the feminine subject) appears in 1 Chr 12:19; 2 Chr 24:20. See

rather, it is donning or dressing with Gideon — namely, wearing Gideon as an outfit.[31] God takes on Gideon's form/appearance in order to summon the northern tribes (Judg 6:35), perhaps because Gideon is unwilling or incapable of rallying the tribes by himself.[32] The spirit's action here appears to be in fulfillment of YHWH's promise to provide his presence for Gideon (see אהיה עמך, Judg 6:16; cf. 2:18).

The Midianites and their eastern allies are a massive body likened to locusts and the sand of the seashore (Judg 6:3, 5, 33; 7:12; 8:10), but the Israelites supernaturally function as "one man" (איש אחד in Judg 6:16) against the enemy horde that ends up "fallen" (נפלים in Judg 7:12; 8:10) as their numbers are reduced from one hundred thirty-five thousand to fifteen thousand.[33] The enemy bodies are killed and dismembered as two generals are beheaded (Judg 7:25), "palms" are counted (כף, Judg 8:6, 15), and two kings — called "Sacrifice" and "Statue/Image" — are captured and killed (Judg 8:12, 21) by Gideon, the "Cutter/Hacker."[34]

Judg 6:34 in LXX (ἐνδύω), NLT, and NRSV ("took possession of"); cf. Luke 24:49 (ἐνδύω).

31 What YHWH's spirit does with Gideon in Judg 6:34 is analogous to how players in *Fortnite: Battle Royale* may select skins to wear as they equip themselves before entering a match.

32 For further discussion about the spirit's activity in Judges, see Way, *Judges and Ruth*, 30.

33 The expression איש אחד refers not to the Midianites (as in NJPS, NLT, NRSV) but to the Israelites: "despite Gideon's lack of official authority the Israelites would fight in concert, unified behind his leadership" (Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 253).

34 For Gideon's names and titles, see Moshe Garsiel, "Homiletic Name-Derivations as a Literary Device in the Gideon Narrative: Judges VI–VIII," *Vetus Testamentum* 43 (1993): 305–6 and Way, *Judges and Ruth*, 61. The palms of slain foes were often removed and counted by the victors after battles in the ancient Near Eastern world. This practice is attested in Bronze Age archaeology, texts, and reliefs from Egypt; see *ANEP*, pls. 340, 348; Manfred Bietak, "The Archaeology of the 'Gold of Valour,'" *Egyptian Archaeology* 40 (2012): 42–43; Block, "Judges," 2:108, 162–63; Danielle Candelora, "Grisly Trophies: Severed Hands and the Egyptian Military Reward System," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 84, no. 3 (2021): 192–99; "The Tomb Biography of Ahmose of Nekheb," trans. James K. Hoffmeier, *COS* 2.1:5–7; and "The Memphis and Karnak Stelae of Amenhotep II," trans. James K. Hoffmeier, *COS* 2.3:20. And, for the two royal names (זבח וצלמנע), see Garsiel, "Homiletic Name-Derivations," 308 and Richard S. Hess, "Israelite Identity and Personal Names from the Book of Judges," *Hebrew Studies* 44 (2003): 32–35. The coupling of this pair of enemy

Therefore, Midian is "subdued" (כנ״ע) before the Israelites, and they never again raise their collective "head" (ראשׁ, Judg 8:28).[35]

In summary, the thematic focus of Judg 1–8 is on the violent subjugation of the bodies of Israel's enemies. Enemy fingers, palms, and toes are chopped. Enemy cities are banned (חר״ם). Enemy bellies are stabbed, and enemy kings are mocked, subdued, fallen, and killed. Enemy heads are pegged, smashed, and severed. Enemies rape the bodies of conquered women. And Israelite bodies are occasionally empowered or co-opted by YHWH's spirit to ensure deliverance when they continue to do the wrong thing in YHWH's eyes. In Judg 1–8, enemy bodies speak about Canaan(ites) and the outside(rs) — Israel's toxic surroundings. This is why the imprecation of the song of Deborah and Barak is so fitting: "So may all your enemies perish, YHWH!" (כן יאבדו כל־אויביך יהוה, Judg 5:31). At the start of the second half of the narrative, however, the composer indicates a thematic shift away from YHWH delivering them "from the hand of all their surrounding enemies" (מיד כל־איביהם מסביב) as the Israelites forget YHWH (Judg 8:34).

Israelite Bodies (Chapters 8–21)

The second half of the Gideon cycle (Judg 8:1–32) introduces the disturbing theme of Israelites torturing and slaughtering fellow Israelites, so that Israel becomes its own enemy as Israelites take on the roles that Canaanites (and other enemy peoples) have in

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kings (Judg 8:5–7, 10, 12, 15, 18, 21) with the pair of enemy generals (Judg 7:25; 8:3) reflects the composer's interest in doubling; see Robin Baker, "Double Trouble: Counting the Cost of Jephthah," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 137, no. 1 (2018): 33–34, 37 and Doak, *Heroic Bodies*, 63. For dual bodies and dual body parts see, e.g., Judg 1:6–7, where enemy appendages (arms, legs, and digits) are mentioned twice; Judg 3:8, 10, where the doubly wicked enemy king is mentioned four times; Judg 5:30 (raped, enemy women); Judg 7:25; 8:3 (two enemy generals and their heads); Judg 8:5–7, 10, 12, 15, 18, 21 (two enemy kings); Judg 14:3, 7, where Samson's eyes are mentioned twice; Judg 15:16 (heaps of enemy corpses); Judg 16:21, 28, where Samson's eyes are mentioned twice, as well as bronze fetters; Judg 17:6; 21:25, where Israel's eyes are mentioned twice; and Judg 19:27 (concubine's hands).

35 Interestingly, when ראשׁ is used for humans in Judges, it usually applies to Israel's enemies in chapters 1–9 (5:26, 30; 7:25; 8:28; 9:57) and to Canaanized Israelites in chapters 9–21 (9:53; 10:18; 11:8, 9, 11; 13:5; 16:13, 17, 19, 22).

the first half of the book. When Gideon the Cutter/Hacker returns with a newfound confidence after defeating the Midianites, he "threshes the flesh" of the men of Succoth with desert thorns and briers (ודשׁתי את־בשׂרכם את־קוצי המדבר ואת־הברקנים, Judg 8:7), and he kills the men of Penuel (Judg 8:7–9, 16–17) in what appears to be a tyrannical act of revenge against Israelite bodies who were less than supportive of his campaign.[36] Starting here, vengeful acts and civil wars seem to characterize the Israelites in the second half of the book.[37]

Gideon also collects copious spoil from his eastern enemies, including gold jewelry, royal garments, and camel ornaments (Judg 8:21, 24–26) that are used to fund the making of an ephod (אפוד, Judg 8:27), which he installs in his hometown (presumably near the YHWH altar) to consolidate power and to control access to divine revelation.[38] It is clear that the ephod is a scan-

36 Sasson, *Judges 1–12*, 359, 361, 511 n. 5 suggests that "threshing the flesh" refers to flailing or carding, while Younger, *Judges, Ruth*, 256 suggests that it refers to flogging or "flaying, threshing the skin, a terrible torture also attested later in use by the Assyrians. The victims die a gruesome death."

37 See Judg 8:7–9, 16–17; 9:5, 15, 20, 24, 49–50, 56–57; 12:1–6; 15:3, 7, 11; 16:28–30; 19:22–21:12; cf. Judg 1:7 where acts of revenge seem to characterize the Canaanites.

38 See further discussion on the ephod in Way, *Judges and Ruth*, 66, 73, 74, 76, 77. See also Victor A. Hurowitz, "What Goes In Is What Comes Out: Materials for Creating Cult Statues," in *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion*, ed. Gary Beckman and Theodore J. Lewis (Providence: Brown University, 2006), 20–21. On the gold jewelry, note that pieces with shapes of rings, crescents, and drips have been excavated from sites like Tell el-ʿAjjul (MB II), Beth Shemesh (LB II), Dan (MB–Iron I) and Megiddo (Iron I); see *ANEP*, pls. 74–75; Eran Arie et al., "A New Jewelry Hoard from Eleventh-Century BCE Megiddo," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 82, no. 2 (2019): 90–101; David Ilan, "The Crescent-Lunate Motif in the Jewelry of the Bronze and Iron Ages in the Ancient Near East," in *Proceedings of the 9th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East: June 9–13, 2014, University of Basel*, 3 vols., ed. Oskar Kaelin, Rolf Stucky, and Andrew Jamieson (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016), 1:137–50; Ornit Ilan, *Image and Artifact: Treasures of the Rockefeller Museum* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 2000), 34–39, 56–59. Because the phrase נזמי זהב (Judg 8:24) also occurs in the golden calf episode (Exod 32:2–3; cf. Judg 8:26), it may be understood as an intertextual allusion to apostasy. The association of rings with cultic paraphernalia (also attested in Gen 35:4) likely reflects aspects of the worshiper's relationship to deity; see Nili S. Fox, "Holy Piercing? The Connection between Earrings and Cult Images" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research, San Antonio, TX, November 18, 2004). Block summarizes Fox's paper in Block, "Judges," 2:165–66. If a sheqel is computed as 11.5 grams, then the total gold spoil in Judg 8:26 is about 43 lb./19

dalous blight on Gideon's record and that it occasioned all Israel's whoredom (ויזנו כל־ישראל אחריו שם, Judg 8:27).[39] What remains unclear is Israel's/Gideon's thinking about this sacred garment: Is the garment conceived as clothing for Gideon, functioning in the capacity of high priest? Or, is the garment conceived as clothing for an implied cult image of YHWH? Alternatively, perhaps Gideon intends to wear and/or manipulate YHWH's clothing. If the second or third scenario is correct, then the ephod demonstrates syncretistic assumptions about how YHWH mediates his will and presence, thereby illustrating ignorance of (or disregard for) the Decalogue (לא תעשה־לך פסל וכל־תמונה, Exod 20:4; cf. Deut 5:8).

The Abimelech cycle (Judg 8:33–9:57) recounts the tragic aftermath of the Gideon story. Abimelech (meaning, "my father is king") is ruthless like his late father, Gideon, but much worse. He is aptly described as an "anti-judge" because he oppresses and slaughters fellow Israelites and functions as an agent of injustice.[40] Abimelech's mother is Gideon's Canaanite/Shechemite concubine (Judg 8:31). This half-blood status sets him against his seventy brothers who are from Gideon's "legitimate" harem in Ophrah (see Judg 8:30).[41] The leaders of Shechem strengthen Abimelech's "hands" (ידים, Judg 9:24) by providing the financial capacity for Abimelech to hire reckless and "empty men" (אנשים ריקים, Judg 9:4) who help him to slaughter his seventy half-brothers with a sin-

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kg. As for camels, their neckbands (העגקות, Judg 8:26) are depicted among the items of tribute presented to Shalmaneser III on the Assyrian Black Obelisk from the ninth century BCE; see *ANEP*, pls. 351, 353, 355; registers A-3 and C-1.

39 The verb זנ״ה paints an extremely graphic depiction of Israel's covenant unfaithfulness to her divine husband, namely, Israel metaphorically sells the use of her body to another. In the second part of the prologue (Judg 2:17), the composer prepared his audience that spiritual prostitution was coming. In Judg 8:33 — introducing the Abimelech cycle — it is clear that such activity becomes the new normal for the second half of the book of Judges.

40 Abraham Malamat, *History of Biblical Israel: Major Problems and Minor Issues* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 168. The composer does not include Abimelech in the roster of twelve judges, even though his story is framed as the fifth cycle; see Way, *Judges and Ruth*, 4, 7, 81, 85.

41 Establishing kingship through the slaughter of seventy princes (see Judg 9:18, 24, 56) is a motif that also appears in the Jehu story (2 Kgs 10:6–7) and in the eighth-century-BCE Panamuwa inscription; see "The Panamuwa Inscription," trans. K. Lawson Younger, Jr., *COS* 2.37:158.

gle-stone weapon (אבן אחת is probably a mace in Judg 9:5, 18).[42] After Abimelech "rules" (שׂר״ר, not שׁפ״ט) over Israel for three years, God delivers Canaanized Israel from itself by inciting war between Abimelech and the city of Shechem (Judg 9:22–24, 56). Abimelech slaughters the Shechemites (Judg 9:43–45), burns the Canaanized temple (i.e., the temple of El, Lord of Covenant) that was jammed with Shechem's gentry (Judg 9:46–49), and then he attacks the Israelite city of Thebez without a stated reason (Judg 9:50).[43] From the roof of the Thebez tower, a single nameless woman hurls an upper millstone against Abimelech's "head" (ראשׁ), lethally crushing his "skull" (ותרץ את־גלגלתו), and Abimelech is finished off when he is stabbed by his armor bearer (Judg 9:51–54).[44]

This head-crushing incident forms a strong parallel with its literary counterpart in the Deborah/Barak account. In both stories, resolution comes through the heroic efforts of a woman independently killing the enemy by a blow to his head (ראשׁ) with

42 Seventy sheqels of silver to kill seventy half-siblings strikes me as a "dirty deed, done dirt cheap" (borrowing lyrics from hard rock band AC/DC). The adjective "empty" (ריקים) modifies "jars" (כדים) in Judg 7:16, but it modifies the word "people" (אנשׁים) in Judg 9:4; 11:3; 2 Chr 13:7. Gregory Mobley, *The Empty Men: The Heroic Tradition of Ancient Israel* (New York: Doubleday, 2005), 2, 36, 37 suggests that such men "lacked sturdy kinship attachments" or "a portion of the family estate," and that they "compensated by forming pseudofamilies under the patronage of warlords, trading their services for portions of martial harvests and brigandage." Brian R. Doak, "'Some Worthless and Reckless Fellows': Landlessness and Parasocial Leadership in Judges," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 11, no. 2 (2011): 21–22 translates it "landless" or "unemployed" and acknowledges that it can also refer to "moral emptiness," serving as a pejorative for "low-class" or "peasant." Sasson, *Judges 1–12*, 373, 379, 416, 421, 515 translates it "rootless." Perhaps the adjective refers pejoratively to "godless" men, in contrast with Gideon who was possessed by YHWH's spirit (Judg 6:34; cf. 2:18; 6:16).

43 "El, Lord of Covenant" is the full identification because Shechem's deity is called both Baal-Berith (8:33; 9:4) and El-Berith (9:46), indicating that El is the proper name and Baal is the epithet. I describe the temple as Canaanized because YHWH's covenant that was previously renewed at Shechem (Josh 24:1–28) is here replaced by another covenant associated with El, head of the Canaanite pantheon; see Way, *Judges and Ruth*, 82.

44 The upper millstone is a small handheld stone, known as the "rider," which is used to grind grain on the large lower stone, known as the "saddle quern." Typically made from basalt, an upper millstone weighs between four and nine pounds; see Denise D. Herr and Mary P. Boyd, "A Watermelon Named Abimelech," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 28, no. 1 (2002), 34–37, 62.

an unconventional weapon (Judg 4:21; 5:26; 9:53). The notable difference is that the enemy is Canaanite (Sisera) in the earlier instance and Israelite/Canaanite (Abimelech) in the later instance. This head reversal demonstrates how Israelite bodies — now Canaanized — are functioning as enemy bodies.

The Jephthah cycle (Judg 10:6–12:7), rightly regarded a "text of terror," shows the sacrifice or slaughter of Israelite bodies by fellow Israelites.[45] Like Abimelech, Jephthah emerges as an illegitimate son who surrounds himself with "empty men" (אנשים ריקים, Judg 11:1–3; cf. 8:31; 9:1–5), but he rises to become the "head" (ראש, Judg 10:18; 11:8, 9, 11) in Gilead in order to respond to the Ammonite oppression. Before he battles the Ammonites, Jephthah opens his "mouth" (פה, Judg 11:35–36) to make a rash vow resulting in the sacrifice of his only child and nameless daughter (Judg 11:30, 31, 34, 39).[46] YHWH gives the Ammonites into Jephthah's "hand/power" (יד, Judg 11:30, 32; 12:3), and the Ammonites are "subdued" (כנ״ע, Judg 11:33) before the Israelites. Then a civil war ensues between the Gileadites and the Ephraimites, and Jephthah pushes the Ephraimites back to the fords of the Jordan (Judg 12:1–5). In the aftermath, and based on dialectical diagnostics at the border, the Gileadites slaughter (שח״ט) a breathtaking number of Ephraimites: "At that time forty-two thousand from Ephraim fell" (ויפל בעת ההיא מאפרים ארבעים ושנים אלף; Judg 12:6). The theme of civil war characterizes the second half of the book of Judges, as it is a major focus in chapters 8–9, 12, and 20–21. In all of these dark accounts, YHWH allows the Israelites to destroy themselves as they see fit (cf. Judg 21:25).

Also, the Jephthah cycle offers some striking literary contrasts

45 Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 93–116.

46 The name "Jephthah" (יפתח) means "He (Will) Open(s)." Although it probably referred to God opening the womb when the name was given at birth, the composer likely employs the name as a pun for the man who frequently opens his mouth in speech. For the former interpretation, see Younger, *Judges, Ruth*, 315. For the latter, see Judg 11:7, 9, 11, 12, 15–27, 30, 35–36, 38; 12:2–3; J. Cheryl Exum, *Tragedy and Biblical Narrative: Arrows of the Almighty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 48, 53, 60–65; and Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1991), 105–6.