

Article

Women in Israelite Religion: The State of Research Is All New Research

Beth Alpert Nakhai 

Arizona Center for Judaic Studies, The University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721, USA;
bnakhai@email.arizona.edu

Received: 5 January 2019; Accepted: 21 January 2019; Published: 19 February 2019



Abstract: Historically, those studying Israelite religion have ignored the existence of women in Iron Age Israel (1200–587 BCE). They have, therefore, accounted neither for the religious beliefs of half of ancient Israel’s population nor for the responsibilities that women assumed for maintaining religious rituals and traditions. Such reconstructions of Israelite religion are seriously flawed. Only in the last four decades have scholars, primarily women, begun to explore women’s essential roles in Israel’s religious culture. This article utilizes evidence from the Hebrew Bible and from archaeological sites throughout Israel. It demonstrates that some women had roles within the Jerusalem Temple. Most women, however, resided in towns and villages throughout the Land. There, they undertook responsibility for clan-based and community-based religious rituals and rites, including pilgrimage, seasonal festivals, rites of military victory, and rites of mourning. They fulfilled, as well, essential roles within the sphere of domestic or household religion. At home, they provided medico-magical healing for all family members, as well as care for women and babies throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and beyond. They, and the men in their communities, worshipped Yahweh, Israel’s primary deity, and the goddess Asherah, as well; for most people, these two divinities were inextricably linked.

Keywords: religion; women; Israel; Judah; Iron Age; domestic religion; family religion; rituals; worship; Jerusalem Temple; feminist studies; archaeology; Hebrew Bible; Old Testament; Yahweh; Asherah

European and American exploration of Ottoman Palestine in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century was fueled, to a great extent, by an interest in Israelite religion, since the Lands of the Bible were understood to hold foundational truths about what was commonly understood as the inevitable supremacy of Christianity. The whole region, from the Levantine coast to ancient Ur, was seen as the geographic and spiritual backdrop to the story of Jesus, a story that highlights exemplary acts by a number of women. How ironic it is, then, that the scholars who engaged in the study of ancient Israel felt no compunction about disregarding the existence of women within Israel’s population, thereby eliminating (*inter alia*) women’s engagement with religion as a topic of discussion. What this means is that most of what scholars have assumed they knew about Israelite religion is wrong, because it has excluded consideration of women (and children), that is, consideration of more than half the population of ancient Israel. It also means that almost everything known today about women’s participation in Israelite religion is newly acquired knowledge. This paper considers the problems created by the exclusion of women from reconstructions of ancient Israel. It then presents a more complete reconstruction, one that incorporates both archaeological and biblical evidence to highlight the spiritual and ritual worlds of women in Iron Age Israel (1200–587 BCE).

1. What Does Traditional Scholarship Look Like?

Only in the past four decades have women populated scholarly reconstructions of ancient Israel life, whether religious, or historical, or anything else. And this is not to say that in the past forty

years, women have been included in all reconstructions of Israel's past. It has been surprisingly easy, for example, for (male) biblical scholars and archaeologists to write about "daily life"—the quotidian responsibilities upon which all of life's grand activities are predicated—and to exclude women (Nakhai 2005). One has to wonder who they thought was doing all that work. As easy as it has been to exclude Israelite women when discussing the responsibilities and chores of daily life, easier still has it been to exclude their active role in Israelite religion (Nakhai 2007). This point is particularly critical because there is, in many people's eyes, a direct link between the religion of ancient Israel and modern-day Judaism and Christianity; therefore, reconstructions of women's roles in biblical antiquity have influenced expectations for women's roles in contemporary society.¹

What accounts for the unduly limited attention that traditional scholarship has paid to religious ritual and belief as experienced by Israelite women? This question must be answered in the first place by stressing that it is not correct to assume—as scholars have traditionally done—that women did not matter in ancient religion. As it turns out, the near-absence of women in the Bible is not because women had no religious lives, but rather because women were not players within the monarchical, prophetic, priestly, scribal, and other dominant communities that crafted the demonstrably androcentric Bible.² However, the narrow lens of the Hebrew Bible has been, until recent decades, the primary lens through which scholars have engaged with Israelite religion.

Who, we next ask, are the scholars who so misrepresented the roles of women in Israelite religion? Whether priests, ministers, rabbis, or professors, whether seminary-educated or university-trained, they have generally been men who owed their intellectual heritage to that long line of male scholars who began writing sacred text in Israel's Iron Age and who have been interpreting it ever since. Just as men monopolized religious leadership from ancient times to modernity, so too have men dominated the study of ancient Israel and its religion. Like biblical scholars, archaeologists (who have often held theological degree), have typically focused on bastions of male authority and elite governance, choosing to excavate palaces and temples, city walls and gates. In short, the exclusion of Israelite women as a topic of scholarly study has been, albeit unwittingly, predicated upon a belief system that has supported male privilege and suppressed women's agency, meaning that the biases of the past have been perpetuated in the present.

What, then, have such reconstructions of Israelite religion looked like? They have been, in short, androcentric, favoring men, the Temple and its priests, the Jerusalem royalty, and other elites.³ They have accepted the biblical trope that vilifies the practice of community and private religion and as they do so, they have perpetuated the erasure of women from the story of Israel.⁴ The cumulative impact of these factors upon the reconstruction of women's roles in ancient Israelite religion is clear. The marginalization of women's roles in ancient religion has served to validate the marginalization of women throughout the millennia.

2. Now: What Does Contemporary Scholarship Look Like?

As is well documented, it is women who most often engage in gender-related discussions, whether they are advocating for gender equity in the workplace and at home, or reconstructing the lives of

¹ For a discussion of the negative consequences of this approach, as found in European (primarily German) biblical scholarship, see Albertz (1994, pp. 1–17).

² For the challenges faced when utilizing the Hebrew Bible to reconstruct the lives of Iron Age women, see Nakhai (2007, 2018a, pp. 195–99).

³ Ismar J. Peritz's 1898 article, "Women in the Ancient Hebrew Cult," is a rare exception. Peritz (1898) endeavored to identify every biblical reference to women's religious activities. He considered women's participation in religion to have been legitimate, and he criticized those scholars who dismissed women's agency in cultic and ritual matters.

⁴ Two examples make the point. William F. Albright, the "father of biblical archaeology," included nothing whatsoever about women's religious practices or beliefs in his highly influential *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Albright 1942). In his classic study, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, Roland de Vaux restricted his consideration of women to only a few biblically determined social categories: wife, divorcée, widow, and slave (de Vaux 1961).

women in antiquity.⁵ Change is afoot, though, since in the twenty-first century, men have begun to join women in the study of ancient women. Our brief overview of scholarship on women in Israelite religion looks at the 1970s and beyond, the decades in which women began their assault on what had been male hegemony over the study of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.⁶ Feminist biblical scholars have engaged in a two-pronged approach: identifying women in scripture and amplifying their voices, and challenging the notion of male dominance and patriarchy to the exclusion of women's authority and agency. Among the first were [Trible \(1973, 1979, 1984\)](#) and [Bird \(1974, 1987\)](#); other important contributions soon followed (see, *inter alia*, [Bal 1989](#); articles in [Day 1989b](#); [Exum 1993](#); [Newsom and Ringe 1992](#); [Brenner 1993](#) and subsequent volumes; [Meyers 2000](#)).⁷

What about the archaeological contribution? Already in 1984, [Conkey and Spector \(1984\)](#) had published "Archaeology and the Study of Gender," which systematically addressed the subject of gender within the field of archaeology. Several years later, Carol Meyers published *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*, integrating archaeology with biblical studies in its reconstruction of women's lives; spiritual and ritual dimensions were among the topics explored ([Meyers 1988, 2005, 2012](#)). In 1997, [Conkey and Gero \(1997\)](#) emphasized the "the centrality of feminist thought" to all aspects of archaeological method and theory, and discussed an "explosion of literature on archaeological gender" (p. 413). In the study of ancient Israel, and especially of Israelite religion, there is now some sense of this "centrality"—but even now, one would be hard-pressed to experience the "explosion."

Archaeological data is not curated. Material culture, the remnants of myriad lives lived, has an unpredictable quality. It does not "speak" to reality; rather, it reflects realities that otherwise remain unseen. Inanimate objects require archaeologists to give them voice and this means that, just as occurs with ancient texts, the physical past can be misunderstood. That said, archaeologists have begun to alter our understanding of women's religious beliefs and ritual practices. Their "discovery" of Israelite women has gone hand-in-hand with their "discovery" of non-elite men and rural communities; recently, attention is being paid to children, as well ([Garroway 2014, 2018](#)). Evidence for these groups is best revealed through household, family, or domestic archaeology (see, *inter alia*, [Daviau 1993](#); [Albertz 1994](#); [Hardin 2010](#); articles in [Yasur-Landau et al. 2011](#); [Dever 2012](#); see also [Perdue et al. 1997](#)).⁸ As it turns out, women's household tasks and responsibilities are made evident, and so, too, are their acts of domestic piety. It is in the domestic sphere that women's agency, whether practical or spiritual, was most clearly articulated—and is now being illuminated through recourse to artifactual and architectural remains (see, *inter alia*, [van der Toorn 1994, 1996](#); [Daviau 2001](#); articles in [Bodel and Olyan 2008](#); [Meyers 2010](#); [Albertz and Schmitt 2012](#); articles in [Albertz et al. 2014](#)).

3. Women in Ancient Israelite Religion

What does a reconstruction of Israelite religion that includes women look like? Two points are, perhaps, the most fundamental. The first is that, under the broad umbrella of religion, women and men did not have the same roles, but together they shared responsibility within the spheres of ritual and belief as they endeavored to ensure the well-being of their families, their kin groups, and their nation. The second is that, notwithstanding biblical attestations to the contrary, Israelite religion was not devoted exclusively to Israel's male deity, Yahweh (the LORD). Rather, the goddess Asherah was worshiped alongside Yahweh; the worship of both deities was essential to some—although not to

⁵ At the same time, not all women study ancient women, nor should they be expected to. For the challenges faced by women working in Near Eastern archaeology, see [Nakhai \(2018a\)](#), pp. 291–95).

⁶ For a history of women engaged in biblical interpretation, see ([Newsom 1992](#); [Bellis 2000](#)).

⁷ See [Bellis \(2007\)](#), which contains an overview of women in the Bible. Essential to this overview is Bellis's presentation of—and engagement with—the ideas of a wide range of female scholars who have published books and articles on biblical women.

⁸ Albertz notes that "... the personal piety of family members constituted a specific stratum of beliefs and ritual practices within the religion of ancient Israel and Judah," prior to and during the Monarchy ([Albertz 2010](#), p. 135; see also [Albertz 1994](#)).

all—members of the community of Israel (Freedman 1987; Olyan 1988; Hadley 2000; Ackerman 2003a; Meyers 2005; Dever 2005). Biblical passages and archaeological evidence suggest that Asherah was worshipped not only in Jerusalem and Judah, in the south, but also at the Israelite cult centers of Samaria, Bethel, and Dan, in the north (1 Kgs 16:33; 2 Kgs 13:6, 17:16, 23:15; Amos 8:13–14; for the inscription from Kuntillet 'Ajrud in the Sinai Desert, which mentions “Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah, see (Dever 1984; Freedman 1987).⁹ Other deities, including Baal (*inter alia*, 1 Kgs 16:31–32, 18:19; 2 Kgs 21:3), the Queen of Heaven (Jer 7:17–18, 44:17–19), and Tammuz (Ezek 8:14), were worshipped by some, as well.¹⁰

At the pilgrimage site of Shiloh in the Central Highlands, Israel's heartland in its formative period (Iron Age I; 1200–1000 BCE), excavators uncovered ritual objects, although the sanctuary itself no longer exists (Nakhai 2001, p. 171). Biblical stories testify to women worshipping there. The “daughters of Shiloh” (בנות שילה) ritually danced as part of a seasonal “festival of Yahweh” (חג-יהוה; Judg 21:19–21), while Penninah and Hannah, together with their husband Elkanah, went to Shiloh on annual pilgrimages to “bow down and sacrifice to Yahweh of Hosts” (1 Sam 1:1–28). A contemporary open-air sanctuary, now called the Bull Site, was excavated in the hills of Manasseh, farther to the north (Nakhai 2001, pp. 170–71). These and other pilgrimage sanctuaries, some of which are known from the Bible (for Bethel, see, *inter alia*, 1 Sam 10:3–5; for Gilgal, see, *inter alia*, 1 Sam 10:8, 11:14–16), were maintained by priests; however, as the narratives about the Shiloh sanctuary make clear, women were not excluded from worshipping at them. Indeed, it was Micah's unnamed mother who underwrote the cost of constructing a small shrine (בית אלהים) in the northern village of Dan (Judg 17:1–5).

From early in the Monarchy (Iron Age II; 1000–587 BCE), worship in Israel and Judah took place in multiple venues, including the Temple in Jerusalem, officially sanctioned places of worship throughout the land, pilgrimage sanctuaries, village shrines, housing compounds, and individual homes (Nakhai 2001, pp. 176–93; Nakhai 2015; Schmitt 2014).¹¹ The Bible describes religious rituals that were carried out both at mandated times, especially within the Temple, and in response to specific needs such as funerals or celebrations of military victories (see, *inter alia*, Nakhai 2001, pp. 44–73; Meyers 2005; Ackerman 2016). Some religious figures, including prophets and seers, necromancers and diviners, did not operate from officially sanctioned sites. A brief overview illuminates the roles women fulfilled within the broad spectrum of Israelite religion.

The dominant biblical voice, articulated by Temple priests, Deuteronomists, Ezra and Nehemiah, and many others, demanded the worship of Yahweh alone and advocated for the exclusivity of Temple worship. While men and women alike were commanded to worship Yahweh (Ex 20:1–2; Deut 5:6), only men from the lineage of Zadok, the first of the Temple priests (1 Kgs 2:35, 4:1–4), could officiate at the Temple. However, several passages indicate that some women fulfilled circumscribed roles within the Temple and in the Temple precinct. The queen mother (מלכה) presided over the cult of Asherah (1 Kgs 15:13), which was celebrated within the Temple (2 Kgs 18:4; 2 Kgs 21:7, 23:6), while women, working within the Temple precinct, wove garments for the cult statue (2 Kgs 23:7; Ackerman 2003b).¹² They may, as well, have played drums in musical processions within the Temple (Ps. 68:26; Ackerman 2003b). A poorly understood form of Temple engagement (זִמְּזִיּוֹת); commonly [mis]translated as Temple prostitute), open to certain women (בנות זִמְּזִיּוֹת; Ahuvia and Gribetz 2018, p. 9) in earlier days, was later forbidden to them (Deut. 23:18). By the time of the Temple's destruction by the Babylonians, some women within the Temple precinct lamented the god Tammuz (Ezek 8:14).

⁹ For further discussion of Asherah in Jerusalem and, additionally, Anat at Bethel and Astarte at Dan, all three of them linked to Yahweh, see Freedman (1987).

¹⁰ See Ackerman (1992, pp. 37–99) for a discussion of this passage, which concludes that some women worshipped the god Tammuz. Zevit, on the other hand, suggests that the reference is to a certain kind of ritual wailing rather than to the worship of a specific deity (2001, pp. 555–61).

¹¹ The Jerusalem Temple was constructed by Solomon (mid-10th c. BCE; 1 Kgs 6:1–8:65) and destroyed by the Babylonians (587 BCE; 2 Kgs 25:8–9). For a recent discussion of “popular” and “official” religion, see Stavropoulou (2010).

¹² This statue was sometimes described as a sacred pole, symbolic of the Tree of Life (Deut 16:21).

Women participated in public ceremonies in Jerusalem. These include the sacred celebrations when David brought the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:1–17), and when Solomon placed the Ark in his newly constructed Temple (1 Kgs 8:1–14, 65–66). In the late-eighth century, the era of King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, a new code of law (now, Deut 12–26) was adopted in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:1–6). From here on, women were included in the injunction to celebrate pilgrimage festivals and share in sacral meals, not only within their communities but also in the Temple precinct (Deut 12:12, 18; 14:22–26; 15:19–23; 16:9–15). While the Bible provides no description of the public ceremony in which Hezekiah's covenant was adopted, it does describe women participating in a comparable covenant ceremony a century later, when King Josiah reestablished Hezekiah's code of law (2 Kgs 23:1–3).

A number of biblical passages make it clear that the Monarchy facilitated worship at a limited number of sanctuaries throughout the Land (1 Kgs 12:31; 2 Kgs 23:5). One such sanctuary has been discovered at the military fortress at Arad; at Beersheba, some 40 km due west, the remains of a massive stone four-horned altar were found. Lachish, Judah's second largest city, contained a small, bench-lined sanctuary filled with ritual objects. In the north, assemblages of ritual objects were found at Megiddo, an Israelite administrative center. Royal sanctuaries at Dan and Bethel are described in the Bible (*inter alia*, 1 Kgs 12:28–30); finds from Dan support that narrative. While ritual objects vary from site to site, overall, they included something from the following: massive stone four-horned altars; smaller stone altars; standing stones (מַצֵּבֹת); ceramic offering stands; priestly implements; and, votive vessels. As at the Temple, worship at these sites was likely restricted to men; at Arad and Beersheba, inscriptions on ostraca link their priests to those at the Jerusalem Temple. At the same time, the paired altars and standing stones in the Holy of Holies of the Arad sanctuary intimate the worship of Asherah alongside Yahweh (Holladay 1987; Nakhai 2001, pp. 177–87; Nakhai 2011, 2015, pp. 91–92; Zevit 2001, pp. 122–349; Schmitt 2014).

The Bible also gives witness to a multiplicity of smaller shrines on hilltops and within villages throughout the Land (see, *inter alia*, 2 Kgs 17:9–11). Before the Temple was constructed, these shrines—like the pilgrimage sanctuaries at Shiloh, Bethel, Gilgal, and elsewhere—had raised no concerns.¹³ David, for example, went to Bethlehem, his family's village, to participate in a familial festival of sacrifice (1 Sam 20:5–7, 28–29). Given what is known about women worshipping at Shiloh, it is likely that in Bethlehem too, the women in the family participated alongside the men. In the days of the kings, as Israel's population grew, the number of small, local places of worship would have increased accordingly. Israel's long-established social structure, which emphasized the tribe (שֵׁבִיט), clan (בֵּית אָבִי), and residential kin group or extended family (בֵּית דִּבְרֵי; see Stager 1985; Nakhai 2001, pp. 161–93; Dever 2012, pp. 156–58; Faust 2012, pp. 172–74), meant that the traditional, pre-monarchical, modes of worship flourished during the Monarchy. The oft-repeated Deuteronomistic condemnation of local places of worship, over which the Jerusalem priesthood had no control—and perhaps, in reality, made no effort to control until the Deuteronomistic reforms of the era of Isaiah and Hezekiah (Deut 12–26; 2 Kgs 18:22) and, a century later, of Josiah (2 Kgs 22:8–23:25)—attests to their widespread popularity.

It is in these village settings that women's participation in religious rituals is most evident. Several points are particularly relevant. The first is that community and family worship was the exclusive province neither of men nor of women. Their essential concerns, concerns about which one would entreat the Divine, were for health, sustenance, and progeny, and these were concerns shared by everyone. Elders in towns and villages, heads of households, and individuals as well, all shared responsibility for the physical—and hence spiritual—maintenance of the community (Nakhai 2011). This means that no one was exempt from religious responsibilities, although those responsibilities would have varied according to social status and gender. A passage in Jeremiah, in which (so the story goes) the people of Judah, in exile in Egypt after the Babylonian destruction of their Temple and their homeland, turn against the prophet, highlights the shared responsibilities of the entire

¹³ For the agricultural roots of Israel's pilgrimage festivals, see Albetz (1994, pp. 82–91).

community—women and men, royalty, elite and commoners, in Jerusalem and throughout the Land—in worship rituals (Jer 44:15–19).

Extensive archaeological evidence has clarified what the Bible only hints at, by means of condemnation (e.g., 2 Kgs 17:9–11), that religion was practiced not only in state-sponsored sanctuaries, but also in community and domestic settings, and at burial sites. In towns such as Mizpah (Tell en-Nasbeh), Tirzah (Tell el-Far'ah [N]), and Rehov (Tel Rehov), simple “shrines of the elders” were fashioned within housing complexes for use by extended families (Nakhai 2011). The common assumption that “elders” (זִקְנִים) were men fails to consider the fact that the Hebrew “masculine” plural can include women. It also ignores those biblical passages that highlight the responsibility that all members of the community, “man or woman, family or tribe (אִישׁ אוֹ אִשָּׁה אוֹ מִשְׁפָּחָה אוֹ שִׁבְט),” bore toward Israel’s public and private religious obligations (Deut 29:17; Nakhai 2014a, p. 63). Women, as well as men, would have been counted among Israel’s elders, adjudicating conflicts, dispensing justice, and—most significant for this discussion—participating in ritual ceremonies (Nakhai 2011). Even more specifically, the Bible delineates positions of authority that women held within their communities (for a “mother’s household” [אִמֵּי-בֵּית], see Gen 24:28 [(Meyers 1991)]; for a “mother in Israel,” [אִמֵּי-יִשְׂרָאֵל] see Judg 5:7; for a female elder at the gates of the town, see Prov 31:31). Women, like men, could take the vows of the Nazirite and thereby enter a community of people consecrated to Yahweh (Num 6:1–21; Judg 13:6–14).

Worship took place not only at community and family shrines but also within the home. In Iron Age Israel, women participated fully in the domestic economy, not only as household workers but as partners in a heterarchical society in which responsibilities for food production and household maintenance were shared by women and men alike (Prov 14:1, 31:10–31; Meyers 1988, 2006, 2013; Ebeling 2010; Nakhai 2014a). This means that women had access to the material goods (grains, livestock, oils, wine) that were used in Israel’s most common religious rituals, the rituals of sacrifice and offering (Jer 44:15–19; Prov 7:14). Domestic religion was, in particular, the responsibility of women, who more fully occupied the four-room house, as the typical Israelite house is known. It was both their place of residence and their primary workplace, where they managed the storage of food products, fuels, and other necessities, the production of textiles and clothing, and the preparation of meals for daily consumption and for festivals and ritual celebrations (Dever 2012, pp. 142–205; Faust 2012, pp. 213–29; Faust and Bunimovitz 2014; Meyers 2014). What this means is that each ritual act that took place within the home transformed that home, or at least some part of it, into sacred space. At the same time, given the many domestic tasks taking place in and around the house and housing compound, this sacralization was impermanent, meaning that space, like people, “multi-tasked” (Nakhai 2014a, p. 56).

For their domestic rituals, women used clothing and textiles made of fabrics dyed in specially chosen colors, or woven, knotted or twisted in special ways, to perform acts of apotropaia and healing (Gen 38:27–30). A panoply of small, easy-to-move cultic objects that might include figurines, votive vessels, lamps, little stone altars, ceramic offering stands, amulets, specially colored beads, and more, some configuration of which is found in most four-room houses, highlights women’s agency in domestic religion (Meyers 2005; Willett 2008; Nakhai 2011, pp. 355–59; 2014a, p. 56). Of particular concern to women were the risks of childbirth-related morbidity and mortality, and the dangers posed by infant and childhood illness and death. Demographic studies show that the average lifespan for women was thirty, as compared to forty for men; a third of children died by age five, and half by age eighteen (Willett 2008, pp. 79–81; Nakhai 2018b, p. 109). Along with midwifery, many other healthcare responsibilities fell under the purview of women. They assumed responsibility for medico-magical tasks, blending remedies both spiritual and practical (Gerstenberger 2014). The healer’s arsenal included apotropaia, incantations, spells, prayers, blessings, and vows, echoes of which are found in the Bible (Gen 30:14–17; 1 Sam 1:10–13, 26–27; Judg 17:2; Jer 44:15–19; Prov 7:14, 31:2). Even the naming of babies reflected women’s personal piety; the names women chose often mirrored the concerns and beliefs they shared with their families and communities (Albertz 2012, pp. 245–367).

Within villages and homes, as well as in tombs and a cave in Jerusalem, Judaeen pillar-based figurines were common. More than a thousand of these small, simple ceramic pieces depicting a female figure whose arms support her breasts, come from eighth-seventh century Judah (see, *inter alia*, Kletter 1996; Darby 2014). Presumably, they were used to invoke the protection of the Goddess, who would provide succor and sustenance for those who beseeched her (see, *inter alia*, Dever 2005, 2014; Willett 2008, pp. 93–97; Nakhai 2014b, pp. 183–85). Rachel (Gen 31:19–35) and Michal (1 Sam 19:11–17) both used figurines (*teraphim*; תִּרְפִּים) to protect their household interests; *teraphim* were also used in the household shrine at Dan commissioned by Micah’s mother (Judg 17:5, 18:14–20). Such images, used by women in domestic contexts and eventually forbidden to them in the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah (2 Kgs 23:24), may have been used for the purpose of divination (1 Sam 15:23).

The four-room house may also have been the setting in which laws of ritual purity were fulfilled. It is not possible to conclusively situate the prescriptive and proscriptive Priestly laws delineated in the book of Leviticus beyond the confines of the Temple. At the same time, it is not impossible that laws of ritual purity, those dealing with menstruation, sexual intercourse, and childbirth (Lev 12:1–8, 15:18–33, 18:19, 20:18), and those dealing with the preparation and serving of food for everyday consumption and for familial and community celebrations (Lev 11:1–46), had traction within at least some households beyond the Temple community (e.g., Gen 31:35; 2 Sam 11:2–5). The layout of the four-room house may have allowed for privacy and seclusion while facilitating access to women’s work areas (see Faust and Bunimovitz 2003, p. 29; Faust 2012, pp. 223–24; Faust and Katz 2017, pp. 13–16). If laws of ritual purity were observed at home, their implementation would have been, primarily, the responsibility of women, providing yet another way in which they engaged with the Divine.

Women shared in the tasks and ritual acts required to properly care for the dead, whether preparing corpses for burial, determining burial locations, or participating in burial rites and the subsequent annual commemorations (Ebeling 2010, pp. 129–46; Schmitt 2012, pp. 429–73; Nakhai 2018b, pp. 113–15). Wise women, skilled in singing dirges, led laments of mourning (2 Sam 1:24 [בְּנֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל]; Jer 9:16–20 [תִּלְכָּמוֹת בְּנֵי קִינִיּוֹת]) and taught them to their daughters (Jer 9:19). They may have been the same women who engaged with the realm of war; several biblical passages attest to women leading victory celebrations with song, dance, and the playing of drums (Exod 15:20–21; Judg 5:1–31, 11:34; 1 Sam 18:6–7). A ritual ceremony enacted by young women (בְּנֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל) was both memorial, mourning the death of Jephthah’s daughter, and celebratory, marking the transition from girlhood to womanhood; it took place in the wilds of nature (Judg 11:36–40; Tribble 1984, pp. 100–101; Day 1989a; Ahuvia and Gribetz 2018, p. 7).

The Bible makes it clear that men held no monopoly over knowing the will of God. Yahweh or his divine messengers appeared to some women (Eve in Gen 3:13; Hagar in Gen 16:7–14, 21:17–21; Sarah in Gen 18:9–15; Samson’s unnamed mother in Judg 13:2–21). Some women were prophets (Miriam [Ex 15:20–21; Num 12:1–2], Deborah [Judg 4:4], Huldah [2 Kgs 22:11–20], Isaiah’s unnamed wife [Isa 8:3–4], Noadiah [Neh 6:14], and, more generally, “women who prophesy” [מִתְנַבְּאוֹת; Ezek 13:17]), and some were judges (Deborah [Judg 4:4–5:31]).¹⁴ Others were necromancers (for the “witch” [אִשָּׁת בַּעַל-אֹיֵב] of Endor, who not only conjured the ghost of Samuel but also slaughtered a calf and prepared and baked unleavened bread to serve King Saul, see 1 Sam 28:7–25; see also Lev 20:27) and wise women (for Tekoah, see 2 Sam 14:4–20; for Abel Beth Maacah, see 2 Sam 20:14–22 [אִשָּׁה חֲכָמָה]). Rebecca “inquired of Yahweh” (לִדְרֹשׁ אֶת-יְהוָה) to understand her difficult pregnancy (Gen 25:19–26).¹⁵ All these women accessed the Divine through their own actions.¹⁶

¹⁴ For women as prophets and as priests, see Ackerman (2002). For female prophets, whether named and unnamed, operating on their own or in guilds, see Gafney (2008).

¹⁵ The Hebrew root *drš* is typically used for prophetic inquiries.

¹⁶ For the work of diviners, soothsayers, magicians, and witches, who might heal by appealing to divinities other than Yahweh, see Gerstenberger (2014).

4. Final Thoughts

The fact that the stories of these women, and others as well, appear in the Bible demonstrates that women in at least some Israelite communities fulfilled meaningful religious functions. That there are so few of these stories speaks to the androcentric biases of the biblical authors, editors, and redactors. That so little has been known about women, including information about their religious beliefs and behaviors, can be attributed both to the androcentric nature of the Hebrew Bible and to the enthusiasm with which this androcentrism has been embraced by male scholarship over the millennia. Archaeology has become an invaluable resource for reconstructing the lives of women and examining their religious behaviors. The relationship between the Bible and archaeology is two-way. That is, evidence from each explicates otherwise obscure passages or realia in the other; taken together, they expand our ideas about what was possible, and about what was. The scholarly biases of the past are now being contested by female scholars—and by their likeminded male colleagues—who together strive to develop reconstructions of ancient Israelite religion that highlight both its inclusivity and its diversity.

Acknowledgments: My thanks to Avi Faust for inviting me to contribute to this special issue. Thanks, too, to the two anonymous reviewers whose thoughtful comments helped to improve the paper. A version of this paper was presented at the 2018 annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- Ackerman, Susan. 1992. *Under Every Green Tree: Popular Religion in Sixth-Century Judah*. Harvard Semitic Monographs 46. Atlanta: Scholars Press.
- Ackerman, Susan. 2002. Why Is Miriam Also among the Prophets? (And Is Zipporah among the Priests?). *Journal of Biblical Literature* 121: 47–80. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Ackerman, Susan. 2003a. At Home with the Goddess. In *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina*. Edited by William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, pp. 455–68.
- Ackerman, Susan. 2003b. Women and the Worship of Yahweh in Ancient Israel. In *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever*. Edited by Seymour Gitin, J. Edward Wright and J. P. Dessel. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, pp. 189–97.
- Ackerman, Susan. 2016. Women in Ancient Israel and the Hebrew Bible. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Ahuvia, Mika, and Sarit Kattan Gribetz. 2018. “The Daughters of Israel”: An Analysis of the Term in Late Ancient Jewish Sources. *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 108: 1–27. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Albertz, Rainer. 1994. *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period. Volume I: From the Beginnings to the End of the Monarchy*. Translated by John Bowden. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Albertz, Rainer. 2010. Personal Piety. In *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah*. Edited by Francesca Stavrakopoulou and John Barton. London: T&T Clark, pp. 135–46.
- Albertz, Rainer. 2012. Personal Names and Family Religion. In *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*. Edited by Rainer Albertz and Rüdiger Schmitt. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, pp. 245–367.
- Albertz, Rainer, and Rüdiger Schmitt. 2012. *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Albertz, Rainer, Beth Alpert Nakhai, Saul Olyan, and Rüdiger Schmitt, eds. 2014. *Household Religion: Toward a Synthesis of Old Testament Studies, Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Cultural Studies; Proceedings of the International Conference at Westfälisches Wilhelms-Universität Münster, April 1st–3rd, 2009*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Albright, William Foxwell. 1942. *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel: The Ayer Lectures of the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, 1941*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.
- Bal, Mieke. 1989. *Anti-Covenant: Counter-Reading Women's Lives in the Hebrew Bible*. Bible and Literature Series 22. Sheffield: Almond.

- Bellis, Alice Ogden. 2000. Feminist Biblical Scholarship. In *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*. Edited by Carol Meyers. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, pp. 24–32.
- Bellis, Alice Ogden. 2007. *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Bird, Phyllis. 1974. Images of Women in the Old Testament. In *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in Jewish and Christian Traditions*. Edited by Rosemary Radford Ruether. New York: Simon & Schuster, pp. 41–88.
- Bird, Phyllis. 1987. The Place of Women in the Israelite Cultus. In *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*. Edited by Patrick D. Miller Jr., Paul D. Hanson and S. Dean McBride. Philadelphia: Fortress, pp. 397–419.
- Bodel, John, and Saul M. Olyan, eds. 2008. *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*. Malden: Blackwell.
- Brenner, Athalya. 1993. *A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs*. Feminist Companion to the Bible 1. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Conkey, Margaret W., and Joan M. Gero. 1997. Programme to Practice: Gender and Feminism in Archaeology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26: 411–37. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Conkey, Margaret W., and Janet D. Spector. 1984. Archaeology and the Study of Gender. In *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 7. Edited by Michael Schiffer. New York: Academic Press, pp. 1–38.
- Darby, Erin. 2014. *Interpreting Judean Pillar Figurines: Gender and Empire in Judean Apotropaic Ritual*. Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Daviau, P. M. Michèle. 1993. *Houses and Their Furnishings in Bronze Age Palestine: Domestic Activity Areas and Artefact Distribution in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages*. JSOT / ASOR Monograph Series 8. Sheffield: JSOT.
- Daviau, P. M. Michèle. 2001. Family Religion: Evidence for the Paraphernalia of the Domestic Cult. In *The World of the Aramaeans II: Studies in History and Archaeology*. Edited by P. M. Michèle Daviau, John W. Wevers and Michael Weigl. JSOT Supplement Series 325. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, pp. 199–229.
- Day, Peggy L. 1989a. From the Child Is Born the Woman: The Story of Jephthah's Daughter. In *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*. Edited by Peggy L. Day. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, pp. 58–74.
- Day, Peggy L., ed. 1989b. *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- de Vaux, Roland. 1961. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Dever, William G. 1984. Asherah, Consort of Yahweh? New Evidence from Kuntilet 'Ajrūd. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 255: 12–37. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Dever, William G. 2005. *Did God Have a Wife?: Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Dever, William G. 2012. *The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: Where Archaeology and the Bible Intersect*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Dever, William G. 2014. The Judean "Pillar-Base Figurines.". In *Household Religion: Toward a Synthesis of Old Testament Studies, Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Cultural Studies, Proceedings of the International Conference at Westfälisches Wilhelms-Universität Münster, April 1–3, 2009*. Edited by Rainer Albertz, Beth Alpert Nakhai, Saul M. Olyan and Rüdiger Schmitt. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, pp. 129–41.
- Ebeling, Jennie R. 2010. *Women's Lives in Biblical Times*. London and New York: T&T Clark.
- Exum, Cheryl J. 1993. *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)versions of Biblical Narratives*. JSOT Supplement Series 163. Valley Forge: Trinity International.
- Faust, Avraham. 2012. *The Archaeology of Israelite Society in Iron Age II*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Faust, Avraham, and Shlomo Bunimovitz. 2003. The Four Room House: Embodying Iron Age Israelite Society. *Near Eastern Archaeology* 66: 22–31. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Faust, Avraham, and Shlomo Bunimovitz. 2014. The House and the World: The Israelite House as a Microcosm. In *Household Religion: Toward a Synthesis of Old Testament Studies, Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Cultural Studies; Proceedings of the International Conference at Westfälisches Wilhelms-Universität Münster, April 1–3, 2009*. Edited by Rainer Albertz, Beth Alpert Nakhai, Saul M. Olyan and Rüdiger Schmitt. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, pp. 143–64.
- Faust, Avraham, and Hayah Katz. 2017. The Archaeology of Purity and Impurity: A Case-Study from Tel 'Eton, Israel. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 27: 1–27. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Freedman, David Noel. 1987. Yahweh of Samaria and His Asherah. *Biblical Archaeologist* 50: 241–49. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Gafney, Wilda C. 2008. *Daughters of Miriam: Women Prophets in Ancient Israel*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

- Garroway, Kristine Henriksen. 2014. *Children in the Ancient Near Eastern Household*. Explorations in Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations 3. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Garroway, Kristine Henriksen. 2018. *Growing Up in Ancient Israel: Children in Material Culture and Biblical Texts*. Archaeology and Biblical Studies 23. Atlanta: SBL Press.
- Gerstenberger, Erhard S. 2014. Healing Rituals at the Intersection of Family and Society. In *Household Religion: Toward a Synthesis of Old Testament Studies, Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Cultural Studies; Proceedings of the International Conference at Westfälisches Wilhelms-Universität Münster, April 1st–3rd, 2009*. Edited by Rainer Albertz, Beth Alpert Nakhai, Saul M. Olyan and Rüdiger Schmitt. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, pp. 165–81.
- Hadley, Judith M. 2000. *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah: Evidence for a Hebrew Goddess*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hardin, James W. 2010. *Lahav II: Households and the Use of Domestic Space at Iron II Tell Halif: An Archaeology of Destruction*. Reports of the Lahav Research Project Excavations at Tell Halif, Israel vol. 2. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Holladay, John S., Jr. 1987. Religion in Israel and Judah under the Monarchy: An Explicitly Archaeological Approach. In *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*. Edited by Patrick D. Miller Jr., Paul D. Hanson and S. Dean McBride. Philadelphia: Fortress, pp. 249–99.
- Kletter, Raz. 1996. *The Judean Pillar-Figurines and the Archaeology of Asherah*. BAR International Series 636. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.
- Meyers, Carol. 1988. *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University.
- Meyers, Carol. 1991. "To Her Mother's House": Considering a Counterpart to the Israelite *Bêt 'āb*. In *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*. Edited by David Joblin, Peggy L. Day and Gerald T. Sheppard. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, pp. 39–51.
- Meyers, Carol, ed. 2000. *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Meyers, Carol. 2005. *Households and Holiness: The Religious Culture of Israelite Women*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Meyers, Carol. 2006. Hierarchy or Heterarchy? Archaeology and the Theorizing of Israelite Society. In *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever*. Edited by Seymour Gitin, J. Edward Wright and J. P. Dessel. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, pp. 245–54.
- Meyers, Carol. 2010. Household Religion. In *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah*. Edited by Francesca Stavrakopoulou and John Barton. London: T&T Clark, pp. 118–34.
- Meyers, Carol. 2012. Women's Religious Life in Ancient Israel. In *Women's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Jacqueline E. Lapsley, Sharon H. Ringe and Carol A. Newsom. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, pp. 354–61.
- Meyers, Carol. 2013. *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Meyers, Carol. 2014. Feast Days and Food Ways: Religious Dimensions of Household Life. In *Household Religion: Toward a Synthesis of Old Testament Studies, Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Cultural Studies; Proceedings of the International Conference at Westfälisches Wilhelms-Universität Münster, April 1st–3rd, 2009*. Edited by Rainer Albertz, Beth Alpert Nakhai, Saul M. Olyan and Rüdiger Schmitt. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, pp. 225–50.
- Nakhai, Beth Alpert. 2001. *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*. Atlanta: ASOR.
- Nakhai, Beth Alpert. 2005. Daily Life in the Ancient Near East: New Thoughts on an Old Topic. *Religious Studies Review: A Quarterly Review of Publications in the Field of Religion and Related Disciplines* 31: 147–53. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Nakhai, Beth Alpert. 2007. Gender and Archaeology in Israelite Religion. *Compass Religion* 1: 512–28. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Nakhai, Beth Alpert. 2011. Varieties of Religious Expression in the Domestic Setting. In *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond*. Edited by Asaf Yasur-Landau, Jennie R. Ebeling and Laura B. Mazow. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 50. Leiden: Brill, pp. 347–60.
- Nakhai, Beth Alpert. 2014a. The Household as Sacred Space. In *Household Religion: Toward a Synthesis of Old Testament Studies, Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Cultural Studies; Proceedings of the International Conference at Westfälisches Wilhelms-Universität Münster, April 1–3, 2009*. Edited by Rainer Albertz, Beth Alpert Nakhai, Saul M. Olyan and Rüdiger Schmitt. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, pp. 53–71.

- Nakhai, Beth Alpert. 2014b. Mother-and-Child Figurines in the Late Bronze—Persian Period Levant. In *Material Culture Matters: Essays on the Archaeology of the Southern Levant in Honor of Seymour Gitin*. Edited by John R. Spencer, Robert A. Mullins and Aaron J. Brody. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, pp. 165–98.
- Nakhai, Beth Alpert. 2015. Ways of Believing: Religious Practice in Iron Age Israel. In *Defining the Sacred: Approaches to the Archaeology of Religion in the Near East*. Edited by Nicola Laneri. Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp. 90–101.
- Nakhai, Beth Alpert. 2018a. Factors Complicating the Reconstruction of Women's Lives in Iron Age Israel (1200–587 B.C.E.). In *Studying Gender in the Ancient Near East*. Edited by Saana Svärd and Agnès Garcia-Ventura. State College: Eisenbrauns, pp. 289–313.
- Nakhai, Beth Alpert. 2018b. When Considering Infants and Jar Burials in the Middle Bronze Age Southern Levant. In *Tell It in Gath: Studies in the History and Archaeology of Israel. Essays in Honor of A. M. Maier on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*. Edited by Itzhaq Shai, Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Louise Hitchcock, Amit Dagan, Chris McKinney and Joe Uziel. Ägypten und Altes Testament 90. Münster: Zaphon, pp. 100–28.
- Newsom, Carol A. 1992. Women as Biblical Interpreters before the Twentieth Century. In *Women's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Sharon H. Ringe and Carol A. Newsom. London: SPCK; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, pp. 11–24.
- Newsom, Carol A., and Sharon H. Ringe, eds. 1992. *The Women's Bible Commentary*. London: SPCK; Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Olyan, Saul M. 1988. *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel*. SBL Monograph Series 34. Atlanta: Scholars Press.
- Perdue, Leo G., Joseph Blenkinsopp, John J. Collins, and Carol Meyers, eds. 1997. *Families in Ancient Israel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Peritz, Ismar J. 1998. Women in the Ancient Hebrew Cult. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 17: 111–48. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Schmitt, Rüdiger. 2012. Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family. In *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*. Edited by Rainer Albertz and Rüdiger Schmitt. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, pp. 429–73.
- Schmitt, Rüdiger. 2014. A Typology of Iron Age Cult Places. In *Household Religion: Toward a Synthesis of Old Testament Studies, Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Cultural Studies; Proceedings of the International Conference at Westfälisches Wilhelms-Universität Münster, April 1–3, 2009*. Edited by Rainer Albertz, Beth Alpert Nakhai, Saul M. Olyan and Rüdiger Schmitt. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, pp. 265–86.
- Stager, Lawrence E. 1985. The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 260: 1–35. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Stavarakopoulou, Francesca. 2010. "Popular" Religion and "Official" Religion: Practice, Perception, Portrayal. In *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah*. Edited by Francesca Stavarakopoulou and John Barton. London: T&T Clark, pp. 37–58.
- Trible, Phyllis. 1973. Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 41: 30–48. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Trible, Phyllis. 1979. Eve and Adam: Genesis 2–3 Reread. In *Womenspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*. Edited by Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow. New York: Harper & Row, pp. 74–83.
- Trible, Phyllis. 1984. *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- van der Toorn, Karel. 1994. *From Her Cradle to Her Grave: The Role of Religion in the Life of the Israelite and the Babylonian Woman*. Sheffield: JSOT Press.
- van der Toorn, Karel. 1996. *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life*. Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 7. Leiden: Brill.
- Willett, Elizabeth A. R. 2008. Infant Mortality and Women's Religion in the Biblical Periods. In *The World of Women in the Ancient and Classical Near East*. Edited by Beth Alpert Nakhai. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 77–96.
- Yasur-Landau, Asaf, Jennie R. Ebeling, and Laura B. Mazow, eds. 2011. *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond*. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 50. Leiden: Brill.
- Zevit, Ziony. 2001. *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches*. London and New York: Continuum.

