

READING GENDER IN JUDGES

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# READING GENDER IN JUDGES

## An Intertextual Approach

*Edited by*

Shelley L. Birdsong, J. Cornelis de Vos, and Hyun Chul Paul Kim

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## Abbreviations

AB	Anchor (Yale) Bible
ABD	Freedman, David Noel, ed. <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABRL	The Anchor (Yale) Bible Reference Library
ACCS	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture
ADPV	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
ANET	Pritchard, James B., ed. <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
ASV	American Standard Version
AT	Annales Theologici
ATSAT	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
b.	Babylonian
B. Bat.	Baba Batra
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford: Clarendon, 1906.
BHL	<i>Biblia Hebraica Leningradensia</i>
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibSem	The Biblical Seminar
BLS	Bible and Literature Series

BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
BRev	<i>Bible Review</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BSNA	Biblical Scholarship in North America
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
CANE	Sasson, Jack M., ed. <i>Civilizations of the Ancient Near East</i> . 4 vols. New York: Scribner, 1995. Repr. in 2 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995.
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
COS	Hallo, William W., and K. Lawson Younger Jr., eds. <i>The Context of Scripture</i> . 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2016.
CSHJ	Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism
CurBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CV	<i>Communio Viatorum</i>
EBR	Klauck, Hans-Josef, et al., eds. <i>Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009–.
ErIsr	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
esp.	especially
ESV	English Standard Version
ET	English Translation
ETS	Erfurter theologische Studien
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FCB	Feminist Companion to the Bible
fem.	feminine
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
GPBS	Global Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship
HALOT	Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
HAR	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs

HThKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
IBHS	Waltke, Bruce K., and Michael O'Connor. <i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> . Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
impv.	imperative
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
ISBL	Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature
IVBS	International Voices in Biblical Studies
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBQ	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JHebs	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
JMJS	<i>Journal of Modern Jewish Studies</i>
JPS	<i>Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures; The JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
KJV	King James Version
KRV	Korean Revised Version
LAB	Liber antiquitatum biblicarum
LAI	Library of Ancient Israel
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LUO	Luther Bibel, 1912
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NABRE	New American Bible Revised Edition
NAC	New American Commentary
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NIB	Keck, Leander E., ed. <i>The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary</i> . 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994–2004.
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament

NIV	New International Version
NJPS	<i>Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures; The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OTE	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTR	Old Testament Readings
pf.	perfect
RBS	Resources for Biblical Study
REV	Revised English Version
SBS	Suttgarter Bibelstudien
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SHANE	Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
sing.	singular
SJ	Studia Judaica
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SP	Samaritan Pentateuch
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
SR	<i>Studies in Religion</i>
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature (Lang)
Syr.	Syriac
TBN	Themes in Biblical Narrative
TDOT	Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Translated by John T. Willis et al. 17 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2021.
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
VL	Vetus Latina (Old Latin)
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
Vulg.	Vulgate
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZBK	Zürcher Bibel Kommentar

# 1

## Introduction

*Shelley L. Birdsong, J. Cornelis de Vos, and Hyun Chul Paul Kim*

### Judges, Gender, and Intertextuality

#### The Book of Judges

What is the book of Judges about? It is hard to find thematic coherence, especially when read in isolation. This might be due to its intertextual function. Much of the content of Judges can only be understood when read together with other parts of the Hebrew Bible. Narratives in Judges comment, criticize, and reinterpret other texts from across what became the canon. Oftentimes, these interplays trouble gender, disrupting stereotypical binaries, creating a kind of gender chaos.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the treatment of women mirrors the train of the whole book, which moves in a downward spiral.<sup>2</sup> Judges begins positively with the campaign of the tribe of Judah ordered by YHWH. The first female character in the book, Achsah is a strong and assertive woman and an example for all of Israel, as she secures land as an inheritance for herself.<sup>3</sup> She knows what she wants and gets it. Yet by the time we reach the end of the book, Israel is in pandemonium, and women, presumably without their consent, are taken from their

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1. For the original discussion on gender trouble, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

2. See Gregory T. K. Wong, *Compositional Strategy of the Book of Judges*, VTSup 111 (Leiden: Brill, 2006). Wong argues for an ongoing deterioration in the book of Judges from beginning to end. This is followed by Susanne E. Haddox in ch. 2 in this volume.

3. On the assertiveness of Achsah, see the contributions by J. Cornelis de Vos (ch. 6) and Joy A. Schroeder (ch. 3) in this volume.

homeland. The unnamed *pilegeš* in Judg 19 is taken from her father's house in Bethlehem, gang raped by Benjaminites in a foreign city, then cut into pieces by her heartless husband, and spread throughout the land. The last women we see, in Judg 21, are abducted from their homelands and forced into marriage with those from the same Benjaminite tribe. Such acts can only forebode bad news for "Lady Israel." Amid, or intertwined with, the gender drama, Judges alludes to previous books and points to subsequent books, thus functioning as an intertextual hinge between them. The death of Joshua, for example, is described both in Josh 24:29–30 and in Judg 2:8–9; the Caleb-Achsah episode of Josh 15:13–19 is partly repeated in Judg 1:10–15. More broadly speaking, the book is often read intertextually with Genesis, since both books include motifs regarding rape (Gen 19; 34; Judg 19–21), child sacrifice (Gen 22; Judg 11), prostitution (Gen 38; Judg 11; 16), and kinship relations.<sup>4</sup> The form of the annunciation scenes also connects Judges to other mothers and children who share the conception and birth process with the divine (Gen 16; 21; 25; 29–30; Judg 13; 1 Sam 1–2).<sup>5</sup> The major themes of leadership and monarchy set up the framework for the rest of the Former Prophets, while the stories of God's salvation allude to Exodus. Judges is also self-referential (intratextual). Male warriors are humiliatingly killed at the hand of a woman (Judg 4–5; 9), fathers fail their daughters (Judg 1; 11; 19), and mothers cannot protect their children (Judg 5; 13–17).<sup>6</sup> Quite quickly, one can see how intertextual and intratextual Judges is, particularly when it comes to the relationships among gendered characters. These connections necessitate more investigation.

## Gender

Like intertextuality, gender theory has infiltrated biblical studies, giving us fresh ways to reenvision ancient texts in a postmodern world. While

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4. See the contribution by Susan E. Haddock (ch. 2) for the connections between Genesis and Judges.

5. See Timothy D. Finlay, *The Birth Report Genre in the Hebrew Bible*, FAT 2/12 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

6. For men killed by the hand of women, see the contributions by Zev Farber (ch. 8) and Pamela J. W. Nourse (ch. 4) in this volume. See the contribution by Richard D. Nelson (ch. 9) about father-daughter relationships. See the contribution by Rannfrid I. Lasine Thelle (ch. 7) on motherhood.

feminism, which came before it, did a great service to female characters—liberating them from patriarchal authorship and androcentric interpretation—gender studies goes beyond this to reassess *all* genders, their fluidity, and the complex historical and cultural realities that formed them.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, while this volume spends substantial time on the female characters in Judges, individual essays also question the presentation of male characters, or masculinity, as well as characters who transgress the stereotypical gender binaries within the ancient patriarchal world.<sup>8</sup> As a largely resistant way of reading, gender criticism uncovers oft-ignored power inequalities and deconstructs normative gender roles and stereotypes, such as the assumptions that women should be mothers and wives, who are passive and landless, and that men should be warriors and leaders, who are active and landholders. For example, the stories of Deborah, Barak, Jael, and Sisera in Judg 4–5 have long been known to blur gender lines, since the women perform so-called masculine roles (e.g., judging and killing), and the men perform so-called feminine roles (e.g., being submissive and being afraid). As such, these chapters have been highlighted by gender critics for their gender reversals or genderfucks.<sup>9</sup> So, too, many of the other characters throughout Judges defy gendered prescriptions.

One of the ways that an intertextual approach is useful alongside gender study is that both studies recognize that there are many texts and intertexts at play when ascertaining a character's gender and that character's relationships to their surrounding gendered culture. The author's perspective is simply insufficient. We are called to listen to the characters themselves, the characters around them, the authors and editors, the history of interpreters, and ourselves as readers as we detect the gender

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7. See, e.g., Butler, *Gender Trouble*, and bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015).

8. This is one of the unique characteristics of the present work that goes beyond that of Peggy Day, ed., *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989). Day's volume concentrates on feminist readings of female characters, but from throughout the Hebrew Bible. Here, the goal is to broaden the concept of gender while prioritizing intertextuality and the book of Judges in order to create a more focused collection. One should note, however, that *Gender and Difference* includes chapters on Jael (Susan Niditch) and Jephthah's daughter (Day).

9. See Deryn Guest, "From Gender Reversal to Genderfuck: Reading Jael through a Lesbian Lens," in *Bible Trouble: Queer Readings at the Boundaries of Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Teresa J. Hornsby and Ken Stone, SemeiaSt 67 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 9–43.

identity and expressions of a particular character. Depending on our hermeneutical lenses and interpretive ethics, we are free to read with or against these texts. But generally, gender critics utilize a hermeneutic of suspicion, in light of the fact that the Bible was written in an inequitable culture, which continues to affect today's world. Similarly, gender criticism and intertextuality logically align with intersectional lenses, recognizing that the texts of race, ethnicity, class, religion, ability, sex, and sexuality all play a role in how one is gendered.<sup>10</sup> It is no longer enough to look at a character just as a man or a woman. Biblical scholars need to take the intersectional identities of characters and their intertextual environments seriously, and this is what we have begun to do in this volume.

There are many influential scholars who have paved the way for the wide array of contributions in this volume. Regarding gender theory, these include Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, Simone de Beauvoir, Gayle Rubin, Anne Fausto-Sterling, Adrienne Rich, Monique Wittig, Jacob Hale, Cheryl Chase, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Michael Kimmel, and many more. Under the influence of these thinkers, a cadre of biblical scholars has begun to blaze the trail for masculinity studies and a variety of queer readings. Here we will mention a select and instructive few.<sup>11</sup> Peter Ben-Smit has written a short introduction, *Masculinity and the Bible*, for those who want to get the lay of the methodological land, and he has also produced an edited volume with Ovidiu Creangă, *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, which serves as a foundational compendium of essays for the field.<sup>12</sup> The paradigmatic scholars for queer readings are surely Teresa J. Hornsby and Ken Stone, editors of the ground-breaking *Bible Trouble: Queer Reading at the*

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10. Hornsby and Stone, *Bible Trouble*, ix, xi. See also Patricia Hill Collins and Valerie Chepp, "Intersectionality," in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, ed. Georgina Waylen et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 57–87; Gale A. Yee, "Gender, Race, Class, and the Etceteras of Our Discipline," *JBL* 139 (2020): 7–26.

11. The point here is not to give a comprehensive list but simply to demonstrate that there are several scholars bringing creative insight to these burgeoning fields. We use *queer* in this introduction as a capacious umbrella term for persons and perspectives that align with and affirm the LGBTQIA+ community.

12. Ben-Smit, *Masculinity and the Bible: Survey, Models, and Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Creangă and Ben-Smit, eds., *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, HBM 62 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2014). Some other full-length volumes include Stephen Wilson, *Making Men: The Male Coming-of-Age Theme in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Rhiannon Graybill, *Are We Not Men? Unstable Masculinity in the Hebrew Prophets* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

*Boundary of Biblical Scholarship*.<sup>13</sup> Other volumes of note include those by Guest, Caryn Tamber-Rosenau, and Amy Kalmanofsky.<sup>14</sup>

Without being exhaustive, here we will briefly excerpt some essential remarks by these scholars. In her groundbreaking work, Butler declares that gender defies the rigid binary opposition of male and female but instead is fluidly constituted by way of the “stylized repetition of acts.”<sup>15</sup> Gender is neither static nor permanent. It is performed. Picking up Butler’s revolutionary concept of gender as performance, Tamber-Rosenau critiques the concept of liminality in relationship to gender, as it assumes that “there is a clear gender boundary or threshold for the characters to straddle.”<sup>16</sup> The construction of gender thus goes beyond physicality, as Hornsby and Guest aver: “Though the lived gender may be more or less aligned with one’s physicality, the performed masculinity or femininity lives out a subversion that maintains queerness; it is masculinity or femininity with a difference.”<sup>17</sup> Here, queerness inherently interrogates, or crashes through, the presumably fixed boundaries that have been socially constructed, and, as Hornsby and Stone claim, the “chaos is indeed a good thing.”

Shawna Dolansky and Sarah Shetman similarly develop this fluidity and complexity of gender in that “gender constructs vary with time and social circumstance” as “gender constructions are relational.”<sup>18</sup> Likewise, manifold features of intersectionality call for redefinition of “hegemonic masculinity”: “As opposed to the strict social hierarchy suggested by the patriarchy paradigm, this results in a heterar-

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13. See also their influential individual works.

14. Guest, *Beyond Feminist Biblical Studies*, Bible in the Modern World 47 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2012). See also Guest’s collaboration with Hornsby in Teresa J. Hornsby and Deryn Guest, *Transgender, Intersex, and Biblical Interpretation*, SemeiaSt 83 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016). Guest, like Stone, has contributed extensively to gender scholarship on Judges. See Tamber-Rosenau, *Women in Drag: Gender and Performance in the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish Literature* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2018); Kalmanofsky, *Gender Play in the Hebrew Bible: The Ways the Bible Challenges Its Gender Norms*, Routledge Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Biblical Criticism 2 (New York: Routledge, 2017).

15. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 174–79.

16. Tamber-Rosenau, *Women in Drag*, 24.

17. Hornsby and Guest, *Transgender, Intersex, and Biblical Interpretation*, 5.

18. Dolansky and Shetman, “Introduction: What Is Gendered Historiography and How Do You Do It?” *JHebS* 19 (2019): 10.

chical organization of society, in which class, age, and gender intersect in various ways to construct complex layers of domination and subjection.”<sup>19</sup> For example, concerning the priestly family rules in Lev 21–22, women can lose or retain their status in relation to priestly males, while men’s status and power too are linked to women. Accordingly, the complex aspects of privilege and power can vary individually, collectively, and relationally.<sup>20</sup>

Such aspects of relationality and fluidity of gender further extend to masculinity. Stephen Wilson expounds (biblical) hegemonic masculinity and contends that masculinity be considered not in contrast to femininity per se but also to boyhood: “manhood is constructed vis-à-vis *boyhood* just as much as *womanhood*.”<sup>21</sup> Inspired by the study on King David by David J. A. Clines, Wilson examines the general conglomeration of “culturally exalted” features of hegemonic masculinity. These features consist of strength (physical military prowess and psychological courage), persuasive/intelligent speech, self-control, honor (through competition, hospitality, or grace), kinship solidarity (for family, tribe, and nation), legal manhood/age, as well as—albeit somewhat dubiously—physical beauty (youthfulness), womanlessness (real men versus immature/infant), and virility/marriage (heir/offspring).<sup>22</sup> Wilson opines that “the *failure-to-come-of-age* theme is used in the book of Judges to indicate symbolically Israel’s national predicament as a fragmented and immature political/religious entity.”<sup>23</sup>

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19. Dolansky and Shetman, “What Is Gendered Historiography,” 10.

20. Dolansky and Shetman, “What Is Gendered Historiography,” 11–16. For a countering epistemological and sociological analysis on gender vis-à-vis historiography, see Susanne Scholz, *The Bible as Political Artifact: On the Feminist Study of the Hebrew Bible, Dispatches* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017).

21. Wilson, *Making Men*, 8, emphasis original. See also Nancy Chodorow, “Family Structure and Feminine Personality,” in *Woman, Culture, and Society*, ed. Michelle Z. Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 43–66; Gilbert H. Herdt, *Guardians of the Flutes: Idioms of Masculinity* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981).

22. Wilson, *Making Men*, 29–46. David J. A. Clines, “David the Man: The Construction of Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible,” in *Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. David J. A. Clines, JSOTSup 205 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 212–41.

23. Wilson, *Making Men*, 22, emphasis original.

Therefore, gender constructs comprise multifaceted features. Wilson posits that the story of Jether in Judg 8 and the Samson cycle in Judg 13–16 exhibit cases of “the converse of the coming-of-age theme—that is, they tell the story of youths who fail to transition to adulthood.”<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, Samson as a man-child both possesses some of the masculine characteristics (“most notably strength, but also rhetorical skill—a function of wisdom”) and lacks others (“self-control, kinship solidarity, marriage, and children”).<sup>25</sup> Hence, as Rhiannon Graybill affirms, “masculinity in the Bible, even hegemonic masculinity, is unstable—‘shaky indeed.’”<sup>26</sup> The same can apply to femininity, as Tamber-Rosenau argues for the Book of Judith, and (Pseudo-Philo’s) LAB 31 claiming that Judg 4–5 is “about women performing femininity, acknowledging the system of sexual exchange of which they are a part, playing with it, and ultimately subverting it, and playing with the signs of maternity while not becoming mothers themselves.”<sup>27</sup>

Like these critics, the contributors to this volume are interested in gender issues and their intersections/intertexts, but particularly in the book of Judges. The choice to engage Judges should not be surprising; it is one of the mainstays for gender analysis.<sup>28</sup> The reasons are myriad, but we will highlight three primary ones that are taken up in this volume. First, the intersection of sex, gender, and sexuality litters the book. Second, it is the poster child for gendered violence, including some of the most gratuitous male-on-female brutality in the Bible. Finally, Judges has an array of uniquely gendered characters, with several performing beyond the binary. Many characters play with or transgress the gender norms of the ancient Israelite world, and there seems to be an implicit intertextual invitation to compare and contrast the gender performance of all the characters as a result. These gender-centered questions lead to another host of ques-

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24. Wilson, *Making Men*, 24.

25. Wilson, *Making Men*, 150. Note also p. 147: “Moreover, both the Jether and Samson stories function as counterpoints to the successful coming of age of David in 1 Sam 17. The relationship between these two tales of failing to come of age and David’s successful maturation signifies the transition of Israel from immaturity to nationhood and political power.”

26. Graybill, *Are We Not Men?*, 26.

27. Tamber-Rosenau, *Women in Drag*, 21–22.

28. See Kelly J. Murphy, “Judges in Recent Research,” *CurBR* 15 (2017): 179–213, esp. 194; Kenneth M. Craig Jr., “Judges in Recent Research,” *CurBR* 15 (2003): 159–85, esp. 170–71.

tions about rhetorical function. Is gender purposefully being used by the authors to make a point? If so, is it about gender or something else entirely, like the moral depravity of the people of Israel, failed leadership, or heroics of the minoritized? If so, what is the historical context of the book as well as of the editorial layers, and how does that affect its intertextual relationship with other books? The contributors in this volume take up many of these queries in the following pages.

### Intertextuality

What exactly is meant by *intertextuality*? The label was coined by Julia Kristeva in 1967, as is well known.<sup>29</sup> By intertextuality she meant that “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.”<sup>30</sup> Kristeva’s intertextuality was influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin’s “dialogism” and “polyphony” in that language is both “contextually shaped” and “intentionally relational,” amid the plurality of heteroglossia inherent in dissonance and ambivalence.<sup>31</sup> Intertextuality is not about dependence of one, in this case, biblical text from another. It is about a conversation between two or more texts. One text interprets and reinterprets the other and vice versa. Meaning and intention are produced in and by the act of the intertextual conversation. Intertextuality is, thus, reception- and production-oriented at the same time, whereby production does not refer to the origin of either texts but to the reception. Intertextuality might be subdivided into intra-, inter-, and extratextuality.<sup>32</sup> Intratextuality points to intertextuality within the same text or book, for example,

29. Kristeva, “Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman,” *Critique* 23 (1967): 438–65.

30. Julia Kristeva, “Word, Dialogue, and Novel,” in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 66.

31. Patricia K. Tull, “Mikhail M. Bakhtin and Dialogical Approaches to Biblical Interpretation,” in *Second Wave Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Marianne Grohmann and Hyun Chul Paul Kim, RBS 93 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019), 180. Mikhail M. Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 259–422. See also Barbara Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship: An Introduction*, SemeiaSt 38 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000).

32. On this division, see Stefan Alkier, “Intertextualität—Annäherung an ein texttheoretisches Paradigma,” in *Heiligkeit und Herrschaft: Intertextuelle Studien zu*

within Judges; intertextuality generally refers to intertextual relationships within the same corpus or canon, for example, the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament; and extratextuality can refer to other texts, contexts, or even readers as texts. Although the concept of text is wide in semiotics studies, we adhere to text as written text, as the starting point, in this volume.

Although Kristeva did not adhere to her concept—she adjusted or even revoked it some years later—it was appetizing to biblical scholars. They could “happily continue doing what they have been doing all along, only under a fancier heading.”<sup>33</sup> Because Kristeva’s intertextuality was welcomed by biblical scholars early on, they have had ample time to refine the methods of intertextual readings of biblical texts. Inasmuch as there have been a plethora of theoretical and philosophical works influenced by Kristeva’s intertextuality, biblical scholarship has enjoyed countless monographs and articles on the methodology or praxis of intertextuality in recent decades.

Michael Fishbane’s exegetical distinction between “tradtum” and “tradio” within the processes of innerbiblical exegesis has been groundbreaking, having reshaped biblical interpretation worldwide ever since its publication.<sup>34</sup> Biblical texts themselves present a mosaic of innumerable yet identifiable intertextual adaptations, be they interactions between the author and the redactor (redaction criticism), comparisons among different manuscripts (text criticism), and the like. Most apparently, among the dual or multiple texts, readers may detect interconnections that comprise a single phrase, a paragraph, or a motif. Cynthia Edenburg differentiates various modes of intertextuality: shared motifs (e.g., “removal of foreign gods,” Judg 10:16), formulaic language (e.g., “to look up and see,” Judg 19:17), type scenes (e.g., “hostility,” Judg 19:3–9, 21–22), genres, parallel accounts, innerbiblical interpretation, allusion, and quotation/citation.<sup>35</sup> Yair Zakovitch essentially sums up with the distinction between “overt” (paraphrase) and “covert” (allusion) innerbiblical interpretation.<sup>36</sup>

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*Heilikeitsvorstellungen und zu Psalm 110*, ed. Dieter Sanger, Biblisch-theologische Studien 55 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2003), 1–26.

33. Serge Frolov, “The Poverty of Parallels: Reading Judges 19 with Ezekiel 16 via the Song of Songs,” ch. 15 in this volume.

34. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985).

35. Edenburg, “Intertextuality, Literary Competence and the Question of Readership: Some Preliminary Observations,” *JSOT* 35 (2010): 131–48.

36. Zakovitch, “Inner-Biblical Interpretation,” in *Reading Genesis: Ten Methods*, ed. Ronald Hendel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 92.

Admittedly, biblical scholars have raised numerous probes and debates concerning the aspects of principles, boundaries, or applicability of intertextuality. The most controversial remains the distinction between diachronic and synchronic approaches, or, put slightly differently, between text-centered and reader-centered approaches. On the one hand, “when the reader takes the place of the author the text potentially becomes ‘a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.’”<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, “the conflict of text-centered and reader-centered exegesis proves to be an unnecessary battle lacking reflection on textual theory.”<sup>38</sup> Regardless of these contentions, Zakovitch’s remark stands legitimate regarding the biblical texts: “No literary unit in the Bible stands alone, isolated and independent, with no other text drawing from its reservoir and casting it in a new light.”<sup>39</sup> In fact, amid those interpretive tensions, we acknowledge that “scholars often cross the border between these approaches.”<sup>40</sup>

Hence, rather than belaboring the ongoing debates of criteria, our goal primarily remains in what intertextuality can do: Why the authors/redactors did it, how we do it, and even the “so what” of these interpretive approaches. The book of Judges, we believe, can provide a paradigmatic resource for such a goal. The book is itself a conglomeration of many texts. Its hinge status within the Enneateuch (within the transition from the Pentateuch to the Former Prophets) makes it function as a hybrid or interrelated book as well.

### Introducing the Essays in This Volume

Gender and intertextuality are the lenses through which the contributors of this volume analyze texts in the book of Judges; some of them more focused on gender, some more on intertextuality, and others on both. Indeed, that might be the value of the volume. Much has already been written about gender in Judges, especially from a feminist perspec-

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37. William Irwin, “Against Intertextuality,” *Philosophy and Literature* 28 (2004): 236.

38. Stefan Alkier, “Intertextuality and the Semiotics of Biblical Texts,” in *Reading the Bible Intertextually*, ed. Richard B. Hays, Stefan Alkier, and Leroy A. Huizenga (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 8.

39. Zakovitch, “Inner-Biblical Interpretation,” 95.

40. Karl William Weyde, “Inner-Biblical Interpretation: Methodological Reflections on the Relationship between Texts in the Hebrew Bible,” *SEA 70* (2005): 300.

tive.<sup>41</sup> By combining intertextual and gender study, the origin, focus, and meaning of the stories can become sharper than by isolated approaches. The male characters and the many—in comparison to other biblical books—female characters interact with other characters within the book of Judges, without Judges in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, and maybe even beyond. Especially the gender aspect might play a decisive role in the intertextual conversation with other texts. Both partners of this conversation gain meaning by and in this process. Judges is popular in biblical research and study, and the last two decades alone have yielded many new commentaries on it.<sup>42</sup>

While numerous feminist, womanist, and minoritized biblical interpretations have been published on the book of Judges, there are few specifically intertextual studies that deal with gender in the book of Judges. The fifteen collected essays in this volume will cover almost all of the key texts, characters, and judges in the book of Judges. This will help readers find examples of how intertextuality together with gender criticism can bring new insight to the book of Judges and, by way of example, to the whole Bible.

Susan E. Haddox identifies the intricate relationship of the triple intertext between Genesis and Judges: Lot and his daughters (Gen 19) with the

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41. See, e.g., Athalya Brenner, ed., *A Feminist Companion to Judges*, FCB 4 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); Brenner, ed., *Judges: Feminist Companion to the Bible*, FCB 2/4 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999); Brenner, "Introduction," in Brenner, *Judges*, 13–17; Susan Ackerman, *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen: Women in Judges and Biblical Israel*, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1998).

42. See the research overview by Murphy, "Judges in Recent Research," of which the bibliography spans eighteen out of thirty-five pages! For older research, see Craig, "Judges in Recent Research." See, among others and without commentaries devoted to more than one biblical book, Marc Z. Brettler, *The Book of Judges*, OTR (London: Routledge, 2002); Trent C. Butler, *Judges*, WBC 8 (Nashville: Nelson, 2009); Serge Frolov, *Judges*, FOTL 6B (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013); Walter Groß, *Richter: Übersetzt und ausgelegt*, HThKAT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2009); David M. Gunn, *Judges*, Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004); Ernst A. Knauf, *Richter*, ZBK 7 (Zurich: TVZ, 2016); J. C. McCann, *Judges*, IBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011); Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008); Roger Ryan, *Judges*, Readings, New Biblical Commentary (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007); Jack M. Sasson, *Judges 1–12: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 6D (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Klaas Spronk, *Judges*, HCOT 7 (Leuven: Peeters, 2019); Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).

Levite and his wife (Judg 19), Abraham and Isaac (Gen 22) with Jephthah and his daughter (Judg 11), and Judah and Tamar (Gen 28) with Caleb and Achsah (Judg 1). In “Bizarro Genesis: An Intertextual Reading of Gender and Identity in Judges,” Haddox points out how Judges reverses Genesis in three main ways, all of which have to do with gender and/or identity. First, Judges lays out the parallel stories in reverse, creating a chiasmus. Second, Judges inverts the gender of the victims, and, finally, it transposes the focus of identity issues, particularly in relationship to the land and God. Genesis moves from extreme violence against out-groups toward a more temperate model of inclusion as the lineage of the promise solidifies, largely via the determination of women. The violence in Judges only accumulates, extinguishing the lives of women and nearly decimating a tribe. Pedigree moves to the background as land rights and the need for political institutions move to the fore. Genesis reinforces kinship ties and God’s continual intervention. Judges lacks God’s direct involvement and society falls apart. It is almost impossible to read these biblical books and not think of the other. They are both using stories of gender and violence to share community identity, yet in very different ways and with very different points to make.

“The Assertiveness of Achsah: Gender and Intertextuality in the Reception History of Caleb’s Daughter” also examines the story of Achsah in Judg 1:11–15 (and Josh 15:13–19). Joy A. Schroeder begins by pointing out the remarkability of Achsah’s story because it is only one of two in the Hebrew Bible in which women directly ask for and receive land. Thereafter, she forges through the history of interpretation of this remarkable female character, with emphasis on early modern and nineteenth-century commentators. In general, males of this generation find Achsah a discontented woman and ungrateful daughter. A few praise her, but often in a way that dampens her personality or portrays her requests allegorically rather than literally. Only in the late 1800s, when American and European women began to fight for and gain property rights, did interpreters (mostly women) latch onto Achsah as an exemplar for that aim. Schroeder concludes that Achsah’s intertext with nineteenth-century interpreters, and their intertextual readings of her via other biblical passages, ultimately reinforced each interpreter’s ideologies of gender.

Unlike most women in the Hebrew Bible, who are usually bound up in their identities as wives, mothers, or daughters, Deborah and Jael are portrayed as leaders and heroes in Judg 4–5. According to Pamela J. W. Nourse, in her essay, “Into the Hand of a Woman: Deborah and Jael in

Judges 4–5,” the women are both painted in a positive light, yet their characterizations are distinct when the language used to describe them is scrupulously analyzed. Deborah receives the rare title of “prophetess” and is the sole female depicted as judging Israel. Both descriptions give Deborah a leadership role that comes with communal authority and put her on par with the other prophet-judges, Moses and Samuel. Several of her other actions are rare, and the feminine labels as “wife” and “mother” should not be taken literally, but metaphorical and thus nontraditionally. Deborah is no stereotype. Jael, on the other hand, does seem to fit expected roles. While Deborah is commanding in a military, judicial, and social context, Jael is placed in a domestic setting. While she does not interact with her husband or any children, Jael’s actions still evoke stereotypical imagery. She mothers in Judg 4 and is sexualized in Judg 5. Yet Nourse argues that Jael’s actions ultimately subvert the assumed connotations. Though motherly, she takes life, and though the presumptive penetrated, she penetrates. Though unique and independent women, together, they conquer an enemy and are praised.

In “Nameless in the Nevi’im: Intertextuality between Female Characters in the Book of Judges,” Elizabeth H. P. Backfish examines the rhetorical effect of the named and unnamed female characters who “exert themselves” (following Susan Ackerman) in the story. She argues that when read intertextually, didactic contrasts become apparent; the named figures function as exemplars for Israel’s behavior, while the unnamed ones illustrate inappropriate behavior or the consequences thereof. Moreover, there is a structural, chiasmic pairing of the women and their male counterparts, which underscores traits that should be deemed commendable (faithfulness) or flawed (unfaithfulness), reflecting the downward spiral of depravity in the book. All this exerts a rhetorical mimetic pressure on the audience to identify with the weaknesses of the anonymous female characters and aspire to be more like the named ones.

J. Cornelis de Vos, in “The Caleb-Achsah Episode: Judges 1:10–15,” explores the intertextual relationships between Judg 1:10–15, its parallel in Josh 15:13–19, and the David-Abigail narrative in 1 Sam 25. After demonstrating that the episode in Judg 1 is the latest, de Vos proposes that the authors of Judges adapted the earlier Josh 15 story of Caleb, Achsah, and Othniel and then added it to the beginning of Judges in order to reinforce the Davidic-Judahite predilection of their (likely postexilic) edition. The most obvious edit is the transformation of Caleb’s inheritance of Hebron into Judah’s conquest of the city instead (Josh 15:13; Judg 1:10). Some-

thing more difficult to explain is why they would keep the Caleb-Achsah narrative despite the contradictions that result. Perhaps their overriding purpose was to connect two assertive donkey-riding wives of Calebites, Achsah and Abigail. The intertextual link would draw attention not only to shrewd females (which may or may not have been humorous to a contemporary audience), but also to a shrewd king—David, the Judahite. Ultimately, we cannot know the intentions of the authors, but the intertextual play is undoubtedly entertaining.

In “Motherhood, Violence, and Power in the Book of Judges,” Ranfrid I. Lasine Thelle poses the following question: “Does Judges toy with the specter of motherhood as reduced to the mere function of keeping the tribes alive, as breeding machines?” Deborah is referred to as “the mother of the tribes of Israel” and keeps the tribes of Israel alive. However, she is not described as a mother of real children. The other mothers, such as those of Samson and Micah, cannot protect their children—and mothering behavior can even be lethal (for Sisera). At the end of the book of Judges, women become breeding machines in acts of mass rape by the Benjaminites, in order to secure offspring for the tribe of Benjamin. The violence is expressed as taking wombs (סרר), an act Sisera’s mother also expects from him. Thus, focusing on the motif of motherhood in Judges elucidates concepts of power and violence.

In “Struck Down by a Woman: Abimelech’s Humiliating Intertextual Death,” Zev Farber describes how humiliating the death of Abimelech is when read intertextually. In order to do so, he reconstructs several layers of redactional work in the Abimelech account and connects them with compositional phases in related texts, namely the story about Uriah being killed (2 Sam 11) and the story about the death of Saul (1 Sam 31). In the first, as part of the story of the battle in which Uriah was killed, an explicit reference is made to the death of Abimelech by a woman. In the second, Saul asks his armor-bearer to kill him to prevent someone who is uncircumcised from killing him, thereby saving Saul’s honor as king of Israel. When these three accounts are read together intertextually, the story of Abimelech becomes even more ignoble. Abimelech is struck down by a woman, whereas Uriah is not. He asks his armor-bearer to kill him so that no one can say that he was killed by a woman and thereby lose his honor. At this request, his servant unhesitatingly kills him. In contrast, the servant of Saul refuses the king’s order, and Saul falls on his own sword.

“Fathers, Daughters, and Problematic Verbal Commitments in Judges” are the themes Richard D. Nelson addresses. He analyzes and compares

three father(s)-daughter(s) relations in three stories: Caleb and Achsah (Judg 1), Jephthah and his daughter (Judg 10–12), and the fallen fathers and their captured daughters of Jabesh-Gilead and the daughters of Shiloh (Judg 21). Fathers, in a patrimonial society, can give their daughters away as brides. As the Jephthah and Shiloh stories show, the brides should be virgins. Caleb's verbal commitment to give away his daughter as a prize can be considered less problematic than the others. Jephthah's vow leads to the sacrifice of his own daughter and only offspring. The two oaths by the elders of the congregation are clearly problematic because they would lead to the extinction of certain tribes and to the virgin daughters' loss of their potential families. But by the end of Judges, the father-daughter relationship is treated with contempt.

Jennifer J. Williams uses the concept of liminality and the postcolonial notion of unhomeliness to analyze the Judg 13 narrative about the conception of Samson in "A Mother's Womb: The Collision of Politics and the Home in Judges 13." The wife of Manoah is the only one who is informed by the messenger of God about her conception. Even when Manoah wants the messenger to come to both spouses, he reappears only to the wife. Williams scrutinizes the Hebrew wording of the messenger's annunciations and concludes that at the second meeting, the wife *is* pregnant without having had any obvious sexual interaction with her husband. Thus, the pregnancy is initiated by God. This is an invasion of God's politics into the homeliness of the woman who, being pregnant and thus in a liminal state, does not tell her husband that God wants her son to be a military leader. God uses the womb, the homeliest space of a woman, for political aims, whereas the wife wants her son to have a normal life.

Many more males than females cry in the Hebrew Bible, and they cry for more reasons as well, the most common being the loss of someone close. Thus, there is no statistical evidence to suppose that crying is primarily a female act. Nor is there evidence that the Timnite woman used crying as a gendered tool to have Samson tell her the solution of his riddle, argues Shelley L. Birdsong in "Rereading Samson's Weepy Wife in Judges 14: An Intertextual Evaluation of Gender and Weeping." However, this is what exegetes have often stated in the reception history of this tale. Through a close reading of the text and the aid of cultural and psychological studies about crying, Birdsong shows that such a view of the Timnite's crying is a product of cultural gender bias, mainly by males. The Timnite cried to save her family from death; undoubtedly anyone in such a circumstance, regardless of gender, would do the same.

In “One of These Things Is Not Like the Other: Delilah and the Prostitute in Gaza,” Tammi J. Schneider expounds the gendered roles Delilah plays in her intertextual relationships with other characters, such as Samson’s mother, the Timnite bride, the prostitute in Gaza, and especially Samson. A brief review of the reception history on Delilah vis-à-vis Samson conveys that over and against Samson the hero, Delilah has assumed the status of a villainous *femme fatale*. Despite the negative labeling, Delilah stands as a unique character. As the only named woman in the Samson narrative, Delilah philologically forms intertextual contrasts with other women whose depictions as “wife,” “whore,” or “prostitute” make Delilah stand apart. Without ethnic designation, geographical association, or family ties, Delilah is an independent character. Eight verbs associated with Delilah as the subject further underscore her unique role, defying conventional female characterizations. Ten verbs with Delilah as the object also depict her agency and power, describing events in which she has survived and prevailed in ordeals against men of immense strength.

Judges 17–18, a seemingly isolated pericope, nonetheless connects the Danites to Samson the Danite in Judg 13–16 as well as the Levite from Judah to another Levite of Ephraim in Judg 19–21. In her essay, “Jonathan’s (Great) Grandmother Is a Daughter of a Foreign Priest!': Other Women, Other Priests, and Other Gods in Judges 17–18,” Soo Kim Sweeney expounds the text-critical matters of the hidden, hanging *nun* in the name of Jonathan’s grandfather (Judg 18:30), which can denote either Moses or Manasseh. Such complexity of the proper names expands to further interrelated characters pregnant with the issues of intertextuality and gender. Both Moses, with his son Gershom, and Manasseh, with his Egyptian mother Asenath, insinuate foreignness and exogamy. Micah too entails polemic against northern Israel, through the allusions to the Jacob-Rachel couple and the Ephraimite King Jeroboam. Likewise, these literary threads portray Luce Irigaray’s “womb-earth-factory” metaphor of body politics, causing Micah’s mother, though a leader figure, to disappear into the private zone and degrading Zipporah the wife of Moses and Asenath the mother of Manasseh into dangerous foreign/otherness. Nevertheless, amid the polemics against the Danites and northern tribes, Kim Sweeney elucidates, these foreign/other characters embraced and looked after their others for altruistic reasons.

The nameless woman in Judg 19 is described as a “secondary woman,” “young woman,” “slave,” and “woman.” In “Lost in the Text(s): The פילגש in Judg 19,” Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher intertextually examines various roles

implied by פִּילִגֶשֶׁת. Though echoing other occurrences, the term פִּילִגֶשֶׁת defies typical portrayals of femininity. This woman is placed on the threshold between inside and outside, between belonging and being the other. She is not merely an allusion to the idolatrous wrongdoings of Israel; rather, this woman displays self-determination, taking initiative and returning to her father's house. Yet, ample intertextual allusions (e.g., Gen 22; Exod 2; Deut 22; 2 Kgs 9; Jer 31; Ezek 16; Hos 2) insinuate comparable expressions and themes of covenant reconciliation. Yet Judg 19 twists any expectation of Israel's virtue or dignity into the depersonalization, devaluation, and dismemberment of the woman, cold-bloodedly executed by male offenders after being led in by her own Levite husband. These images insinuate the fragile and dangerous character of Israel's identity.

Explicating the interpretive tension or mutuality between textual evidences on the one hand and new meanings transposed by readers on the other, Serge Frolov elucidates the gender issues pervading two texts that represent and connect the Enneateuch and the prophets in his essay, "The Poverty of Parallels: Reading Judges 19 with Ezekiel 16 via the Song of Songs." More than the anonymity of Samson's mother and Micah's mother, that even the main characters—the Levite and his spouse—are unnamed is quite unusual. This intertextually parallels the anonymous couple in the Song of Songs, and also the metaphorical couple of male deity (YHWH) and female community (Lady Israel/Zion). Thereafter, Frolov presents and investigates the intertextuality of Judg 19 against Ezek 16. The controversial apostasy or unfaithfulness of the spouse to the husband, leading to the haunting imagery of gang rape, probes issues of theodicy and intervention (or lack thereof) in light of the modern-day Holocaust. Whereas God restores the promiscuous Lady Israel in Ezek 16, the Levite in Judg 19 mutilates the body of his spouse—metaphorically evoking the dismembered body of Israel (both ancient and modern)—even when she returned to him.

Gregory T. K. Wong explores the contact points of the two diametrically opposed approaches of intertextuality, (diachronic) author/reader-centered and (synchronic) reader-centered, in "Synchrony versus Diachrony—Reader- versus Author-Centered: Shall the Twain Ever Meet?" To do so, Wong examines two narratives of pledges where women are victimized—Jephthah's daughter (Judg 11) and the kidnapped daughters who are to be wives for Benjaminites (Judg 21). Both texts contain similar plots and character descriptions, which, Wong opines, adumbrate Judg 11 as the source text (part of the Deuteronomistic core) and Judg 21 as the alluding

text (part of a later editorial epilogue in Judg 17–21). Diachronic correlations associated with gender—such as virgins and dances linked to the daughter of Jephthah, virgins of Jabesh-Gilead, and daughters of Shiloh—engender the synchronic dialogues of these two narratives, imbued with meaning through critiques of war, pledge, and (male) leadership.

These essays themselves will thus showcase diverse methodological orientation and hermeneutical outcomes as to how to read the book of Judges with regard to intertextuality (including innerbiblical exegesis and reception history) as well as gender (including feminism, masculinity, and so on). By projecting and presenting multifaceted cases of intertextuality and gender, the essays in this volume can become enlivening dialogue partners toward future directions and developments of gender and intertextual studies.

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