

Masculinity Studies of the Hebrew Bible: The First Two Decades

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Abstract

Masculinity studies of the Hebrew Bible has emerged in the past two decades as a complement to feminist criticism, focusing on the ways men and masculinity in the biblical texts are social constructs. Masculist interpretation has utilized materials and methods taken from the field of masculinity studies, especially psychoanalytic and anthropological cross-cultural approaches. In the early development of the field, the emphasis has been on gathering data and examining the constructs of particular men in specific books. From these studies, several common traits have emerged as representative of biblical masculinity. As the field matures, scholars are broaching broader theoretical and structural concerns and questioning some of the assumptions of earlier studies, while still valuing the insights they provide. Additional methods are also being brought into conversation with masculist interpretation.

Keywords

Cross-cultural studies, gender, gender criticism, Hebrew Bible, hegemonic masculinity, honor and shame, masculinity, masculist interpretation, phallus, psychoanalytic criticism

Introduction

Biblical interpretation of men, by men, and for men was the normative mode for most of the history of the biblical texts and of biblical criticism. Yet, until the past few decades, portrayals of men were interpreted as the human norm and not studied explicitly as the products of constructed gender. As the field of gender studies has grown and made its way into biblical criticism, the study of masculinity has gained increasing importance. Within biblical criticism, masculinity

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studies complements feminist criticism and queer theory by examining the social constructs and power structures at play in the textual presentation of men and masculinity.

Because the field of masculinity studies is relatively new, terminology has not yet solidified. The lack of vocabulary that is parallel to ‘feminist’ and ‘feminism’ demonstrates the general unmarked nature of masculinity in cultural structures, including language. Femininity is contrasted not with the explicitly masculine, but with the norm, which identifies the masculine as default human. I will use the terms ‘masculist’ and ‘masculism’ to refer to the interpretive strategy that studies masculinity as a constructed concept and recognizes multiple forms of valid masculinities (see also Goldingay 1995: 161; Olson 2006: 77). Thus, masculist interpretation as used here analyzes and critiques the status quo dominated by hegemonic masculinity, rather than championing the promotion of men’s interests over those of women or promoting an anti-feminist perspective.

General Approaches to Masculinity Studies

History

A brief history of the development and perspectives of masculinity studies as a discipline will provide context for the particular approaches employed by masculist biblical scholars. Interest in masculinity studies developed in the late 1970s and 1980s, in part as a response to the feminist movement. This first wave of men’s studies focused on exploring characteristics of men, especially on reclaiming aspects of manhood perceived as lost in the industrial age. One example, which flourished in the 1990s, is the mythopoetic movement, which decries industrial society’s lack of ritual to initiate males into full manhood. Robert Bly is one of the major figures in the movement, outlining the problems of industrial masculinity in *Iron John* (1990). Bly draws on Jungian archetypes as manifested in myths like Grimms’ fairy tales to restore a sense of traditional manhood. The Promise Keepers is another movement dating to 1990 that tries to restore masculine identity in its members. Founded by football coach Bill McCartney, the group functions primarily within Christianity, rather than following the broader spirituality of the mythopoetic movement (McCartney 1992). The Promise Keepers aims to instill the principles of responsibility, leadership, and faithfulness among its followers, but has been criticized for advocating strict gender roles with the man as the authority figure and head of the household. Some aspects of the movement, however, promote egalitarian values in the family, emphasizing the expressive component of masculinity and not just the instrumental.

In the academic world, men’s studies programs began to develop alongside women’s studies programs. Rather than focusing on reclaiming men’s identities and traditional roles, men’s studies programs looked at social constructions of

masculinity. R. W. Connell has been particularly influential in theorizing about masculinity on the basis of both anthropological and psychoanalytic perspectives and gives a concise summary of the development of the field (2005).

Psychoanalytic Studies

Psychological approaches to masculinity arose with Sigmund Freud (1962) and the development of psychoanalysis. Freud's work on the Oedipus complex initiated an exploration of the complexities of masculinity. In his studies of gender and homosexuality, Freud came to the conclusion that people contain both masculine and feminine elements, which are intertwined and expressed to different degrees, so that humans are inherently bisexual. Masculinity is a multilayered phenomenon that develops through the complex relationships of a man with his parents as objects of desire, his primordial masculinity and castration anxiety, and later social interactions, so that masculinity arises through constantly shifting emotional attachments. For Freud, there was no such thing as a pure, unfiltered masculinity. Later psychoanalysis, however, simplified the idea of masculinity, ignoring much of the complexity of development between masculine and feminine forces implicit in Freud's ideas. In this simplified approach, heterosexuality developed naturally and unproblematically while alternate expressions of gender were viewed as psychological disorders (Connell 2005: 8-12).

Carl Jung (1953) accepted the presence of masculine and feminine forces in all people, but related them in a different way than did Freud. He identified his ideas of the socially constructed persona with the masculine, and the repressed, subconscious anima with the feminine. The polarities between them were expressed by contrasting unconscious archetypes, which can be balanced, but never overcome. This idea of archetypes existing in the collective unconscious was expanded by later generations and forms the basis of many of the mythopoetic masculinity movements. Later theorists took these ideas a step further and formulated the concept of a core gender identity. Men either identified as masculine or feminine and the balance between masculine and feminine archetypes of Jung or the more complex relationships expressed by Freud were largely rejected (Connell 2005: 12-14).

Alfred Adler (1956) took gender ideas in a different direction than did his colleague Freud, focusing on the social implications. He understood the masculine and feminine elements existing in a person to be in tension, but also noted that the masculine was more highly valued in social institutions. Thus the feminine tended to be rejected through an excessive emphasis on the masculine. Since it was frequently associated with aggression, which was particularly problematic in the aftermath of World War I, Adler saw this imbalance as harmful to society. In later developments, the Frankfurt School applied similar theories of gender to the development of authoritarian or democratic personalities in society. Jacques Lacan

(2007) envisioned masculinity as a concept fulfilling a particular social and symbolic space, in which the phallus plays a central and dominant role, but is explicitly disassociated from the penis. This idea has been taken up by later theorists, such as Judith Halberstam (1998), who explore the concept of female masculinities.

Anthropological Studies

Ethnographic studies form the basis of the anthropological approach. In particular, theories of masculinity have been elucidated through cross-cultural analysis. Non-urban Mediterranean societies, especially in Spain and Greece (Brandes 1980; Gilmore 1987), and Polynesia (Strathern 1988), have figured prominently in studies of masculinity. Biblical scholars have used these types of studies most often working under the assumption, for better or worse, that those cultures are more similar to the agrarian societies in biblical times than are post-industrial U.S. or Britain. Maurice Berger, B. Wallace, and S. Watson (1995), Harry Brod (1987), Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne (1994), among others, have contributed significant studies. While cross-cultural generalizations have their drawbacks, including glossing over features particular to a given culture and tending to focus on the 'other', they are useful for drawing out common elements of masculinity, some of which are discussed below.

Hegemonic Masculinity

The label 'hegemonic masculinity', coined by Tim Carrigan, is frequently employed in discussions of masculinity (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 1987). It expresses the idea that masculinity is usually tightly entwined with power; thus studying masculinity involves analyzing the competing power structures in a given society. Hegemonic masculinity is the specific gender construction that is dominant in cultural and political power structures. Even if no actual men embody that form of masculinity, the combination of traits still dominates as the ideal masculinity because of its association with power. Thus, a particular gender construction is imitated and propagated by those who seek to rise in the hierarchy of status and power. Nevertheless, hegemonic masculinity is not stable, but is continuously shaped by competing subversive masculinities and the political tensions these represent. Nor can masculinity be defined simply in a dichotomy with femininity, but rather it is expressed along a continuum that must be continually contested with other men, according to the characteristics of the current hegemonic norms. Cross-cultural studies have demonstrated a number of typical components of hegemonic masculinity. While not being equally important or present in all patriarchal cultures, these features represent common ways masculinity is performed in many social contexts.

Military Might

One of the most common characteristics of masculinity cross-culturally is valor in warfare. War has primarily been the domain of men, and a literal field for contesting masculinity. Because of the close linkage between war and masculinity, male sexual prowess is frequently described with military imagery. The weapons of war are often associated with men's virility. In modern times, guns can refer to a man's strength (powerful biceps) or to potency (as a phallic symbol). In ancient times and non-industrial cultures, the equivalent characteristics were conveyed by bows and arrows or staffs and spears. For example, in the ancient Near East bows were a frequent metonym for warriors, and a warrior's fate could be ascertained by the fate of his bow (Haddox 2011: 82-86). One such example occurs in the Assyrian friezes showing the king's defeat of a besieged city. The king is displayed with his bow taut and drawn, while the defeated soldiers are displayed as small figures, forced to cut their bows in half (Chapman 2004). Victory in battle thus increases masculinity, whereas loss is emasculating. A defeated man could maintain some degree of masculinity if he acted bravely in the face of severe opposition.

Bodily Integrity

The inability to defend oneself from bodily penetration severely compromised masculinity, whether it was by weapons in warfare, corporal punishment as a slave, or sexual penetration. Because the appearance of emasculation creates anxiety about a loss of power and prestige, males in power, or aspiring to power, strongly assert their dominance in defending their bodies from penetration or other abuse. While asserting one's role as the active partner in heterosexual intercourse was necessary, it was far more important in homosexual relations. The insertive partner can maintain or even increase his masculinity, because he is penetrating another man, but the masculinity of the passive partner is compromised. The passive partner loses status by being placed in the female position (Loizos 1994: 72).

Honor

The honor and shame model, developed primarily from studies of Mediterranean cultures (Gilmore 1987), has been widely applied to analyses of masculinity in biblical studies, focusing particularly on the ability of a man to show control of the sexuality of the women in his household. Although the model has been criticized as overly simplistic for linking honor and shame too closely to gender and for ignoring differences between cultures, it has proved a useful way of looking at certain features of social relations. According to this model, women

are expected to remain virgins before marriage and to be faithful after marriage. Men are expected to guard the women's sexual fealty. The honor of men is thus largely dependent on the shame, that is, the chastity, of the women in their household. Outside sexual activity is a threat to the honor of the males responsible for the women, constituting a challenge to the masculinity of the father or husband by the male who is cavorting with the woman. Illicit sex, therefore, is largely viewed as a competition between males, with challenges requiring a strong response. That response is often directed at the woman, not only because she is easier to target, but also because she casts aspersion on the honor and masculinity of her guardian by going to another male without official consent. When a daughter has sex before betrothal, she dishonors her father. The worst dishonor a man can suffer, however, is if he is cuckolded by his wife. In part, this is because when she turns to another man, she leaves her husband open to the implication that he was somehow deficient in his ability to provide for her, in material or sexual terms or both (Gilmore 1987: 96-97). The dishonor increases for the husband if he knows about the affair, but does nothing, which shows that he was not only unable to prevent the affair, but also to end it (Brandes 1980: 88).

Virility

A visible sign of a man's masculinity is the ability to reproduce. A concern with paternity underlies the strong emphasis on female fidelity in marriage. In order for a man to know that his offspring are indeed his own, he must ensure that he is the only one having intercourse with his wife. The children themselves, especially sons, serve, among other things, as proof of their father's virility. Although a female who is childless is often castigated as barren, in many areas of the world the male is considered the real source of the child, while the mother serves as an incubator. The language of seed, sowing, insemination, and so forth is quite common cross-culturally. In this model, the male provides the seed, while the female is the soil (Delaney 1987: 35-48). Soil can be fertile or barren, but it ultimately plays a passive role. The active role of the male must be continually proven.

Provisioning

Another component of masculinity is a man's ability to provide for his household. Failure to do so can be grounds for divorce (Kelle 2005: 67-69). Insufficient provisions could also provide a rationale for the women in his household to stray and increase a man's dishonor. Related to this, hospitality was an important component of honor. Hospitality not only shows a man's generosity, but also his ability to provide not only enough for his own family, but for visitors as well (Herzfeld 1987).

Spatiality

A man provides for his household and has authority over it, but the gendered nature of space in the household defines particular masculine and feminine roles. In most patriarchal societies, the interior space of the home, or the private realm, is where women have power, while the exterior or public space is the domain of men. Since politics, large-scale economics, and communal religious rituals are usually performed in the public realm, men have the dominant visible power in a society. Thus, men are expected to spend most of their time and energy in the public realm, and those who too often frequent the private realm are ridiculed as behaving like women.

Masculinity Studies of the Bible

Masculist interpretation has been applied to biblical texts as a way of gaining further insight into the motivations, relationships, and power structures embedded in the texts. The society of ancient Israel, like most societies, was patriarchal, and men dominated the public realm. The biblical texts were written, probably exclusively, by men and focused largely on male characters and concerns. Masculist biblical interpretation, like feminist interpretation, employs a broad range of approaches and methodologies, utilizing in particular the psychological and anthropological perspectives outlined above. Many of the assumptions about masculinity in the Hebrew Bible, particularly hegemonic masculinity, are drawn from textual descriptions and iconography throughout the ancient Near East, especially Assyria and Babylonia. Information specifically about Israelite masculinity has to be drawn from the biblical texts themselves. Most of the masculinity studies to date have been about individual figures or genres, while a few have examined masculinities on a broader scale. In addition, the importance of the body has driven a number of studies. Several of these studies are included in Ovidiu Creangă's edited volume *Men and Masculinities in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond* (2010a), the first collection specifically focused on masculist interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. Creangă co-edited a second volume published in 2014, *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, which continues an exploration of particular masculinities in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, including some portrayals of masculinities not focused on particular men (Creangă and Smit 2014). As these studies form the basis of continuing work in Hebrew Bible masculist criticism, it is worth examining them individually, along with articles scattered through other sources. There have been a few monograph-length works on masculinity studies in the Hebrew Bible. Two came out in 2011 and another is forthcoming in 2015 (Haddox 2011; Macwilliam 2011; Wilson 2015), with more in the process of development.

After treating studies of the body, this article will examine studies of particular texts by genre, followed by the remaining general works, recognizing that there is some overlap between categories. While some masculist biblical scholars rely more heavily on the psychoanalytic or anthropological approaches above, most use insights from both, combining them with literary and historical criticisms. Like other gender critics, masculist scholars are methodological opportunists, united by a topic, rather than an approach. Hence, a division by genre is more fruitful than one by methodology.

Textual Bodies

One of the early masculist biblical scholars was Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, who employed a primarily psychoanalytic approach to the text in his provocatively titled work, *God's Phallus* (1994). He explored some of the difficulties that worshipping a male deity causes for male worshippers. The embodiment of God as a male with a phallus, even if it is not a physical body and there are prohibitions against representing it, requires the worshipper to adjust. He asserted that with respect to a male god, men must be feminized, because the natural assumed relationship between parties is heterosexual. If God is male, the people must be female. This means that men also must be female. Consequently, if the men are female, then the women must be excluded from the cult, because their natural complementarity with the male deity would threaten the male position. 'To come face to face with God is to see oneself in the position of wife' (Eilberg-Schwartz 1994: 148). Eilberg-Schwartz argued that this gender bending explains the commandment that the men abstain from sexual relations before approaching God. They have to remove themselves from the position of husband and prepare to be wives. Furthermore, women with their natural 'wifeness' must be excluded from the cult, which is accomplished by linking women with impurity. Gale A. Yee also articulates homoerotic implications for the relationships of males to Yhwh, noting that males are 'Other' with respect to God. Thus male tensions are often placed on and symbolized by women (Yee 2003: 100; see also Kelle 2008; Moore 2001).

Eilberg-Schwartz's work has been influential, but also criticized. The specific image of Yhwh as the husband of Israel is uncommon outside of the prophets (and a metaphorical reading of Song of Songs), although categorizing apostasy as fornication pervades the Deuteronomistic History. Even more overtly sexual gods were worshipped in the area and there is little evidence that natural complementarity prevailed. While in some cases priestesses attended the temples of male gods and priests those of female gods, this was not universal (Bucher 1988: 47). In the prophetic texts, placing the male audience in the position of the wife seems intended to be rhetorically shocking, rather than an expression of unconscious anxieties (see Kelle 2008). Despite these difficulties, Eilberg-Schwartz does raise some important points for consideration. In a society in

which masculinity was a common representation of power, Yhwh had to be perceived as the most masculine. Everyone else was in a subordinate position. This idea is the basis of Eilberg-Schwartz's explanation of the odd episode in Exod. 4.24-26, in which Yhwh seeks to slay Moses after sending him back to Egypt. Zipporah saves him by circumcising their son and touching his genitals with the blood.

God's attack on Moses is in part an attack on his masculinity. That is why circumcision appeases God. The blood of circumcision is a symbolic acknowledgment that a man's masculinity belongs to God. Submitting to God and surrendering one's masculinity amounts to the same thing (Eilberg-Schwarz 1994: 160).

Similarly, Eilberg-Schwartz interprets Jacob's wrestling with the angel in Gen. 32.25-33 as surrendering masculinity through a genital injury, understanding 'hip' as a euphemism (1994: 156; see also Smith 1990). Jacob has to subordinate his masculinity to Yhwh. When he does, his name is changed to Israel, and he becomes a patriarch. He notes that in Hosea's version of the story (Hos. 12.4), Jacob is explicitly described as wrestling in his manhood (אִוֹנוֹ).

Roland Boer has written a number of studies that explore various aspects of masculinity in the biblical texts, including one focused on 'the testicular logic of Biblical Hebrew' (2011). Through exploring three terms that he translates with various expressions for 'testicles', Boer endeavors 'to uncover the way a gonad linguistic economy stretches out to include courage, strength, fear and trembling, active participation in their own right, and the pressing need for males to bind them up and protect them from harm (usually rendered with the innocent "girding one's loins")' (2011: 41). Boer argues that the terms *יֶרֶךְ*, *מִתְנִים*, and *הַלְצִים* have semantic ranges that include testicles, testicles, and penis, respectively. Even when the context argues for a broader translation (loins or thigh), the gonadic connotations arise in the reader's mind and infuse the text with a masculine embodiment. Boer's work is always highly entertaining and provocative, and he pushes the connotations of the terms at least as far as they will bear.

Continuing the line of Boer's and Eilberg-Schwartz's work with the notion of the maleness of God's body, Alan Hooker (2014) considers the *כְּבוֹד* or 'glory' of God as a manifestation of a divine phallus. He notes that in several places in the biblical text, including Exod. 33.18, Isa. 17.4, and Ps. 16.9, *כְּבוֹד* can refer to 'body', as well as its usual translation of 'glory'. He uses Lacan's idea that the phallus is the ultimate signifier to understand the divine phallus as the representation of God's glory. He observes that the priests must cover their male parts when serving on the altar, perhaps to distance themselves from their masculinity in the presence of the masculine deity. In Genesis 9, exposure of the patriarchal penis led to disruption of the family. To preserve the relationship with Moses, God did not allow him to look upon the divine phallus, but only the backside.

Language suggestive of a divine phallus is also found in Ezek. 1.26-28, which describes the throne vision including loins and a fiery appendage shining like a bow in a cloud. Since Roland Boer associates the word translated as loins with testicles, it is not a stretch to see the כַּבֵּד as the divine phallus. Hooker stresses the nature of Yhwh's blessings of fertility, as also implied in the 'heart of בֶּשֶׁר' ('flesh' which carries the semantic range of 'penis') that God promises the people in Ezekiel. Hooker thus associates Yhwh's כַּבֵּד with his masculinity, at times even referencing the divine phallus, but also manifesting masculine virtues such as military strength, fertility, and power.

The idea of the masculine body as both a body and a textual construction is the object of Samuel Tongue's study of Jacob's wrestling with the angel at the Jabbok in Gen. 32.25-32 (2012). Like Eilberg-Schwartz and Boer, Tongue is interested in the ways in which the text engages the reader in gazing at bodies through the slippery medium of the text. In a patriarchal text, however, male bodies elude the gaze, assumed as normative and often excluded from 'view'. He observes, 'The male writer assumes the facticity of his own body and thus need not question its constitution' (2012: 28). The male body of Jacob becomes visible in the wounding, but the elusive language of the hip and thigh skirts around the sensitive area of the phallus. The divine body of God/the angel is even more obscured. Tongue uses Michael Symmons-Roberts's poem 'Choreographies' (2004: 25) as an intertext, both to reveal the physicality of the wrestling match and to show how the specifically male bodies are still obscured.

The instability of the male textual body is also considered by Rhiannon Graybill (2011). Created by males, this body resists representation and the male gaze. 'The textual economy of Isaiah 29 is a thoroughly masculine space, and the bodies addressed are undoubtedly male bodies. And yet these male bodies are implicated in a radical denial of knowledge and refusal of signification' (2011: 16). Graybill reads the body in Isaiah 29 through the lens of Freud's concept of the uncanny. In many senses, the body is subject to excess, blind and trembling, but not from wine. The body is called upon to blind itself and stupefy itself, in an act of self-negation, unable then to read the book containing the vision, which is then totally inaccessible. The passage resembles the call narrative in Isaiah 6, in which the people deny knowledge, both cognitively and somatically (Graybill 2011: 21). As gendered bodies, these stopped-up entities resist cultural norms: 'In particular, the bodies in Isaiah 29 challenge the facile association of masculinity with rationality, discourse and representation, and of femininity with irrationality, sensuality, and the failure of language' (2011: 22). Arguing that the feminine is excluded from Isaiah and prophets in general, represented only as the textual products of male fantasy, Graybill focuses on the masculine body, which likewise resists signification (p. 23). Because of this resistance, the male textual body enacts the uncanny, making the familiar unfamiliar and destabilizing norms of gender schemas, allowing for new possibilities of reading gender in the prophets.

Graybill's forthcoming monograph (2016 projected), provisionally entitled, *Men in Travail: Masculinity, Embodiment and the Hebrew Prophets*, examines how the prophets, specifically Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, perform and embody masculinity. She explores questions of the openness, pain, and pleasure of the prophetic body and how these traits run counter to hegemonic masculinities based around ideas of perfection and domination through using gender and masculinity studies and queer theory. Each prophet is explored through a different intertext to bring out the relevance to contemporary conversations on gender.

Disabled Bodies

Also troubling the categories of gender norms is the idea of disabled bodies, explored in the volume *This Abled Body*, edited by Hector Avalos, Sarah J. Melcher, and Jeremy Schipper (2007). The intersection of bodily impairment and gender is a ripe field for study, somewhat tangential to this review, so I will treat only the article focused specifically on gender and masculinity (Hentrich 2007). In the Hebrew Bible, the image of the abled body reflects the idea of a perfect body made in the image of God. Hentrich analyzes a few cases of disability, specifically that of Meribaal/Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 4. The son of Benjamin who was dropped as a child and rendered unable to walk had reduced masculinity, and he was not a threat to David in assuming the kingship. Hentrich discusses his possible exclusion from cultic duties of the kingship because of his disability, but does not include his reduced ability to fight and lead the people into battle. As noted above, warfare and victory is an important component of masculinity. The rationale the people gave for wanting a king was to lead them into battle (1 Sam. 8.19-20). If Meribaal could not do so, he would not be acclaimed king in David's place. The struggles with Ziba during Absalom's reign, however, show that Meribaal was still able to own land as a disabled person. Whether Ziba would have been so bold as to malign or even slander his master had he not been disabled is unanswerable. Ziba at least seems to take advantage of Meribaal's dependency. Hentrich next treats those priestly personnel who are excluded from the Temple, including the lame and the blind and those with crushed testicles. After considering the context, Hentrich associates the word translated as 'crushed testicles' with a botched circumcision. Because circumcision was so important to Israelite identity, a botched procedure would be particularly heartbreaking. Since conditions of disability were associated with ritual impurity, disability excluded persons from full participation in the cult.

Disability does not always preclude a person from leadership in the biblical text. Cheryl Strimple and Ovidiu Creangă (2010) explore the nature of masculinity and disability in the case of Naaman. They note that despite his disability, Naaman is portrayed as a successful military leader, with persuasive abilities, self-restraint, and agency. It is not until his disability is removed that questions

arise about his masculinity, because his skin is described as 'like the skin of a little boy' (2 Kgs. 5.14). The relationship between disability and masculinity has been studied very little, in particular considering the differences between the perceptions of disability in contemporary society, where a normative model of health and ability is active, and in the ancient Near East, which did not share a medicalized view of disability. Naaman's healing is described not in terms of curing, but in terms of cleanliness, indicating that from the biblical perspective, his problem was one of impurity that must be cured before he could stand before Yhwh or Elisha. Once he is cleansed, he shows his submission to Yhwh, constraining his otherwise increased masculine status. The language of youth emphasizes that submissive state. This language compares with the descriptions of the Israelite servant in the story as a 'little girl' and Gehazi as Elisha's 'young man'. Strimple and Creangă also consider the significance of the language of 'standing before', with Naaman positioning himself before Elisha, and Elisha before God. Once cured of his leprosy and promising to stay faithful to Yhwh, Naaman asks forgiveness when praying at the House of Rimmon with the king of Aram, who leans on his arm. Thus, the passage portrays the king as enfeebled and requiring someone on which to lean. Gehazi, meanwhile, is punished for acting too much like an exploitative king, asking for silver and garments. The rest of Elisha's accusation brings up olive trees, flocks and cattle, and slaves, similar to the injunctions against greedy kings in 1 Sam. 8.14-17. Greedy kings represent opposition to Yhwh, so the two characters not loyal to Yhwh at the end, Gehazi and the king of Aram, are described with terms of disability. Disability, transferred from Naaman to Gehazi, reveals disloyalty to Yhwh, loyalty to whom marks true masculinity in the text, which simultaneously requires submissiveness to Yhwh.

Moving our consideration from the forms of bodies to bodily actions, Milena Kirova (2014) offers a critique of some of the previous studies on biblical masculinities, arguing that the model of a hegemonic masculinity and subordinate masculinities that are in opposition to it does not apply well to the biblical text. Instead, what she sees are multiple hegemonic masculinities. The existence of viable masculine alternatives accounts for the unmanly characteristics of some of the most prominent biblical characters: the trickster Jacob, the merciful Joseph, and the weeping Jeremiah. She also emphasizes the need to separate modern and ancient conceptions of masculinity. The bulk of her article focuses on the role of weeping in biblical masculinity. Weeping is largely a communal activity in the Hebrew Bible, used in crying to God during oppression or in ritualized acts, such as lamenting Jephthah's daughter. Both men and women weep to seek justice from God. Both men and women also weep out of strong emotion, positive or negative, such as the reconciliation of Jacob and Esau or Naomi and her daughters-in-law. Both men and women can weep to express compassion, which is a term related to the womb, but not limited to women. As Kirova observes, 'For the biblical narrator there is no problem in principle if women, too, think

with the womb (as in the case with the mother prostitute) but the narrative of the history of Israel is simply not interested in their experience' (2014: 39). David, in particular, is a frequent weeper, expressing compassion, but also manliness. He weeps upon leaving Jonathan, again at his and Saul's death, and at the deaths of Abner and his son, Absalom. His weeping in the cases of Saul and Abner serve to manipulate the people into looking upon him favorably. He also weeps in an attempt to influence God upon the sickness of his first son with Bathsheba. Kirova explains that David's crying serves a particular function: 'It is precisely *the performative function of weeping* that distinguishes God's anointed man from the other people and constitutes an important part of the apologetic strategy of the Deuteronomistic narrative about David' (2014: 42; original emphasis). Other kings mourn in sackcloth repenting either their sins or the fate of their people. Kirova finds little evidence of weeping prophets, with the exception of Moses and Samuel who grieved over Saul. Jeremiah as portrayed in the prophetic book does not share the propensity of the author of Lamentations for flowing tears. Weeping in the biblical text plays the communal role of calling on the deity, and thus the kings participate in and lead this ritual without any loss of masculinity.

Coming of Age

Outside of the studies dealing more generally with the body, there are very few works that deal with masculine themes throughout the Hebrew Bible. One exception is the forthcoming monograph by Stephen Wilson (2015 projected). He examines the role of coming of age in the construction of masculinity in the texts. Wilson observes that most previous work in masculist interpretation has defined masculinity vis-à-vis femininity, but that is not the only way to do so. Instead he is examining manhood vis-à-vis boyhood. Many of the characteristics that have been interpreted as an avoidance of femininity could also be understood as an avoidance of infantilization. Wilson evaluates and expands upon categories of masculinity derived from David Clines (1995; see below) to define manhood, then looks at the depiction of boys. He offers a case study of Moses and Samuel, two characters the Hebrew Bible portrays as children and adults. In addition, he looks at David and Solomon, analyzing the Goliath episode and Solomon's accession to the throne and divine vision as coming-of-age narratives. Finally, he looks at cases where boys never mature: Jether, Gideon's son, and the man-child Samson. Wilson's work adds a needed dimension of study to the portrayal of masculinity in the Hebrew Bible.

Deuteronomistic History

One of the most influential works for the early stages of masculist interpretation of the Hebrew Bible was David Clines's essay, 'David the Man' (1995). He

identified David's masculinity with several categories of traits that have been utilized extensively by later scholars. Some of these corresponded to the general categories described above and others were novel. First, David is an active warrior, killing or supervising the killing of some 140,000 men in all. Second, he displays verbal prowess and persuasiveness, especially in his encounters with Saul. (It must be noted, however, that his attempt to persuade Uriah to sleep with Bathsheba proves singularly unsuccessful in 2 Samuel 13.) Third, he has great beauty, which is also positively attributed to several prominent men in the Hebrew Bible. Comments about his beauty are particularly associated with his anointing and succession. Fourth, he shows bonding with other men, particularly with Jonathan, and despite having several wives, is mostly portrayed without women. Fifth, David displays musical abilities, playing stringed instruments, which are typically associated with male players (1995: 228). David is not necessarily the ideal ancient Israelite man, however, as some of his actions seem to go against masculine norms (pp. 228-31). Clines has done the same kind of inventory with other characters and texts as well, including prophets (2002), Moses (2010), and some unpublished studies of Job and Psalms.

Marcel V. Măcelaru (2014) applies four of Clines's categories of masculinity to the case of Saul, examining his prowess in battle, persuasiveness, womanlessness, and male bonding. In addition, he considers Saul's appearance, which is described as impressive, standing head and shoulders above the people. The goodness of height is undermined quickly, however, by its association with the enemy of Israel, Goliath. Saul's mental illness, which causes him to rave and attack, represents a diminished masculinity. In addition, throughout the text he loses clothing, appearing naked at one point (1 Sam. 19.23-24). Saul displays mixed success on the battlefield. The majority of the texts relating to Saul show him engaged in activity related to warfare. In particular, his battles with the Philistines have limited success. He shows poor judgment in uttering a rash oath, which his own son violates. He spares the Amalekite king against Yhwh's orders and thus Samuel informs him he will lose the kingdom. He is compared unfavorably to David when the women sing victory songs. He is eventually killed in battle by the Philistines, along with Jonathan. Saul is not associated with women in the story, except for his daughters whom he uses as marriage prizes, and the medium of Endor, whom he visits in disguise to contact Samuel after he has banned mediums from the land. Once she establishes that he is not going to kill her, she takes charge of the relationship, caring for Saul after his encounter with Samuel. Saul is alienated from his son Jonathan, who fights alongside him but also questions his judgment and chooses friendship with David. Saul's relationship with David is marked by paranoia. He is also cut off from Samuel, even while Samuel is alive, and from Yhwh. In terms of persuasiveness, Saul starts out his kingship relatively successfully, drawing troops into battle to defeat the Ammonites at Jabesh-Gilead. He binds people to an oath in 1 Samuel 14, but

when Jonathan violates it, the people side with Jonathan. Several times Saul's speech turns to confessions of failure. As a whole, he does not come across as an effective speaker. While Saul does not completely violate the norms of masculinity, he does fall short in several categories, especially as the narrative develops. Măcelaru suggests that Saul's portrayal offers an alternative masculinity, alongside that of David, suggesting the classic hegemonic masculinity is not favored in Israel.

As Măcelaru's approach suggests, although Clines draws elements of masculinity from the texts, there are some concerns with the method. By focusing on particular persons, Clines (1995) obtains particular masculinities. David and Moses were both leaders, but the prophets were often liminal figures. Thus, one must take care in assuming their characteristics are normative for masculinity in ancient Israel. Clines does not address the issue of whether these traits are primarily masculine or if they are general human traits in ancient Israel. It is not necessary for the traits to be absent in females for them to form an important part of the masculine ideal, but later scholars who use his schema tend either to assume they are uniquely masculine or to question them as components of masculinity if women also demonstrate the traits. Clines does note that David seems to act against masculine norms at different points. These points seem to be where his actions provoke surprise or rebuke, including the death of Absalom and the death of Bathsheba's child. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly which elements of his response are atypical, however, and whether they oppose masculine or some other norms.

Clines's (1995) assessment of the importance of sex is another potentially problematic issue in his analysis. He contrasts the heavy emphasis and expectation of sex as part of masculinity today with the seeming lack of interest in sex within the David story. He glosses over some important episodes, however, including the incident with Bathsheba, which seems primarily sexually motivated, as well as the negative portrayal of David's impotence in 1 Kings 1. Instead, he focuses on David's love of Jonathan, noting that it seems much more important than that of women. Love and sex are different, however, and as even modern masculine expectations greatly privilege the latter, it seems insufficient to equate the lack of discussion of the love of women with a lack of emphasis on sex and sexuality (this latter term is anachronistic, but I use it here to refer to a public dimension of sex).

The important role of public sexuality is addressed by Ken Stone in his study of the relationship between masculinity and power in the Deuteronomistic History (1996). He reads references to sex in the Deuteronomistic History with the understanding that sex symbolizes activity in the public domain:

These narratives are structured in relationship to cultural assumptions about sexual activity that involve the quest by males for public honor, power, and prestige. One's

status as a sexual subject is seen to play a crucial (albeit complicated) role in this quest, though differently for men than for women (Stone 1996: 11).

An important implication Stone expresses regarding the connection between sex and public power is that the relations between men and women in the narratives are, at their root, power struggles between men. The illicit sex between Amnon and Tamar, Abner and Rizpah, and Absalom and David's concubines are really attacks on the masculinity of the women's guardians, who are unable to protect their women. That these situations were conflicts between men is evidenced by the fact that the women disappear from the scene soon after the unfortunate event, doomed to live like Tamar as a desolate woman in her brother's house (2 Sam. 13.20b) or to be shut up like widows by David for the rest of their lives (2 Sam. 20.3). Their violation, however, gives motivation for the larger struggles between the men, leading to Absalom's revolt and Abner's defection.

The affronted males respond in different ways. Absalom kills Amnon. Ishbaal backs down from Abner, ceding more masculinity in the process. David eventually returns and defeats Absalom. David's masculinity is severely questioned in this whole saga, however, because, in the first place, he is fooled by Amnon's plot, and thus puts Tamar in jeopardy, and then, once he finds out, he takes no action to punish Amnon. Likewise, he does not punish Absalom for killing Amnon, although he was angry at both episodes (Stone 1996: 112). He is a father unable to control or discipline his children, foreshadowing his lack of control over his kingdom.

Another aspect of male power and prestige is examined by Harold Washington, who discusses warfare as the definitive domain of men and masculinity (1997). 'The language of war in the Hebrew Bible and other ancient Near Eastern literatures is acutely masculinist. Warfare is emblematically male and the discourse of violence is closely imbricated with that of masculine sexuality' (Washington 1997: 330). As in the Assyrian inscriptions, 'being a man' is associated with dominance. The Philistines encourage each other to 'be men and fight' in 1 Sam. 4.9, overcoming their fear of the Ark of God and routing the Israelites. In Judg. 6.12 the angel of Yhwh greets Gideon with the epithet 'you mighty man' in an effort to bolster his questionable confidence and recruit him to fight (see Haddox 2010b for an exploration of Gideon's complex masculinity). The few cases in which women kill in battle (mostly in Judges) are also illuminating. Jael kills Sisera by staking him through the temple with a tent peg, which is phallic imagery (Washington 1997: 361; see also Niditch 1989: 46). Sisera is feminized in defeat. Deryn Guest (2011) addresses this episode in terms of female masculinity, with Jael taking on a butch role that is neither man nor woman.

The greatest humiliation seems to be dying at the hand of a woman in battle. This is implied in the interaction between Deborah and Barak, when Barak is chastised for not leading the battle himself. Barak refuses to go into battle unless

Deborah comes with him. She agrees, but tells him in Judg. 4.8-9 that he will not get the glory of victory, but that Sisera will fall by the hand of a woman (see Haddox 2013 for an examination of the gendered nature of violence in these chapters). Even more explicitly, when a woman mortally wounds Abimelech by dropping a millstone on his head in Judg. 9.54, he commands one of his compatriots to finish him off so that people will not say that a woman killed him. Stone (2007: 195-96) exegetes this episode, explaining how the imagery and events work to 'un-man' Abimelech, reversing the normal positions of the male and female, as he is penetrated from above. The upshot of all of this is that defeated men are feminized. The story of Eglon in Judges 3 also implies the feminization of the defeated man. Ehud, while alone in the chamber with him, thrusts his sword into Eglon's belly, after 'going to him' (בָּא אֵלָיו), both sexually tinged actions (Alter 1981: 39).

Ela Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska (2010) analyzes masculinity in the Samson cycle through the lens of masculine honor. The first part of the story represents challenge and assertion of masculinity, as Samson's marriage to the Philistine woman is disrupted. Her people 'plough with his heifer'. Whether that implies a sexual dalliance or just control of her weakness, the result is that he loses face and the bet. He reasserts his masculinity by paying the debt through killing Philistines, but this does not mark the end. When he returns to claim his wife, he finds that she has been given away. He refuses to accept the situation by taking her younger sister as a bride, but instead sets fire to Philistine property. When the Philistines seek revenge by burning his once wife and her family, he increases the cycle of violence by killing many in a great slaughter. The Philistines and Samson again trade violence before Samson visits a prostitute in Gaza and makes off with the city gate while eluding capture. Samson loses his masculinity to the Philistines, when Delilah cuts his hair, rendering him powerless. He is made to 'sport' for the Philistines, perhaps implying sexual submission, and grinds at a millstone, work reserved for women, feminized slaves and prisoners. Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska suggests that the reference to Samson's gouged eyes may in fact indicate that he was castrated, as a harnessed beast of burden. In any event, at a low-point of masculinity, he is displayed by the Philistines. By the end, however, with his hair regrown, he regains some masculinity through pulling down the temple on the Philistines gathered to mock him, killing more in his death than he had in his life. Samson's life is a contest of honor, initially around women, but finally around violation of his own body. He seeks revenge as a way to restore honor through killing. Ultimately, the text expresses ambivalence about his character by failure to attribute offspring to him, perhaps a punishment for consorting with foreign women. He is restored to the literary legacy of the Israelite community, but is excluded from the lineage.

Another character excluded from the lineage, but more surprisingly so, is Joshua. Ovidiu Creangă (2010b) looks at masculinity in the Joshua narrative. He

observes that Joshua is the premier military leader, exercising tight control over the people, including severe retribution for those who disobey, such as Achan. The people in the land are defeated decisively. Joshua proves persuasive in encouraging the people to keep the covenant. People still obey him in his old age. Joshua is strikingly lacking in another masculine trait, however. Nowhere are wives or children mentioned for him. Creangă asks, ‘How could it be that Joshua could have a hard military phallus, but not a procreative penis?’ (2010b: 92). While Creangă acknowledges that it is not uncommon for ancient Near Eastern texts and iconography focused on war to exclude mention of family members, he still suggests that the gaps allow for a destabilization of Joshua’s perceived heterosexuality. Creangă suggests that it may be possible to read homoerotic elements in Joshua’s encounter with the Captain of Yhwh’s army, which would help account for the lack of a wife. Creangă goes on to describe marginalized masculinities in the text, including that of the Gibeonites, who engage in trickery in order to survive. Those outside of the established power structures have to engage in manipulation and cunning to get access to power. The kings of the land who are fearful and defeated represent a subordinated masculinity, as does Achan, whose attempted assertion of his will over Joshua’s and Yhwh’s command is rejected. Nevertheless, these nonconforming masculinities, and Joshua’s absent penis, open up fissures in the hegemonic masculinity of the text of Joshua.

The absence of the male phallus in Joshua is balanced in the Deuteronomistic History by the presence of female masculinity, not only in the case of Jael, mentioned above, but with the queen of Judah, Athaliah (Macwilliam 2014). While her reign apparently lasts six or seven years, the narrator is reluctant to acknowledge this fact, spending most of the textual space on the plot to overthrow her and omitting the usual formulas relating the length of reign. Because she ruled as queen, and because of her identity as a northern foreigner in Judah and the daughter of Jezebel, the narrator portrays her as the most wicked woman in the Bible, even exceeding Jezebel. She, like the kings before her, exterminated those of a rival line to her throne. She performed the masculine traits of violence and political power. Unlike in Jael’s case, however, Athaliah is portrayed very negatively in the text. Her gender-bending assumption of the throne is reduced to a few verses, focused mainly on her overthrow.

Prophets

Prophetic texts have been another source for masculinist interpretation. In particular, a lot of early masculinist studies have examined the marriage metaphor in Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, which has also attracted the attention of many feminist scholars. The marriage metaphor, along with other prophetic texts and oracles, reveals and proposes masculinities not only for humans, but for the divine.

Clines (2002) detects several characteristically masculine traits in the prophets, similar to the ones he identified for David. He lists characteristics that may apply both to the men and to their prophecies. These include exhibiting strength and violence. The violence of the prophetic imagery is obvious, but such episodes as 1 Sam. 15.33, in which Samuel hacks up Agag, and 2 Kgs. 2.23-24, in which Elisha sends the she-bears to attack the boys who taunt him, show that the prophets themselves were not averse to using their power in violent ways. Prophets also serve as standard bearers who hold people and nations (including foreign nations) accountable through their oracles, and show a concern for honor, holiness, and preserving the tradition. They possess great verbal prowess, including the use of satire to dispense praise and blame. An important characteristic is that they place politics in the ethical realm, often using gendered language. Clines argues that they are, by and large, portrayed as womanless, while some appear in the company of men (2 Kgs. 6). Women are either portrayed negatively or not at all. The few neutral mentions of women are undeveloped. While most of the prophets are married, their wives and children only enter the picture as symbols. Most notable is Hosea's wife, Gomer and his unfortunately named children. Isaiah's wife is also mentioned in the context of bearing children with symbolic names. Ezekiel is told not to mourn his dead wife, while Jeremiah is told not to marry at all.

The prophets are hardly typical men, and while the writing prophets seem to be portrayed as ideal figures, they occasionally act against cultural norms. This is particularly true of their relationship with women, which makes it difficult to make a reliable claim that the ideal man is womanless. Clines's analysis also does not address how possession or lack of these masculine traits affects the perception or power of the men he studies. The prophets are liminal figures and are often critiquing the existing power structures, which should be taken into account in an analysis of masculine traits drawn from their portrayal.

In a work that is very helpful in synthesizing and interpreting masculine images and expectations in Assyrian literature and iconography, Cynthia Chapman addresses military rhetoric in Assyrian and biblical sources (2004). She observes that in the Assyrian royal inscriptions various epithets for the king explicitly claim that he is a man. Obviously such a statement is not an affirmation of biology, but implies power and vigor. In palace reliefs, the king is invariably portrayed in a strictly upright posture, has a full beard, and is often carrying a drawn bow (2004: 26). Vassal kings, in contrast, prostrate themselves before the Assyrian king and sometimes are shown wiping the king's feet with their beards (2004: 39). Other elements of masculinity that the Assyrian king possesses in abundance, but that the defeated kings lack, include the ability to provide for and protect his people, the ability to leave an inheritance for his family or people, military prowess, and bravery (defeated kings are often described as fleeing in fear to save their own lives). Treaty curses most often involve threats

to the masculinity of the vassal kings, including the threat that they and their soldiers will become women, that they will lose their land, that their people will be deported from their inheritance, and that the kings' families will become vulnerable to capture and starvation. Chapman applies these observations to the account of Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem, noting the various elements of masculinity that mark the encounter in the biblical rhetoric, especially in Isaiah.

Drawing upon Chapman's work, Susan Haddox explores the use of masculinity in Hosea's prophetic rhetoric in one of the few monographs on masculinity in the Hebrew Bible, *Metaphor and Masculinity in Hosea* (2011). The prophet Hosea uses a wide range of metaphors, switching frequently among image bases, which has led some commentators to question the integrity of the text. While acknowledging the diversity of metaphors, Haddox sees a common rhetorical thrust that underlies them. All of the metaphors work to lower the masculinity of the intended audience. Utilizing a model from James Fernandez (1986), a contemporary cognitive anthropologist who analyzes the use of metaphors to place and move people in social space, she rates the metaphors on the axes of potency, activity, and goodness. These three factors correspond tightly to values of hegemonic masculinity, thus even metaphors that do not seem directly related to gender image fields can be scored for their masculinity. Haddox's work thus breaks ground by analyzing the masculine nature of texts that do not feature people or explicitly gendered imagery. Hosea does, in fact, include a number of explicitly gendered metaphors. The most famous of these is the marriage metaphor, which clearly feminizes the elite male audience by portraying it as an adulterous woman (see also Kelle 2005). Hosea also utilizes a number of male sexual images, which have been less explored. These metaphors project impotency onto the male audience, while reaffirming the potency of God. Other image fields Hosea employs are parent-child, which demasculinizes the audience by portraying them either as disobedient children or ineffective parents; agriculture, which shows the audience as female herbivores or unwise farmers; hunting, which portrays the audience as prey; sickness, which shows them as ill and incapable; and a few other smaller fields. All of these metaphors serve to move the audience out of the octant of social space defined by high potency, activity, and goodness, which is associated with the highest masculinity and reserved for God, and they move the male elite audience to different places in other octants. Thus, they do not attempt to feminize completely the audience or to create uniformity, but rather offer a variety of forms of subordinate masculinities that are acceptable. While the leaders' assertion of their hegemonic masculinity has gotten Israel into trouble because they have not subordinated themselves to God, there is a range of models for them to perform masculinity, as long as they submit to God. In addition to the overarching rhetorical shape of the text, Haddox points out that there are a number of subversions in the imagery, which further serve to break up the idea of a hegemonic masculinity. While the text as a whole affirms a strongly

masculine role for God, there are fissures in the edifice which prevent an unproblematic equation of God with a human concept of hegemonic masculinity.

Another monograph published the same year and also related to prophetic metaphor is that of Stuart Macwilliam, which applies queer theory to the marriage metaphor in the prophets Jeremiah, Hosea, and Ezekiel (2011). Macwilliam queers the prophets by taking seriously the nature of the male audience cast as a wife. Rather than seeing this entirely as provoking a negative response on the part of the audience, he observes that in Jeremiah especially, but also in Hosea, the audience is portrayed not only as an adulterous, bad wife, but is also offered the option to accept the role of good wife. This is similar to Haddox's observation that Hosea offers the elite males several ways to perform masculinity, just not the one they are currently enacting. Macwilliam takes note of the slippage between male and female in the language, particularly in Jeremiah, which blurs the gender associations of feminine with acting badly and masculine with the good husband. Finally, Macwilliam applies a camp reading to the Ezekiel text, using an issue of *The Gay Times* as an intertext. This innovative reading points out the outrageousness of Ezekiel's rhetoric.

C.J. Patrick Davis (2010) considers the masculinity of the lamenting prophet Jeremiah. He wonders how the common portrayal of Jeremiah as the weeping prophet fits with the tradition of prophecy in Israel. First, he notes that the association of Jeremiah as the author of Lamentations has a long history, which influences the perception of the prophet. In the book of Jeremiah itself, however, the rhetoric fits more closely with that of other prophets, with many aggressive oracles and a negative view toward women's laments, which are associated with apostasy. The laments Jeremiah offers in the text serve to feminize the audience, encouraging them to flee or submit. Lamentations is written largely with a feminine voice (not necessarily implying a female author), which then casts upon Jeremiah a more feminine character through association. The plight of the Israelite people as a defeated nation may have also shone a feminized light on Jeremiah.

Jan Tarlin (1997) also addresses the issue of feminizing rhetoric in Ezekiel. In his interactions with God, Ezekiel subjects himself to domination by the divine, becoming feminized, though not female. His masculinity has in effect been shattered. 'The return onto male subjectivity of the lack, weakness, and fragmentation males usually project onto females has, for Ezekiel, created a new form of subjectivity: a person with a penis who has renounced any claim to possessing the phallus' (1997: 182). Submitting to God requires relinquishing one's masculinity.

Stone offers a different perspective on masculinity and manhood in Hosea (2004: 111-28). In his work on the intersection of food, sex, and gender, he focuses on the implications of the provisioning aspects of the marriage metaphor, which take up considerable space in the text. He argues, in line with cross-cultural studies, that the ability to provide for one's family is an expectation of

masculinity, as is the expectation that it will be publically acknowledged. By misattributing the gifts, the wife in Hosea is undermining the masculinity of the husband. Stone further observes that the divine command for Hosea to marry a promiscuous woman already transgresses the norms of masculinity, and thus problematizes, rather than strictly reinforces, cultural gender concepts.

Torah

A number of studies have also examined masculinity in the Pentateuch. In an accessible and engaging essay designed for pedagogical use, Dennis Olson examines how masculinity intersects with femininity in the Genesis creation narratives (2006). He argues that masculinity has multiple characteristics in the text, showing a sensitivity to situations. Activity and passivity alternate, and relations to others are important. He shows parallels between the story of Adam and Eve and that of Cain and Abel and draws out implications for contemporary masculinity, particularly the intersection of masculinity and violence. In addition to its contribution to biblical masculinist interpretation, it works well to introduce students to the concepts of gender criticism and literary analysis, as well as its relevance to contemporary issues.

Continuing in Genesis, Deborah Sawyer paints a stark picture of Abraham as a passive and childlike figure before God (2004). At least with respect to his family, Abraham takes little initiative, but is driven by Sarah and by God. His first encounter with God puts him into a situation of adoption as a son, but also complete submission, as he leaves his natural connections behind. The issue of his lack of fertility is dealt with first by Sarah through her giving of Hagar to Abraham, and then by God, who gives Sarah a child. Abraham is never really allowed to be a father, however, as he has to cast out his first son, and nearly sacrifice his second, which likely created a less-than-ideal relationship. For Abraham, being chosen by God meant enacting an alternative masculinity that was relatively passive.

Not all scholars have understood Abraham's passivity as so extreme. Haddox's study 'Favoured Sons and Subordinate Masculinities' (2010a) examines the men in Abraham's line in Genesis, focusing in particular on those sons that are divinely chosen to form the Israelite lineage. She selects four characteristics of masculinity: lack of being feminized, potency, honor, and wisdom/persuasiveness to evaluate the biblical personas. She notes that the chosen sons Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob express a masculinity that does not conform to the ancient Near Eastern hegemonic ideal. While they are manly in some respects, when compared with the rejected siblings, they appear less active and perform in ways more often associated with femininity. Abraham shows typical masculine traits such as prowess in warfare and independent leadership, but also purposely puts his wife in danger on multiple occasions, allowing her to be married to Pharaoh in Genesis 12, in order

to preserve his life. He also throws one son into the desert with minimal provisions and nearly kills the other. Both of these actions are in response to edicts from God, which underscores the reason behind favoring subordinate masculinities: the willingness to submit to God. Abraham's son Isaac, who generally comes across in the biblical text as a milquetoast, is also favored over the more rugged Ishmael, who will become 'a wild ass of a man' (Gen. 16.12). A third example is Jacob, a homeboy who prefers the company of his mother to his father. Jacob plays the trickster, a role taken most often by women in the Bible because it is executed by a person outside of the usual power structures, and cooks rather than going out to hunt, as does Esau. Cooking proves an adaptive skill for him, but it nonetheless distances him from cultural masculine norms. As with Abraham, however, a subordinate masculinity sets up Jacob to be submissive to God, which grants him the status of favored son. Haddox argues that the privileging of a subordinate masculinity in the Genesis narratives not only sets up a standard for an appropriate relationship with God, but also may reflect Israel's and Judah's status as vassal nations in the ancient Near East. As the prophets Hosea and Jeremiah warned about rebellion against the Assyrian and Babylonian suzerains, so the ideal men do not rebel against the suzerain God. By submitting to the greater power, the men and nations end up with a degree of autonomy and power. Rebellion, the assertion of masculine authority, results in rejection and exile.

Brian DiPalma (2010) addresses the question of masculinity in Exodus 1–4 using similar criteria to Haddox, drawing also on Clines: violence, wisdom and persuasive speech, and detachment from women. He argues that these characteristics are used to portray Pharaoh as a failed man, but that ultimately the passages undermine the validity of those elements of masculinity for an ideal man. The Pharaoh's plan to reduce the numbers of Israelites fails, both because it is ill-conceived and because he is unable to persuade others, specifically the female midwives, to carry it out. Thus, he is unsuccessful in killing the babies. While Moses is successful in killing the Egyptian, his fear and flight afterward show that violence is not condoned as a way to deal with conflict. DiPalma argues that the way Moses's actions are described in the incident with the Midianite shepherds separates him from violence and positively associates him with women. Hence, the outlined standards of masculinity are questioned. DiPalma suggests that Moses is persuasive, but does not offer much evidence for this, and acknowledges that Moses denies his capacity for persuasive speech, but is still chosen for the task of delivering the Hebrews. Action, rather than speech, is necessary for persuasion and deliverance, as is reiterated by Zipporah appeasing God through circumcision. DiPalma concludes that the three characteristics of masculinity he applies serve initially to emasculate Pharaoh, but in the case of Moses are countered as definitive or desirable masculine qualities.

Clines (2010) uses the same categories of masculinity to explore Exodus 32–34, adding the category of Beautiful Male to the Warrior, the Persuasive

Male, and the Womanless Male. Clines points out that warrior masculinity is achieved by the Levites in their consecration through the massacre of their fellow Israelites after the golden calf incident. Moses, however, gains masculine points in Clines's view by his ability to persuade God not to exterminate the Israelites at that point. Clines notes that the text addresses the males in the congregation, who are ordered to remove the jewelry from their wives, sons, and daughters in order for Aaron to make the golden calf. Thus, even though women are mentioned obliquely, the congregation is portrayed as male. Finally, he claims that since the men also wear jewelry, adornment and beautification were part of the masculine persona in Exodus. He equates Moses's shining face with the favorable aspect of God, who in the priestly blessing makes his face shine upon people. He does not address the issue that people were afraid of Moses's shining face, which required him to wear a veil. Hence, it is not clear that it was associated with attractiveness.

Mark George (2010) examines masculinity in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy regulates large areas of life and worship, and George notes several categories in which Deuteronomy defines masculinity: 'a man's body; a man's place in society; how time is categorized; the spaces and places a man inhabits and passes through; and the relationship a man has with the deity' (2010: 67). The male body is regulated with various practices, restrictions, and social expectations. George examines the ways the body is regulated with regard to five areas. With regard to food, consumption is restricted to certain categories, which implies that self-control in eating is required of a man. It is expected that men will obtain that food through work, bearing in mind that they came from a situation of slavery. Men are expected to have sex, and sexual relations are not necessarily confined to marriage for men, although the Deuteronomistic codes specify penalties for certain kinds of relations. Men are prohibited from cross-dressing. As noted in several previous studies, war is strongly associated with masculinity. Deuteronomy provides certain regulations for conduct in battle. It is expected that men should marry and have children. Finally, having a name in Israel is an important component of masculinity, and one of the reasons to have sons is to continue that name. Part of having a name is maintaining honor, which involves duty and mercy. Because Yhwh is a single deity, Yhwh's name is continued through the obedience of Israel to the covenant. Another area George addresses is a man's membership in the assembly of Israel. First, not all men are eligible, such as men with crushed testicles or those born of illicit unions. Second, men in the community are expected to uphold honor through the practice of generosity and to fulfill appropriate social roles. Third, men are called to appear at certain times before Yhwh and to observe holidays, tithes, and sabbatical years. Fourth, Deuteronomy sets up appropriate spaces for men and the activities they must perform. Fifth, Deuteronomy establishes a suzerainty relationship between Israel and Yhwh, which regulates worship, marriage choices, and requires absolute loyalty.

George analyzes the regulations to determine what kinds of activities and attitudes were expected of men. He does not necessarily place value judgments on these assumptions. For example, if the text prohibits an action, George assumes that it was expected some men would do it, such as committing adultery. Such an approach is helpful if one is seeking out the range of masculinities and masculine traits present in a society, but less helpful if one is trying to determine a favored or hegemonic masculinity.

Writings

Relatively little work has been done on masculinity in the Writings, a promising area for future research. Roland Boer has written about the unexpected masculinity displayed in *Chronicles* (2010). On the one hand, the extreme emphasis on masculinity and virility is underscored by the described dimensions of the rebuilt temple, with a vestibule 120 cubits tall, twice as high as the length of the entire temple. As Boer describes it: 'It is a massive phallic tower, a high-rise temple for Solomon, like some angular cock raised to the heavens with its balls on the ground' (2010: 25). In addition, he notes the genealogies in *Chronicles* proceed entirely through the male line, with men begetting more men and the mothers excluded from the picture. On the other hand, the greatest emphasis in the book involves activities that are not typically associated with manliness: singing, wearing fancy clothes, baking bread, and caring for crockery. These activities are related to the temple cult, limited to an exclusive group of high ranking men, but run counter to cultural expectations for masculinity.

Hilary Lipka examines masculinity in *Proverbs*, finding that it offers alternatives to the hegemonic forms that stress physical prowess (2014). While *Proverbs* acknowledges that physical strength and skill in warfare are valuable, it subordinates them to traits of inner strength: strategy, wisdom, self-control, humility. The characteristics of small, weak, yet clever and industrial animals are lifted up as examples. Gaining and maintaining honor is important, but in *Proverbs* honor is contrasted with pride and associated with humility before Yhwh and wisdom. Self-control and righteousness bring one honor. These traits offered an alternative masculinity that could be adopted during and after the Exile, when conventional forms of hegemonic masculinity, relying on physical strength and kingship, were no longer available.

Conclusion

The field of masculinity studies in the Hebrew Bible has gained momentum in the past few years, after the slow start of a few initial explorations. To date, most of the studies have treated individual biblical characters or books. These kinds of works are necessary for the initial process of laying the groundwork. As the field moves

further, there are several areas of logical expansion. First, more general studies of broader characteristics are needed. The lack of these types of studies is probably due to the absence of monograph-length treatments. Of the three monographs that have been published, two deal with broader themes. Haddox's work (2011) on metaphor and masculinity examines how masculine rhetoric functions across a variety of image fields, both gendered and non-gendered. Wilson's study (2015 projected) of masculinity and coming of age looks across the canon for examples, although most of the focus texts are in the Pentateuch and Deuteronomistic History. Second, scholars should expand the ways in which they analyze masculinity in the Hebrew Bible. Clines's characteristics have proved extremely influential, but face some methodological concerns. Although helpful in the first stages, it is necessary to start thinking about masculinity in the texts in a more sophisticated way. Studies are beginning to use insights from a variety of fields, in addition to the base fields of psychoanalytic and cross-cultural approaches. Insights from post-colonialism, queer theory, as well as fields seemingly as far removed as horror films and camp are being used productively to analyze the biblical text and explore new realms of masculinity. Along these lines, masculinity studies needs continued interaction with the closely related fields of feminist criticism, queer theory, post-colonialism, and disability theory, among others. Already a number of studies plumb the intersections, but recognizing that masculinist interpretation is embedded in a larger matrix of concerns is important to the development of the field.

Masculinist interpretation seems to be on the cusp of a new phase of work, beyond the initial explorations. There is a lasting significance to the understanding that the males and masculinities in the text are not simply the human norm, but are social constructs just as much as the women and femininities in the text. This understanding is the new expectation for any type of analysis, even if not treated directly. As the field becomes more well known in biblical studies, fewer explanations of the need for the analysis will be required and more expansion into general use will be possible. Masculinist interpretation shows that whether or not a particular reading explicitly deals with gender, the text can no longer be accepted as neutral. And this insight will give masculinist interpretation a growing influence in the future.

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