

LAMENT BEYOND BLAME: CONSEQUENCES OF WOMEN'S POETRY IN
LAMENTATIONS 1-2

By

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Dedicated to those who have said #MeToo,
aloud or in their spirits.

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כִּי־תֵעָבֵר בְּמִלִּים אֶת־דַּדְאִנִּי וּבְנֵהֲרוֹת לֹא יִשְׁטָפוּדָּךְ כִּי־תִלְוֶה בְּמוֹ־אֵשׁ לֹא תִכְנֹה וְלֹהֲבָה לֹא תִבְעַר־בָּךְ:

Isa 43:2

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Introduction

Orienteing Questions

As a young Divinity student at Vanderbilt University, I read Lamentations for the first time while enrolled in an Introduction to the Hebrew Bible class taught by Dr. Douglas A. Knight. The presence of a female speaker as a central figure in the first two chapters of Lamentations floored me. Daughter Zion did not match what I had come to expect of “women in the Bible”; she speaks and challenges divine authority. How could such an extraordinary book—and a such an extraordinary persona—have escaped my notice?

I think there is more in play than my own prior lack of biblical knowledge. Daughter Zion has been erased from Lamentations because of choices across millennia to favor male voices instead of hers. Only in rare instances--usually in poetry--does her voice survive. In effect, the “Lamentations” which readers like myself encounter today scarcely can be said to contain a dominant, authoritative female figure. What constitutes Lamentations is shaped by the precedents of tradition that readers of the book have brought to it. As, increasingly, audiences have chosen to read Daughter Zion out of Lamentations, the text in effect does not include her voice. When she appears in received tradition, she rarely is the bold figure whom I encountered, but a defeated woman whose licentiousness has stripped her of dignity and clout.

My dissertation asks, what happened to Daughter Zion’s voice? Through what processes did it both develop and disappear, and what do both its evolution and erasure have to tell us about how communities might read Lamentations? When Daughter Zion’s voice is absent, what is missing, and when present, what does it add to our understanding?

Scope

The biblical texts at the core of my project are the first two chapters of Lamentations—a short section of an already short book. In these chapters, Daughter Zion herself speaks, while in later ones, she goes silent. While I regard Lamentations as a composite of five linked poems, my primary concern is with Daughter Zion’s subjectivity, and so I have limited the scope of my project. In fact, as I will explain in a later chapter, the fact that Daughter Zion does not speak directly after the first two chapters signals her developing disappearance within tradition.

In terms of the “receptions” or “consequences” which my dissertation includes, I have obviously needed a winnowing process through which I decide what to include within my discussion. The sources I have selected deal with the connection between sin and suffering in Lamentations or directly feature a lamenting woman’s voice (an afterlife of Daughter Zion). I selected the orientation towards sin and suffering after realizing how, in both the Christian and Jewish traditions, Daughter Zion’s minimization correlates with an uptick in blaming survivors of violence. Therefore, in considering these materials in particular, I hope to show what consequences the erasure of Zion has had within communities of faith. Concerning my other criterion for inclusion, the occasions in which Daughter Zion speaks directly are so rare that including them is a matter of both interest and obligation.

Additionally, I have focused on the medium of written materials because I am especially concerned with the issue of “women’s writing.” Feminist literary criticism has raised the question of what constitutes “women’s writing,” but as of yet, this investigation has not factored significantly into biblical scholarship. As I noticed a difference between poetic and prosaic consequences of Lamentations (namely, that survivals of Daughter Zion were more likely to appear in poetry than prose), I decided to narrow my study to examine this distinction.

Finally, I have surveyed the period from the time of Lamentations' composition (including a brief look at its Mesopotamian forebearers) to the present. Though this time period is very broad, and meant omission of certain consequences, my concerns range from the historical-critical (e.g. the role of Mesopotamian sources in Lamentations' writing), to the pastoral, involving contemporary communities of faith. Thus, I found a broad time period necessary to address the wide-ranging, and yet interconnected, concerns of my study.

Lamentations' Context

While the dating and genre of Lamentations are not crucial elements of my argument in and of themselves, addressing these issues provides the groundwork for later topics. Most authors have dated Lamentations to the early to mid-sixth century BCE, shortly following the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem, with significant disagreements by Kaiser (1981), and Provan (1991).¹ Overall, the tone of the book is bleak, a feature exemplified by the communal complaint that God has utterly forsaken Jerusalem (5:20). While the destruction of Jerusalem is obviously apparent, no reference to Persian ascension or return from exile is present.

However, these factors do not inherently establish a pre-exilic dating. As F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp writes, "It is one thing to make general inferences about the setting of the plotted action in a fictional work or of the lyrical discourse in a poem, and quite another to use these inferences as the basic datum for establishing a time of composition." Accordingly, Dobbs-Allsopp conducts a linguistic analysis of Lamentations. He concludes that, while there are features of Lamentations characteristic of late Biblical Hebrew, postdating the pre-exilic literature of the

¹ Iaian W. Provan, *Lamentations*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991). Otto Kaiser, "Klagelieder," in *Das Hohelied, Klagelieder, Das Buch Ester*, ed. Hans-Peter Müller, Otto Kaiser, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992).

bible, the co-occurrence of standard Biblical Hebrew forms alongside these late Biblical Hebrew ones indicates that late biblical Hebrew has not yet fully developed.² He writes, “Furthermore, the typological misfit between Lamentations and both the classic SBH and classic LBH strongly suggests that the language of Lamentations reflects a transitional stage between the two dominant phases of BH.”³ Given similarities with Ezekiel, Dobbs-Allsopp dates Lamentations to the 6th century, after 587/6, pre-dating works that have been linguistically analyzed as belonging to the end of the 6th or beginning of the 5th century. Thus, Dobbs-Allsopp joins the majority of scholars dating Lamentations to the period relatively close to the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem, a position which I share.⁴

Classifying the genre of Lamentations has long presented problems for scholars. The book, consisting as it does of five poems with different speakers and theological attitudes, does not necessarily need to be regarded as a unity. In the first three chapters, first person singular speakers (“I”) predominate, but in the fourth and fifth chapters, the speaker shifts to the communal “we.” Accordingly, Lamentations resists easy categorization.⁵ The genre of city-lament, derived from study of Mesopotamian laments, helps to account for the plurality of speakers, and especially the prominence of a female voice within the poems.⁶ I will explore the

² F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “Linguistic Evidence for the Date of Lamentations,” *JANES* 26 (1998), 21.

³ Dobbs-Allsopp, “Linguistic Evidence,” 35.

⁴ Dobbs-Allsopp, “Linguistic Evidence,” 36.

⁵ See, for example, Hedwig Jahnow’s classification of Lamentations in the folk genre of the dirge, or *qināh*. *Das hebräische Leichenlied im Rahmen der Völkerdichtung* (Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1923), 170-171. However, some modifications that Westermann argues would actually qualify them as communal laments. Claus Westermann, *Lamentations: Issues and Interpretation*, trans. Charles Muenchow (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 7. Paul Wayne Ferris, Jr. expands greatly on this concept in *The Genre of Communal Lament in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*. SBL Dissertation Series 127 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

⁶ F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblica, 1993).

city-lament genre in much greater depth in Ch. 2 and explain why I believe it appropriate for Lamentations.

Biblical Origins and Translation of בַּת־צִיּוֹן

Biblical Origins of בַּת־צִיּוֹן

The figure of בַּת־צִיּוֹן (“Daughter Zion”) is by no means alone in the Hebrew Bible as a woman personifying a city. Among the sixty-nine occurrences of the formula בַּת GN (geographical name) in the Hebrew Bible, seventy-four percent (50 or more) “occur as designations of the personified country or city that belong to genre of city-laments.”⁷ Specifically, בַּת־צִיּוֹן appears a total of twenty-six times, though most frequently in Lamentations (8x in Lamentations, 7x in Isaiah, 4x in Micah, 3x in Jeremiah, 2x in Zechariah, as well as 1x in Psalms). W.F. Stinespring’s seminal article “No Daughter of Zion: A Study of the Appositional Genitive in Hebrew Grammar” normalized the translation of בַּת־צִיּוֹן as “Daughter Zion,” arguing that the construct relationship should not be understood primarily as a familial one. For Stinespring, not only can בַּת serve as a term of endearment rather than filial attachment, but the construct relationship can be construed as an instance of appositional genitive, in which one term in the construct chain explains the other.⁸ Thus, Daughter Zion is only a personification of the city itself, not its people.

Mark E. Biddle’s comparative approach to the personification of women in Northwest Semitic and Mesopotamian literary contexts challenges Stinespring’s thesis. Responding both to

⁷ F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “The Syntagma of *bat* Followed by a Geographical Name in the Hebrew Bible: A Reconsideration of Its Meaning and Grammar,” *CBQ* 57 (1995): 454.

⁸ W.F. Stinespring, “No Daughter of Zion: A Study of the Appositional Genitive in Hebrew Grammar,” *Encounter* 26.2 (1965), 135.

arguments that trace the personification to the Hosean polemic against Canaanite fertility goddesses and to feminist critiques of the dehumanizing effects of the personification upon women, Biddle provides a panoramic account of the history of the personification.⁹ Biddle notes that the Mesopotamian and West Semitic identification of cities with goddesses gives the biblical personification positive origin; the portrayal of cities as patronesses, mothers, and maidens are usually complimentary.¹⁰

Taking a different approach to critiquing Stinespring, Dobbs-Allsopp argues that the construct formula appearing in בַּת־צִיּוֹן is best understood as a divine title parallel to the Akkadian construct *mārtu*.¹¹ Thus, the personification of cities as women evolved in order to provide an Israelite “substitute for the dominant image” of goddesses equated with a captive city.¹² Like Dobbs-Allsopp, Michael H. Floyd also disagrees with Stinespring’s diagnosis of the appositional genitive, but points to the primarily familial connotation of בַּת . To Floyd, the familial translation of “Daughter” is the most straightforward explanation of the formula בַּת GN . He suggests that this formula should be regarded simply as the singular form as בְּנוֹת GN , such as appears in the Song of Songs, used to refer to the female inhabitants of the city.¹³ From this perspective, Daughter Zion in Lamentations is an individual representative of the ordinary women of Jerusalem, taking part of the traditional (gendered) women’s role of voicing lament.

⁹ Mark E. Biddle, “The Figure of Lady Jerusalem: Identification, Deification, and Personification of Cities in the Ancient Near East,” in *Scripture in Context IV* (ed. K. Lawson Younger, Jr., William Hallo, and Bernard F. Batto; Scripture in Context 4; Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 11; Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen, 1991), 173.

¹⁰ Biddle, “The Figure of Lady Jerusalem,” 186.

¹¹ Dobbs-Allsopp, “The Syntagma of *bat*,” 467.

¹² Dobbs-Allsopp, “The Syntagma of *bat*,” 455.

¹³ Michael H. Floyd, “Welcome Back, Daughter of Zion,” *HBQ* 70 (2008), 489-490.

Responding to Floyd, Dearman brings up new points related to Zion's nomenclature while still maintaining Springstine's appositional genitive. Dearman counters Dobbs-Allsopp's position on Lamentations' connection to Mesopotamian city-lament, because these texts do not make use of the בַּת־גִּנ formula. He emphasizes that the "daughter" label can indicate a role within YHWH's household, as YHWH, though neither identified as a father or spouse of Daughter Zion, treats the figure punitively as if she were a member of his family.¹⁴

Both Floyd and Dearman bring up points that, aside from their stance on the issue of the appositional genitive, do not have to be mutually exclusive. Like Floyd, I believe the cultural precedent of women's role of voicing lament is too important to be ignored, and I appreciate his insistence on the connection of the בַּת־צִיּוֹן figure to flesh-and-blood women. However, Floyd ironically undersells the extent to which the speaking voice in Lamentations 1-2 figures primarily in a *maternal* role, rather than as the child of a mother. From Dearman, I take the point that Daughter Zion operates as a family member, with references to the marriage metaphor in the background. Whether functioning as a wife, daughter, or mother in a particular part of Lamentations, she is a woman in a subsidiary position to more powerful males, namely, her father/husband, YHWH. YHWH is at liberty to control her body and punish her as he sees fit.

However, I disagree with Dearman that the absence of the בַּת־גִּנ GN formula from city lament disallows the comparison of Lamentations and Mesopotamian lament. The writers of Lamentations have creatively drawn upon a variety of sources rather than copying and pasting from a solitary one. The traditional gendered role of women in lament, the Mesopotamian goddesses of city-laments, and the household relationships suggested in the Hebrew Bible can all

¹⁴ J. Andrew Dearman, "Daughter Zion and Her Place in God's Household," *HBT* 31 (2009), 156-157.

factor into the emergence of בַּת־צִיּוֹן in Lamentations. In this project, I will translate בַּת־צִיּוֹן as Daughter Zion, while maintaining the polyvalent nature of *bat* here (with connections both to real inhabitants of Jerusalem and goddess figures).¹⁵ Ultimately, while the philological concerns do factor into the understanding of Daughter Zion and are a means of “doing right” to the people and texts studied, they are not wholly determinative of meaning.¹⁶

Invoking the Marriage Metaphor

Sexual and marriage metaphors are frequently present within the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible. Using this trope, capital cities and sometimes countries are the female spouses of YHWH, and then, following their disloyalty, experience some combination of divorce, abandonment, and sexual, physical, and verbal abuse. At times, the prophetic literature also contains the description of the restoration of the marriage between YHWH and the constituent city or country.¹⁷

It is not necessary to regard Lamentations’ echoes of the marriage metaphor, or, as O’Connor terms it, the “broken household metaphor,”¹⁸ as a conscious use on the part of Lamentations’ poets. Mandolfo argues that, regardless of authorial intent, the central role of the marriage metaphor in biblical depictions of women renders it a source for Lamentations’ appropriation:

¹⁵ Here, I share Dobbs-Allsopp’s perspective that it is not necessary “to stipulate goddesses as the sole or even primary source of the personification in question.” There can be multiple sources of the personification of the city-women in question, ranging from the Mesopotamian goddesses to the cross-cultural phenomenon of women’s lament. [F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “Daughter Zion,” *Thus Says the Lord: Essays on the Former and Latter Prophets in Honor of Robert R. Wilson*, ed. John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Cook (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 30, fn. 16.]

¹⁶ Dobbs-Allsopp, “Daughter Zion,” 127, fn. 7.

¹⁷ See, for example, Hosea 1-2, Jeremiah 2-3, Ezekiel 16 and 23.

¹⁸ Kathleen O’Connor, “‘Speak Tenderly to Jerusalem’: Second Isaiah’s Reception and Use of Daughter Zion,” *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 20.3 (1999): 282.

The prophetic marriage metaphor is one instantiation of Israel's master narrative that says women are 'naturally' inferior to men and must defer to them in all matters social and moral. Because it taps into a vein that goes deep into Israel's understanding of itself, the marriage metaphor is part of an extremely effective rhetorical strategy deployed by the prophets...God does not 'author' responsibly. He 'tells stories' about her that entirely disregard her point of view.¹⁹

However, there are major differences in the terminology of Jerusalem's transgressions in Lamentations and those in other prophetic books. Daughter Zion is not explicitly accused of "whoring" or adultery. Her marriage and betrothal do not figure within the text. Neither are idols of any kind mentioned. Instead, as Baumann points out, the weight of the text falls upon the absence of a comforter for Zion, as in Nahum 3:7.²⁰ Thus, the less overtly accusatory tone is a major divergence between Lamentations and prophetic texts personifying cities as women, which accompanies other differences, such as the absence of divine voice. Lamentations develops a perspective towards Daughter Zion that is morally nuanced, even while it builds on the trope of the marriage metaphor.

Lamentations and Jeremiah

Despite Lamentations' appropriations of other instances of Hebrew Bible city-women, there is a more particular relationship with Jeremiah. The figure of Rachel in Jeremiah 31:15-16 who "refuses to be comforted" represents the "mourning woman" tropes which Daughter Zion shares. The poets of Lamentations have seized upon two aspects of Rachel in Jeremiah: her role as a mother and her refusal to be comforted--in order to shape *בַּת-צִיּוֹן* in Lamentations, who envelopes and expands upon Rachel's role.

¹⁹ Carleen R. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets: A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (Boston: Brill, 2007), 16.

²⁰ Gerlinde Baumann, *Love and Violence: Marriage as a Metaphor for the Relationship Between YHWH and Israel in the Prophetic Books*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), 71.

Even more prominent than Zion's status as a widow within Lamentations 1-2 is her maternal identity. While city-women of the Hebrew Bible can serve a maternal role as well (e.g. Israel in Hosea), maternity is usually secondary to their status as adulterous wives. In contrast, the occasional portrayals of Daughter Zion as an adulterous wife or widow appear secondary to her maternal role. Zion's maternal instincts may hail from her affiliation with Rachel, whose entire identity within Jeremiah 31:15-16 is maternal.

Additionally, Rachel's introduction of the motif of the "comfort" bears a close literary relationship with the refrain of Lamentations 1. Rachel's refusal of comfort appears to stem from her maternal role specifically. In fact, Lamentations' insistence that there is "no comforter" for בַּת-צִיּוֹן intensifies Rachel's "refusal" to be comforted; Zion does not even have the opportunity to eschew comfort, for comfort is impossible. While the crafting of Daughter Zion in Lamentations draws from Rachel in Jeremiah, Rachel remains relatively more visible in Christian and Jewish traditions, and Daughter Zion recedes into the background. Rachel "re-emerges from" and becomes a "cipher" of Zion.²¹

***Foregrounding* בַּת-צִיּוֹן**

Recent scholarship on Lamentations, which I will engage in detail later in this dissertation, centers the personification of Daughter Zion. Carleen Mandolfo's *Daughter Zion Talk Back to the Prophets* engages both feminist and postcolonial criticism, along with Bakhtinian literary theory, to demonstrate how the voice of Daughter Zion in Lamentations both draws from and resists the precedent of portrayals of city-women elsewhere in the Hebrew

²¹ Tod Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 128.

Bible.²² *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response*,²³ edited by Mark Boda, Carol J. Dempsey, and LeAnn Snow Flesher, includes an extensive collection of essays on Daughter Zion, both in Lamentations specifically and throughout the Hebrew Bible. Within this collection, prominent themes that emerge are the roles Daughter Zion plays in various prophetic texts, Daughter Zion as a speaking subject in dialogue with God and others, the cultural significance of lament, and the violence and trauma which she suffers.

With the entrance of trauma theory into biblical studies, contemporary works have shown how Lamentations enacts literary “survival.” In *Surviving Lamentations: Catastrophe, Lament, and Protest in the Afterlife of a Biblical Book*, Tod Linafelt traces how Daughter Zion manages to survive and protect her children in Lamentations, despite the bias against her within religious traditions. James W.S. Yansen’s *Daughter Zion’s Trauma: A Trauma-Informed Reading of Lamentations* argues for a reading of Daughter Zion in Lamentations that draws on both psychological and literary understandings of trauma survivors.

Naming My Investments

I do not pretend to be an objective interpreter of the bible. Given my theoretical frameworks, I believe that *no one* is an objective interpreter, and each of us bears the responsibility of identifying our own subjectivities. Through this identification of my investments, I aim to clarify the interpretive decisions I make and create a space of intellectual honesty.

I am an upper-middle class white, straight, cis-woman from the southern United States. Through each of these identifiers, I recognize that I bring to bear a level of privilege. Spiritually,

²² Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*.

²³ Mark J. Boda, Carol J. Dempsey, and LeAnn Snow Flesher, *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response* (Atlanta: SBL, 2012).

I identify as a progressive Protestant evangelical Christian, meaning that I take seriously—but critically—the authority of Scripture and believe that the Gospel of message of Jesus Christ is good news for the whole world. My critiques of “Christian traditions” stem from the mainline Protestant and evangelical traditions that have formed me, which have had the tendency to silence women’s voices. The urgency of my task to reclaim scriptural women’s voices for the Church also emanates from this background.

I also identify as a survivor of domestic violence and sexual assault. This component for my lived experience means that I do not have the privilege of reading texts such as Lamentations which depict women’s abuse as ethically neutral. I am keen to uncover the gendered power dynamics inherent in biblical texts, and I believe my background gives me the heightened awareness of these texts that is necessary to do this work. Believing, as I do, that scripture is authoritative and can become a life-giving Word for oppressed communities, I am eager to parse out how new interpretations can overcome systemic injustices such as sexism.

Chapter Outline and Argument

I have arranged my chapters in hopes of giving a biography of Daughter Zion. A good biography, I believe, should include not only an account of someone’s life, but also an explanation of where they come from, and what happened after their passing. However, a substantial introduction to my intellectual framework will be in order. In chapter I, I discuss how my concerns with the theoretical issue of “women’s writing” led me to pursue a reception methodology in order to ascertain the consequences of Daughter Zion’s omission from Jewish and Christian traditions.

In subsequent chapters, I carry out my biographical sketch of Daughter Zion. Recognizing that the Hebrew Lamentations to which the MT witnesses is itself a consequence of

earlier classics, in chapter II, I consider Mesopotamian city-laments (especially Sumerian) and analyze how the polyphonic depiction of Daughter Zion in Lamentations echoes the goddesses' portrayals in these texts. In chapters III and IV, I consider the consequences of Lamentations' Daughter Zion in intertextual allusions within biblical texts. Chapter III deals exclusively with Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah, while chapter IV moves on to the rest of the biblical canon, as well as ancient translations of Lamentations. In chapters V and VI, I consider how Daughter Zion's afterlives fared in Jewish and Christian traditions, in parallel trajectories that, though with different features and theological rationales, both trend toward Daughter Zion's erasure. Finally, in my conclusion, I explore the implications of my findings for church ministry and project directions for future research.

My argument centers on the trajectory towards erasure of Daughter Zion, which is a consequence of the biblical traditions that creatively appropriate her. In stark contrast with the multi-faceted portrayal of Daughter Zion as an authoritative voice in the Hebrew Lamentations, which builds upon the goddesses in Mesopotamian city-lament, the consequences of Lamentations diminish her role into near oblivion. The diminishment of Daughter Zion in these traditions has had grave consequences for the reading of the book. Where Daughter Zion's voice is absent, the dominant interpretive threads of Lamentations veer towards a dangerously uncritical causal connection between suffering and sin. When Daughter Zion does appear, she merely epitomizes the sinfulness deserving of suffering, rather than speaking authoritatively in her own right. From the modern period onwards, the dominant, Zion-less Lamentations (with sin leading to suffering) has seemed less and less acceptable. Read this way, Lamentations has fallen into popular disuse, rejected as a resource to address undeserved suffering.

Of course, there are exceptions to the broad trajectory which I have identified. Poetry has played an influential role in preserving Daughter Zion's voice as a speaker. This is because poetry, which patriarchy in Jewish and Western Christian traditions has gendered as feminine, is afforded license to preserve "female" expressions of emotion.²⁴ The lament genre has a special connection with poetry, as the emotional tenor of lament fits within the patriarchal gendering of poetry. Thus, ironically, where Daughter Zion's afterlives survive, their persistence owes to the patriarchal gendering of both emotion and poetry.

²⁴ Of course, gender is not a "natural" phenomenon; gender constructions are fluid and dependent on social context. The assignment of emotion to the "female" gender does not reflect an inherent quality of women, but rather, has been part of men's attempts to sideline women's voices. I will address the gendering of emotion and poetry in Ch. 1, as I survey my methodology, and will return to this issue again in Ch. 5 and 6, where I deal with the Jewish and Christian receptions of lament.

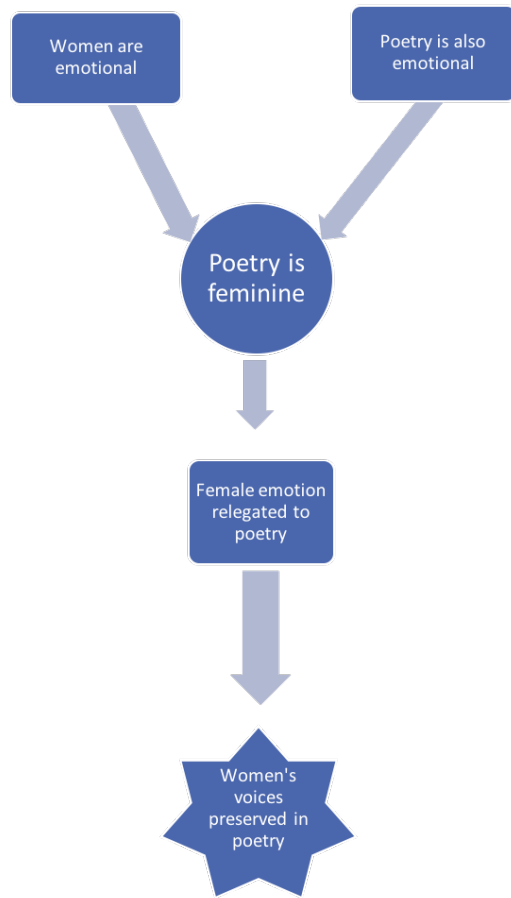


Fig. 1: The Patriarchal Gendering of Poetry:
Assumptions and Outcome

Ch. I

A Palimpsestic Study: Reception History and Feminist Criticism

Introduction

Given the central question of this project, which involves the disappearance of Lamentations' Daughter Zion from dominant strains of both Jewish and Christian interpretations, I need a methodology that intertwines texts, interpretations, and ideological concerns. Therefore, I invoke the palimpsest, which is the driving image of Gérard Genette's literary theory of transtextuality. "Transtextuality" is related, though not identical, to my understanding of reception history.²⁵ Of this theory, Genette writes,

That duplicity of the object, in the sphere of textual relations, can be represented by the old analogy of the *palimpsest*: on the same parchment, one text can be superimposed upon another, which it does not quite conceal but allows to show through...one who really loves texts must wish from time to time to love (at least) two together.¹

The imagery of the palimpsest also appears in Elaine Showalter's argument about women's writing. Women's writing manifests itself in spite of the obscuring effect of patriarchal cultural domination. The palimpsest in Showalter's work

is an object/field problem in which we must keep two alternative oscillating texts simultaneously in view: 'In the purest feminist literary criticism we are...presented with a radical alternative of our vision, a demand that we see meaning in what has previously been empty space. The orthodox plot recedes, and another plot, hitherto submerged in the anonymity of the background, stands out like a thumbprint.'²

²⁵ As I will soon explore further, I understand "intertextuality" slightly differently than does Genette, who limits the sphere of intertextuality quoting, plagiarism, and allusion, although his terminology of hypertextuality is much closer to what I would deem "reception."

¹ Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 399; trans. of *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré* (Editions du Seuil 1982).

² Elaine Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," in *Writing and Sexual Difference*, ed. Elizabeth Abel (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 35.

These two quotations demonstrate why I find reception and feminist criticism to be powerful tools for the study of Hebrew poetry. Though their joint usage has been uncommon, the two share a concern with understanding texts as multi-layered artifacts, crafted and recrafted by generations of readers.

In the case of reception history, the layers of the palimpsest to be unpeeled are the “receptions” of biblical texts which exert influence on the “meaning” of texts, and which, in turn, the biblical texts exert upon other forms of cultural media.³ In the case of feminist criticism of the bible, the layers to be unpeeled are the strata of patriarchal domination of women’s voices, under which, I contend, representations of women’s voices are still present. Both methodologies unpeel the palimpsest not in order to isolate an original context or meaning, but to reveal how that “conventional” interpretations are not inevitable; they arise through attempts to sublimate some layers of the palimpsest while restoring others. By using these methodologies, I want to include as many layers of the palimpsest as possible. Neither the most subsumed nor the most visible layer of biblical texts and their interpretations tells the entire story.

Reception History/History of Consequences

Terminology and Rationale

To understand how Daughter Zion disappears from the reading of Lamentations, I need a theoretical framework to trace her journey after the writing of the Hebrew Lamentations is done

³ Gillingham uses the imagery as an archaeological excavation to make a similar point about the multi-leveled investigation of reception history. I find the palimpsest imagery more compelling because it evokes the sense of more deliberate human involvement in the creation of layers [Susan Gillingham, “Biblical Studies on Holiday? A Personal View of Reception History,” in *Reception History and Biblical Studies*, ed. Emma England and William John Lyons (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 19].

(and, indeed, how Lamentations came to include her persona in the first place). I find this method in reception history. “Reception history,” a translation of the German *Rezeptionsgeschichte*, is a term inspired by Hans Robert Jauss’ methodology.⁴ A problem with this term, however, is that it can unfortunately convey a passive acceptance of preceding texts far from the actual process of crafting literary tradition.

The dynamic interaction between text and tradition is suggested better by Gadamer’s *Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*, “historically-effected consciousness.” I bring this idea to play in my use of reception history, with the caveat that reception is meant to signify an active and dynamic re-molding of material to fit the cultural context into which the material is being received. I will also use Choon-Leong Seow’s term, “history of consequences,” to reflect both the dynamic nature of reception and its intended and unintended effects in society.⁵

In early examples of the deployment of reception history in biblical studies, a major problem has been the view of “reception history as “an activity that follows from exegesis rather than being intrinsic to it.”⁶ Susan Gillingham responds to the charge that reception history is a less rigorous form of biblical studies, and that it indeed may not even belong in biblical studies at all, since it generously draws upon other disciplines such as music, literature, and visual arts. She flips the critique that reception history is “biblical studies on holiday” to argue that the change of perspective, addition in priorities, and birth of new projects makes reception history a vital

⁴ Mark Knight, “*Wirkungsgeschichte*, Reception Theory, Reception History” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 33.2 (2010), 139.

⁵ Choon-Leong Seow, “Reflections on the History of Consequences: The Case of Job,” in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Peterson*, ed. Joel M. LeMon and Kent Harold Richards (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 563.

⁶ Knight, *Wirkungsgeschichte*, 142.

contribution.⁷ To the accusation that reception history is mainly useful for producing descriptive anthologies without a “hermeneutical key” to show their significance, Gillingham suggests limiting reception studies in scope via time period, creator, media, or text.⁸

To use Gadamer’s terminology, what we behold in “horizon” of our own historical situatedness is largely the view that previous interpretations of the biblical text have created for us. Neglecting the study of these interpretations is to lack understanding of the ground upon which we stand and to assume falsely that our perspectives are wholly of our own creation. Furthermore, to draw upon Seow’s imagery, receptions of the biblical text add meaning and value to it, like a Chinese landscape painting that has stamps added to it: “The value and meaning of the painting reside not in what the original artist might have intended, but in the many ways the work has been engaged.”⁹

Reception history can involve study of an almost bewildering mass of materials. To re-contextualize the definition of Hardwick and Stray from their work in classical Greek and Roman studies, reception history within biblical studies represents the ways that biblical texts have been “transmitted, translated, excerpted, interpreted, rewritten, re-imaged and represented.”¹⁰ The amount of material will inevitably lead to biblical scholar’s selectivity.¹¹ Despite the amount of material that may be considered, however, reception history at its best should involve more theoretical underpinning than mere piling on of material. It involves the

⁷ Gillingham, “Biblical Studies on Holiday?,” 18.

⁸ Gillingham, “Biblical Studies on Holiday?,” 25

⁹ Seow, “Reflections on the History of Consequences,” 578.

¹⁰ Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray, “Introduction: Making Connections,” *A Companion to Classical Receptions*, ed. Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray (Maldon and Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 1.

¹¹ Gillingham, “Biblical Studies on Holiday?,” 26.

realization that the locus of meaning is neither in the text alone or the reader alone, but is created in the meeting between the two.

Seminal Figures: Gadamer and Jauss

Hans-Georg Gadamer is the most prominent forerunner of contemporary reception studies, though his student, Jauss, developed the incipient methodology associated with it. Gadamer's theory of *Wirkungsgeschichte* must be understood as a reaction both to Romantic valorization of individual subjectivity and Enlightenment empiricism. Both of these perspectives, in Gadamer's opinion, misrepresent the relationship between interpreter and subject, primarily because of its discounting of tradition and context as opposed to reason. We come to understand ourselves and everything else about the world, only through our contextual situatedness in tradition:

History does not belong to us; we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society, and state in which we live. The focus of subjectivity is a distorting mirror. The self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life. That is why the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgements, constitute the historical reality of his being.¹²

Our situatedness in a particular historical moment and tradition constitutes our horizon. Building on Heidegger and Husserl's concept of the horizon, Gadamer understands the horizon as "the historical world in which we live and is constituted by the prejudices that we inherit from our tradition."¹³ On the one hand, Gadamer envisions reading as a somewhat passive "fusion of horizons," in which the historical world of the reader and of the text must meet. On the other

¹² Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. Ed., translation revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 2000), 276-277; trans. of *Wahrheit und Methode* (1960, Tübingen).

¹³ David M. Parris, *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2009), 151.

hand, Jauss nuances the idea of horizon to include the model of Platonic dialogue, in which questions and answers are posed with a posture of openness.¹⁴ Jauss prefers “mediation of horizons” in order to convey the active role the reader plays.¹⁵

Gadamer and Jauss agree that objectivity on the part of the reader is not possible, and claiming such objectivity leads to domination of the text by the reader.¹⁶ To interpret a text is not to determine correctly the message it delivers to readers from across centuries or millennia, but to realize the question the text asks of us in particular context, and what we ask of it. Jauss writes,

But a past text cannot, of its own accord, across the ages, ask us or later generations a question that the interpreter would not first have to uncover or reformulate for us, proceeding from the answer that the text hands down or appears to contain. Literary tradition is a dialectic of question and answer that is always kept going—though this is often not admitted—from the present interest... For the question of whether an old or allegedly timeless question still—or once again—concerns us, while innumerable other questions leave us indifferent, is decided first and foremost by an interest that arises out of the present situation, critically opposes it, or maintains it.¹⁷

What we glean from a text is, to a large degree, informed by the questions we ask of it. These questions are not set for us, but instead are shaped by our historical and social moment.

The reader-oriented focus of Jauss work raises the question of the relationship between reception history and other ‘readerly’ criticisms:

Reader-response criticism focuses on the pivotal role played by the reader in the formulation of meaning. Each reader receives a text in his/her unique way depending on his/her own experience and agenda. Reception theory rejects the existence of the one, original, objective and fixed text that has to be examined as pure art form. In reception

¹⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 363.

¹⁵ Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 1982, 19.

¹⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 360.

¹⁷ Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, 65.

we speak rather of ‘texts,’ plural, because each time a text is read it is being received in a new way.¹⁸

Both reception history and reader-response refute the idea of meaning lying in wait in a text; the construction of meaning takes place via reader involvement. However, Wolfgang Iser and Stanley Fish, leaders of reader-response criticism, focus upon a reader’s interpretive process rather than the construction of a “reception.”¹⁹ Additionally, reception history retains the role of the text to a greater degree. While Fish and Iser argue for the “disappearing text,” Jauss and successor reception historians call upon the “determinate text...to prevent what seems to be a totally subjective and arbitrary response.”²⁰ Even though the reader and interpretive communities are creators of meaning, the text still remains an entity in the meaning-making process. Additionally, Jauss must be read as responding to Formalist and Marxist schools. Jauss notes the validity of these school’s concerns. Holub writes, “Jauss seeks to meet the Marxist demand for historical mediations by situating literature in the larger process of events; he retains the Formalist achievements by placing the perceiving subject at the center of his concerns.”²¹ For Jauss, literature and history are inseparable.

Unlike Gadamer, Jauss put forward a method for his study.²² The process of encountering a text takes place in three stages: comprehension, interpretation, and application. These stages take the form of “3 successive readings,” which, while “fabricated” to a certain

¹⁸ Anastasia Bakogianni, “Introduction,” *Dialogues with the Past: Classical Reception Theory and Practice*, Vol. 1, ed. Anastasia Bakogianni (London: University of London, 2013), 3.

¹⁹ Robert Holub, *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1984), 83.

²⁰ Holub, *Reception Theory*, 150.

²¹ Holub, *Reception Theory*, 58.

²² Gadamer states, “The priority of the question in knowledge shows how fundamentally the idea of method is limited for knowledge, which has been the starting point for our argument as a whole. There is no such thing as a method of learning to ask questions, of learning to see what is questionable” (*Truth and Method*, 365).

degree, each have a distinctive character.²³ The first reading is mainly focused on the aesthetic perception of the texts and entry into the text's literary properties, which sets the horizon for the stage of interpretation. Next, the reader transitions from aesthetic understanding to a construction of meaning through the reader's own performance of interpretation. The reader settles upon a "possibility of significance" that does not preclude others, but rather answers the questions posed in the reader's earlier stage of reading.²⁴ It is this step to which Jauss relates Gadamer's saying, "To understand means to understand something as an answer."²⁵

Finally, in the stage of application or exegesis, a reader investigates historically the text's horizons of creation while recognizing the questions that she asks of a text are informed by her own contextual horizons. The first and second steps of reading, which are completely guided by the reader, remain the grounding force of this juncture.²⁶ While this final step may seem to mirror the methodology of historical criticism, its awareness of the distinctions between the historical horizon of the text and our own sets it apart. Jauss writes, "The reconstruction of the original horizon of expectations would nonetheless fall back into historicism if the historical interpretation could not in turn serve to transform the question, 'What did the text say.' into the question, 'What does the text say to me, and what do I say to it?'"²⁷

Jauss theorizes that a text can only be properly understood as part of a literary series. The literary series is characterized by dialogical engagement between "message and receiver as well as between question and answer, problem and solution."²⁸ To understand the purpose of

²³ Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic*, 140.

²⁴ Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic*, 139.

²⁵ Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic*, 142.

²⁶ Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic*, 146.

²⁷ Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic*, 141.

²⁸ Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic*, 32.

one work, readers must identify the problem in a previous work to which it is an answer. While I find this concept of the literary series very useful, I diverge from Jauss' framing of it using an evolutionary model. There is no fixed and necessary end towards which the literary series is working. Interpretations later in the literary series are not necessarily more advanced or developed from those earlier in the series. Moreover, it may be more accurate to speak about "series" as a plural than a singular, for there are often multiple divergent streams of interpretation of a single work. Finally, instead of speaking exclusively about *literary* series, it might be more inclusive of the breadth of media that reception series can encompass to term the series "cultural" instead.

Reception History and Historical Criticism

As my framework is an interdisciplinary one, in which the best of multiple schools of thought can influence one another, I do not wish to dismiss the important work of historical criticism. One shortcoming of reception history can sometimes be an inadequate engagement with historical criticism. John F. A. Sawyer writes,

A second and rather more substantial reason for taking the reception history of the Bible more seriously than has been done by our forebears, is quite simply that the afterlife of the Bible has been infinitely more influential than, in every way--theologically, politically, culturally, and aesthetically--than its ancient near-eastern prehistory.²⁹

Sawyer's comments seem to position the bible as the original "text," with everything after it figuring as "reception." However, this distinction creates a false dichotomy. The biblical texts themselves are receptions of other ancient Near Eastern texts with which the authors were likely in some way acquainted. For instance, Lamentations derives from the creative appropriation of themes, figures, and structures of Mesopotamian ritual and city-laments, as I will later explore.

²⁹ John F.A. Sawyer, "A Critical Review of Recent Projects and Publications," in *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 1.3 (September 2012): 324.

Within the bible itself, there is a continual borrowing of previous texts, as, for example, working within the framework of the Documentary Hypothesis, P receives J and E, and within the Deuteronomistic History, Chronicles receives Samuel and Kings.

Concern with historical setting was part of reception criticism's incipient stages. According to Jauss' method, historical reconstruction *is* part of the process of comprehending a text, but this exegetical step comes after perception of a text's aesthetic properties and interpretation. Jauss recognizes that, while Gadamer's concept of dialogue is an apt metaphor for understanding the relationship between text and reader, the text is a conversation partner that must be protected. Trying to understand a text's historical context and its meaning in that context "serve[s] as a controlling function by protecting the temporal distance of the text from the reader's horizon and thereby allowing the text to be seen in its alterity."³⁰

Brennan Breed's *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History* engages the problem of reception history's relationship to historical criticism. He argues that reception history provides a profound critique of historical criticism's idea that there is an "original text" or meaning which we can read. However, this is not to say that we can neglect the context or texts that precede the bible and declare that the bible is the natural starting point for our study. Before we can embark on the project of reception history, we have to recognize that our starting point for "texts" and "receptions" is arbitrary. Even at the moment of the biblical text's writing, it has already been laden with meaning through its association with its forebears. The

³⁰ David P. Parris, *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2009), 163.

“borderlines” between “original text” and “reception” are blurry, so reception historians must “admit the contingency of their distinctions even while boldly making them.”³¹

Neither, as older historical criticism claims, is there an “original context.”³² In agreement with the more recent currents of historical criticism that views historical settings as constructed, Breed argues that the context of the biblical texts’ writing was already “sedimented with meaning.”³³ The context in which a biblical text was orally transmitted or written is no more determinative than interpretive contexts. Breed’s analysis of the illusion of original texts and contexts leads to a new definition of the role of reception history: We can understand reception history as a study of the “processes of transmutation” of texts and contexts.³⁴ Biblical texts are neither “exiles” displaced from a pure original state nor migrants headed to a set, known destination, but rather “nomads,” “going in between fixed points with no original and no endpoint.”³⁵

Most recently, Seow’s work has cast light on the contested nature of the idea of a single text—and indeed, the idea of a single reception. The project of historical criticism is flawed without the recognition that there is no “original” text, even in ANE forerunners to the Hebrew Bible. This literary heritage, as significant as it is, should be viewed itself as a reception, which can even include texts which are no longer extant. The biblical “text” is not to be regarded as the

³¹ Brennan W. Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 12.

³² Crucially, newer movements within historical criticism recognized that “there is no naturally given historical context which is not ‘always already’ socially determined or constructed.” In make this claim, Dobbs-Allsopp frames an argument for the integration of literary and historical criticism, which I hope to continue through my own scholarship. [F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “Rethinking Historical Criticism,” *Biblical Interpretation* 7.3 (1999), 248.]

³³ Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 204.

³⁴ Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 206.

³⁵ Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 202.

starting point for a reception history, because it itself is a storied work: “In all these cases, the “text” being interpreted is not the static written form in a pristine state, unencumbered by previous contributions. Rather, every text is inevitably comes to the interpreter as shaped by its history, whether or not one is aware of that it is, and it is not possible to suggest that one is only going to view the pristine form.”³⁶ Since we have no “original” copies to biblical texts (and, if we had them, in many cases even these would be heir to oral transmission that is lost), to study historical criticism is itself to embark on a project of reception history. Thus, reception history builds upon the project that newer trends in historical criticism have already begun, of understanding the

Reception History and Ideology

Harold Bloom argues that the study of literary influence is hostile to ideological criticisms. In his 1994 work, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*, Bloom pioneered the term “School of Resentment” to label Marxist-influenced approaches, which, he contends, distract from the true project of literary criticism (appreciating texts).³⁷ However, I argue that reception history can welcome and encompass perspectives of ideological approaches. Here, I turn to Charles Martindale’s point that reception history’s main task is “contesting the idea of the classics as something fixed.”³⁸ Rather than venerating a canon of classics set by the privileged few, reception history cultivates the inclusion of a wide range of interpretive traditions as vital to its scholarly project. This is what Martindale calls the “egalitarian politics of

³⁶ Choon-Leong Seow, “Perspectives on a Pluriform Classic” (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 2018), 19.

³⁷ Harold Bloom. *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*, 1st ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994), 4.

³⁸ Charles Martindale, “Introduction: Thinking Through Reception,” in *Classics and the Uses of Reception*, ed. Charles Martindale and Richard F. Thomas (Maldon/Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 2.

reception.”³⁹ Scholars are not the only or most important interpretive stakeholders; all interpreters must be considered. Parris writes, “Reception theory protects a text such as the Bible from being taken captive by the trained scholars and opens its interpretation and the history of its effects to a much wider community than a theory such as the historical-critical method does.”⁴⁰ While historical criticism remains vital, the project of reception history can expand and enrich the interpretive voices that are heard.

Jauss’ work offers a foundation for the employment of reception history in conjunction with ideological critique. For Jauss, one of the most prominent characteristics of great literature is its potential to transform society. He writes, “The social function of literature manifests itself in its genuine possibility only where the literary experience of the reader enters into the horizon of expectations of his lived praxis, preforms his understanding of the world, and thereby also has an effect on his social behavior.”⁴¹ Reception studies understand literature and history in a dialogic relationship, with literature effecting change on interpreters just as interpreters effect change on literature. Literature is thus part of the process of social change.

Yvonne Sherwood illustrates the potential for inclusion of diverse traditions in reception history. Sherwood’s chapters on receptions fall into two chapters: “The Mainstream” and “Backwaters and Underbellies.” The first deals with dominant Christian Patristic and Jewish interpretations of Jonah, while the second concerns Christian and Jewish interpretations that have seldom made their way into academic study. Sherwood offers her own interpretation of Jonah through her study of both these categories: “To finish, I stir these new ingredients into the book of Jonah, and so cook up a ‘new’ interpretation, which is a kind of hash or jambalaya--a

³⁹ Martindale, “Introduction,” 11.

⁴⁰ Parris, *Reception Theory*, 168.

⁴¹ Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic*, 39.

combination of insights from biblical scholarship mixed with older, more piquant, marginal readings.”⁴² The “agglutination” of meaning is only possible through including readings that have hitherto been marginal to mainstream biblical studies.⁴³

Ultimately, the most useful tool I find for addressing the concerns of ideological critics is Seow’s term “history of consequences.” The “history of consequences” can lead biblical scholars to consider the impact of interpretations on communities. Though all interpretations of texts add layers of meaning, interpretations are never ethically neutral. Biblical commentaries and sermons are not the only sources we must consult to understand “reception”; a much broader range of cultural media show how a text is being used and abused in communities.⁴⁴ Seow explores how the interpretation of Job in medieval Europe contributed to the violent actions of Christians during the crusades—a “consequence” that is ethically abhorrent.⁴⁵ The ethical contribution of reception history is one that Ulrich Luz recognized in his reception-oriented New Testament commentary: “Biblical texts whose consequences have been hatred, exclusiveness, and injustice call for critical questioning, even if they correspond superficially to the history of Jesus or even if they are his own words.”⁴⁶ While reception history must attempt to consider as many “effects” of a biblical text as possible, not all receptions can be equally regarded.

In this project, I will analyze how Daughter Zion’s elimination from interpretation has contributed to a sin-to-suffering theology. I am keenly aware how this theology is not ethically neutral and instead is harmful to many sufferers, including women who have experienced sexual

⁴² Yvonne Sherwood, *A Biblical Text and Its Afterlives: The Survival of Jonah in Western Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2.

⁴³ Sherwood, *A Biblical Text*, 5.

⁴⁴ Seow, “Reflections on the History of Consequences,” 563.

⁴⁵ Seow, “Reflections on the History of Consequences,” 574.

⁴⁶ Ulrich Luz, *Matthew in History: Interpretation, Influence, and Effects* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 92.

violence. Therefore, the terminology of “history of consequences” helps me to capture how the choices to exclude or vilify Daughter Zion have repercussions for communities of faith both in the past and in the contemporary world.

Reception History and Intertextuality

As I study consequences of Lamentations, I will often have reason to refer to the intertextuality of various writings. The term “intertextuality,” which Julia Kristeva coined, refers to how, within a text, “several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize each other.”⁴⁷ In other words, “Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.”⁴⁸ Kristeva goes a step farther than Jausse in analyzing the nature of texts’ interactions with one another. However, later literary critics have differed in their application of the concept. For some, the sphere of intertextuality is relatively narrow. For example, Gérard Genette uses the term “intertextuality” to refer to quoting, plagiarism, and illusion, while other types of “transtextuality” involve more sophisticated types of textual relationships. Genette’s concept of “hypertextuality” comes close to the broad field of material which we may consider “reception,” for it articulates a textual relationship “onto which [a text] is grafted in a manner that is not commentary.”⁴⁹

However, for many literary critics, the scope of intertextuality itself is much larger; *all* texts experience the literary influence characteristic of intertextuality. This is the perspective that Daniel Boyarin takes in *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, in which he argues that

⁴⁷ Julia Kristeva, *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), 36; trans. of *Séméiotiké: recherches pour une sémanalyse* (Paris: Edition du Seuil, 1969).

⁴⁸ Julia Kristeva, “Word, Dialogue and Novel,” ed. Toril Moi, *The Kristeva Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 37.

⁴⁹ Genette, *Palimpsests*, 3.

intertextuality is not “a characteristic of some texts as opposed to others but part of the structure of the literary text as such.”⁵⁰ For Boyarin, even biblical texts constitute fundamentally intertextual works. The intertextuality of biblical literature functions to shape the meaning of the biblical texts, which interact with one another and leave gaps with unanswered questions. The gaps which the bible leaves unfilled—pauses, as it were, in conversation—offer chances for creative contributions to the conversation. Midrash, in Boyarin’s view, is one such attempt to “fill in the gaps.”⁵¹ This second, broader understanding of intertextuality as present in all literary texts (and also active in oral transmission as well) reflects my own understanding.

An important criticism of this view of intertextuality comes from William Irwin in “Against Intertextuality,” in which he argues, “Authorial intention is unavoidable; intertextual connections are not somehow magically made between inanimate texts but are the products of authorial design. To think otherwise is to commit the referential fallacy.”⁵² Irwin is correct that texts must come from somewhere, such as the pen of an author or the oral transmission of tradition, and that process of textual transmission is carried out by sentient, deliberate humans. However, even as an author is exercising agency crafting a text, and even though she may often intentionally transpose semiotic systems upon her own work, there are also times when the intertextual connections, though familiar to the author, take place unconsciously. This phenomenon is similar to how, though I (a Georgian who now lives in Tennessee) can identify a Southern accent when I hear one and know many words and phrases particular to the South, I may not be aware when I slip into a southern drawl, even as I exercise agency in speaking.

⁵⁰ Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 14.

⁵¹ Boyarin, *Intertextuality*,” 17.

⁵² William Irwin, “Against Intertextuality,” *Philosophy and Literature* 28.2 (2004), 240.

Furthermore, even to the extent that authors do “intend” to make allusions, we commonly have no way to access what the author’s intentions are. Therefore, we can only surmise an intertextual web that transcends our ability to identify authorial intent.

Despite my broad understanding of intertextuality, in this project I will most frequently reference “allusion,” drawing upon the methodology of Ziva Ben-Porat for “actualizing” allusions. Her four-stage process guides readers through the journey of bringing to bear an older text upon the reading of a new one. The first step is recognizing an allusive marker in the newer text. Next, the evoked text must be recognized. In light of the alluded-to entity in the evoked text, the identifying marker is modified in the alluding text. Finally, potentially the whole of the evoked text is “activated,” brought to bear on the whole of the alluding text. This necessitates “recalling signs within each text which affect interpretation of the alluding text, even though these signs are not linked as marked and marker.”⁵³ Of course, this process represents only a broad outline of my thinking about allusions. In some cases, the allusion may more be limited, and the older text’s activation may be limited in the newer one.

Feminist Criticism and “Women’s Writing”

My concerns with feminist criticism drew me initially to *Lamentations*, as a female speaker, *Daughter Zion*, dominates the first two chapters of the book. However, I want to move beyond the “representations of women” approach common in second wave Anglophone feminism towards a methodology informed by feminist literary theory. Although *Lamentations*’

⁵³ Ziva Ben-Porat, “The Poetics of Literary Allusion,” *Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1 (1976): 12.

authorship is unknown, I want to investigate whether the book can be considered “women’s writing” on any level, especially given its constituency within the city-lament genre.

First, though, I will survey how two distinct schools of feminist literary theory, Francophone and Anglophone, have dealt with the question of women’s writing in very different ways from one another, with French theory centering questions of subjectivity and English theory mainly considering representations women. Then, I will lay out my own understanding of “women’s writing” in biblical texts, particularly Lamentations, recognizing that the questions posed by modern feminist theory were formulated with literature very distinct from ancient scriptural texts in mind.

Francophone Critics on “Women’s Writing”

French feminists have explored female subjectivity as the core of *l’écriture féminine*, “women’s writing,” often employing psychoanalytic perspectives. I appreciate Hélène Cixous’ resistance to a static definition of women’s writing: “It is impossible to *define* a feminist process of writing...for this practice can never be theorized, enclosed, coded.”⁵⁴ For Cixous, women’s writing responds to the problem of women’s two alternatives: passivity or non-existence.⁵⁵ This forced sublimation has had the effect of making women strangers to their own bodies and voice: “[S]he has been kept at a distance from herself, she has been made to see (=not see) woman on the basis of what man want to see of her, which is to say, almost nothing.”⁵⁶ While biological understandings of sex do play a role in shaping Cixous’ idea of women’s writing, they are not determinative for gender expression. Part of what women’s writing encompasses is the “presence

⁵⁴ Hélène Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” *Signs* 1, no. 4 (Summer 1976): 883.

⁵⁵ Hélène Cixous, “Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays,” in *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), 64. Originally published as *La Jeune Née* (Union Générale d’Editions, Paris).

⁵⁶Cixous, “Sorties,” 68.

of both sexes” within each person, and the willingness to pursue accompanying desires where they lead.⁵⁷

Thus, when Cixous refers to *écriture féminine*, she does not mean to generalize women’s experiences as monolithic, but rather, a willingness to defy traditional constraints and engage otherness.⁵⁸ Cixous writes, “Where does difference come through in writing? If there is a difference, it is in the manner of spending, of valorizing the appropriated, of thinking what is not-the-same...”⁵⁹ Women’s writing involves a celebration of voice, allowing the embodied self to be recovered as a speaking subject.⁶⁰

Dobbs-Allsopp uses Cixous’ construction of *écriture féminine* to explore the figure of the Shulammitte, providing an initial model for the extension of French feminist literary theory to biblical studies. Dobbs-Allsopp argues that Shulammitte represents the type of poet who can produce women’s writing, who, in Cixous’ terms, is “capable of loving love and hence capable of loving others and wanting them, of imagining the woman who would hold old against oppression and constitute herself as a superb, equal, hence ‘impossible’ subject, untenable in a real social framework.”⁶¹ Acknowledging the intentional ambiguity of Cixous’ definition of *écriture féminine*, Dobbs-Allsopp follows several thematic cues from Cixous to demonstrate how Song of Songs can reflect women’s writing; ultimately, “If there is any book in the Bible that qualifies as feminine in this sense, it is the Song of Songs. It is the voice of a woman, the

⁵⁷ Cixous, “Sorties,” 98.

⁵⁸ Here, Cixous’ outlining of *écriture féminine* strikes me as related to Kristeva’s understanding of femininity.

⁵⁹ Cixous, “Sorties,” 87.

⁶⁰ Cixous, “Sorties,” 94.

⁶¹ Cixous, “Sorties,” 98.

Shulammitte, that dominates this poetic sequence. She literally has the most lines, and it is her voice that both opens and closes the sequence and that readers find the most compelling.”⁶²

Building upon Dobbs-Allsopp’s use of Cixous, I understand Lamentations 1-2 as crossing the threshold into *écriture féminine*. It is not just that a woman’s voice, that of Daughter Zion, speaks many of the lines in these chapters. Lamentations invites and even seems to welcome a perspective distinct from many other biblical writers, one that includes dissent, embodied reality, and emotional expression. These qualities do not limit or define what a “woman” is or what a woman’s voice must be. Rather, they present an “Otherness” that exists alongside and even subverts the dominant Deuteronomistic theological currents concerning sin and suffering.

Anglophone Critics on Women’s Writing

Anglophone feminist critics have taken the idea of “women’s writing” in a different direction, focused primarily upon representations of women in literature. Particularly prominent in the “representations of women” field are the works of Ellen Moers, Elaine Showalter, and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. Of these figures, I will deal explicitly with Elaine Showalter’s work as well as that of Gilbert and Gubar.⁶³

Showalter’s model is cultural, giving an account of women’s writing that would “insist upon gender and upon a female literary tradition among the multiple strata that make up the force of meaning in a text.”⁶⁴ Showalter distinguishes between “feminist critique, “ which is focused

⁶² F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “I am Black and Beautiful: The Song, Cixous, and *Écriture Feminine*,” *Engaging the Bible in a Gendered World: An Introduction to Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Katharine Doob Sakenfeld*, ed. Linda Day and Carolyn Pressler (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 138-139.

⁶³As Moers herself freely admits, Moers’ *Literary Women* is less analysis than panegyric, with its goal mainly to draw attention to neglected female writers rather than to develop a theory of women’s writing (Ellen Moers, *Literary Women*, 1st ed.(Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1976).

⁶⁴ Showalter, “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness,” 35.

on female *readers*, and “gynocritics,” which focuses on the work of feminist *writers*. The former feminist critique is still, Showalter argues, androcentric, as male writers’ work constitute the majority of what is being studied.⁶⁵ However, women’s writing constitutes a “double-voiced discourse” that acknowledges and creatively appropriates men’s writing while also building primarily on the legacy of literary mothers. She writes, “Women writing, are not, then, *inside* and *outside* of the male tradition: they are inside two traditions simultaneously...”⁶⁶ Notably, writing by men is also heir to the legacy of both literary fathers and mothers. However, male authors are at liberty to neglect their maternal heritage, while “a woman writing inevitably thinks back through her fathers as well.”⁶⁷ This aspect of Showalter’s work is particularly useful for my work in biblical studies, as it provides a model for thinking about women’s voices even when they are an undercurrent of a patriarchal torrent.

Showalter conceptualizes a collective “women’s experience” that sets women’s writing apart. It is this aspect of Showalter’s work that gives me the most pause, as she argues that distinctions in race, nationality, class, and sexual orientation do not bar any woman from participating in this collective experience.⁶⁸ Seemingly paradoxically, however, the universality of women’s experience still produces a diversity of texts: “the land promised to us is not the serenely undifferentiated universality of texts but the tumultuous and intriguing wilderness of difference itself.”⁶⁹

To some degree, Showalter does attempt to address differences between women and their experiences. She writes, “Thus the first task of a gynocentric criticism must be to plot the

⁶⁵ Showalter “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness,” 15.

⁶⁶ Showalter, “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness,” 32.

⁶⁷ Showalter, “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness,” 33.

⁶⁸ Showalter, “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness,” 14.

⁶⁹ Showalter, “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness,” 35.

precise cultural locus of female literary identity and to describe the forces that intersect an individual woman writer's cultural field."⁷⁰ Here, though, it seems that Showalter still regards biological sex and gender as the primary identity marker of one's experience; factors such as race merely nuance one's partaking in the primary experience of being a woman. Furthermore, she seems to view gender as something fixed and immutable. Showalter becomes territorial of her definition of women and women's writing when confronted with the work of another female critic and author, Virginia Woolf. She accuses Woolf of engaging in a "flight into androgeny," which, for Showalter, is a troubling effort to avoid confrontation with her own femininity.⁷¹ This essentialism and failure to address intersectional factors represent major problems with Showalter's treatment of women's writing.⁷²

Gilbert and Gubar theorize how women's voices can still be heard in writing, even while women are operating within a society dictated by patriarchal standards. They write,

Women from Jane Austen and Mary Shelley to Emily Bronte and Emily Dickinson produced literary works that are in some sense palimpsestic, works whose surface designs conceal or obscure deeper, less accessible (and less socially accessible) levels of meaning. Thus these authors managed the difficult task of achieving true female literary authority by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards.⁷³

Gilbert and Gubar's analysis of the recurring themes of women's writing reveals how writers can subvert the sexist standards for women held by patriarchal society. Even when it appears that

⁷⁰ Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," 32.

⁷¹ Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 263.

⁷² Showalter's later works evince a more nuanced approach of intersectionality, as in *Jury of Her Peers: American Women Writers from Anne Bradstreet to Annie Proulx* (2009), where she takes care to include writings from women across a spectrum of identities. However, she does not seem to have revised substantially her theoretical framework in this work to revisit the issue of "women's experience."

⁷³ Sandra M. Gilbert, and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 73.

women are replicating in their own writing the confining roles set for them by patriarchy, they may actually use this imagery to crack patriarchy's foundations. Simultaneously, Gilbert and Gubar see themselves as gathering the leaves, which were once scattered like those in Mary Shelley's parable of the cave, to form a matrilinear tradition of women's writing.⁷⁴ Here, the book of Lamentations comes to mind. The female voice of Daughter Zion speaks through the literary, patriarchal norm available to her—that of the personification of an abused woman—despite the problem of gendered violence inherent in such a representation. As I will argue, her persona is allowed to subvert the male dominated paradigm from which her voice emerges.

As compellingly as the “representations of women” criticism has drawn attention to literary women (both figures and writers), it leaves unanswered important issues. First, while representations of women are readily available in literature written by both women and men, the connection between these images and reality remains tenuous. Moi writes, “One quickly becomes aware of the fact that to study ‘images of women’ in fiction is equivalent to studying *false* images of women in fiction written by both sexes. The ‘image’ of women in literature is invariably defined in opposition to the ‘real person’ whom literature never somehow manages quite to convey to the reader.”⁷⁵ Additionally, in their portrayals of “women's writing,” these critics eventually fall victim to essentialism. For example, Gilbert and Gubar's insistence that the heroines and anti-heroines of nineteenth century literature are reflections of the authors' own confinement within and rebellion from patriarchal society begs the question of whether women's

⁷⁴ Gilbert and Gubar, 98.

⁷⁵ Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics : Feminist Literary Theory*, 2nd ed. (London : Routledge, 2002), 44.

writing is conceived of as *inherently* closer to experience than men's. This assumption would then replicate the "phallacy" of a monolithic women's experience.⁷⁶

Women's Writing in the Bible?

The Hebrew bible's depictions of violence against women makes the question of women's writing in the bible a thorny one, especially where difficult texts like Lamentations are concerned. Cheryl Exum even argues that the literary portrayals of violence and derogatory perspectives towards women do literal violence, claiming that women are "raped by the pen."⁷⁷ From Exum's perspective, these texts should be excised from women's reading of the bible.⁷⁸ On the other hand, critics like Adele Berlin contend that such literary portrayals of women are not inherently harmful. Instead, these depictions understand violence against women as so very harmful that women's assault is the most apt example for the total, traumatic destruction of Israel.⁷⁹

As feminist critics are dealing with ancient texts, ones whose authors are unknown and likely male, their engagement of the issue of women's writing and the gendering of emotion is complicated. In *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets*, Mandolfo observes that her thesis raises the question of Spivak: "Can the subaltern speak?" While Mandolfo answers that question with a "yes," she notes the caveat raised by Griffith: "Even when the subaltern appears to 'speak'

⁷⁶ Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, 61

⁷⁷ J. Cheryl Exum, *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)Versions of Biblical Narrative*, Second ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 170.

⁷⁸ To make this point about women's pain (both in the text and as readers) is not to discount that of other figures in biblical texts, particularly in Lamentations, which portrays wholesale suffering and carnage. However, I am writing both *in* and *for* a particular social location, that of women who have experienced sexual violence. For this reason, both at this point and throughout the dissertation, I will concentrate on women's suffering.

⁷⁹ Berlin does not explicitly identify herself as a feminist critic. Nevertheless, she frequently and directly engages feminist arguments, and for this reason, I think she belongs in this discussion.

there is a real concern as to whether what we are listening to is really a subaltern voice, or whether...what is inscribed is not the subaltern's voice but the voice of one's own other."⁸⁰ The issue brings to mind the argument of Toril Moi that images of women in literature are "false images of women."⁸¹ At the same time, while male bias can shape the portrayal of Daughter Zion, male writers may be choosing to speak as women precisely because women represent a subaltern category within which men, as subjects of Babylon, can self-identify.

Thus, I do not claim that I can uncover the voices of "real" women through my study. Instead, I will be concerned with interrogating the significance of instances where women's lament *appears* to be preserved or erased, both in the bible and in its consequences. Rooted as these representations are in historical female lament, the flesh-and-blood women and their voices are buried to an inaccessible level under the palimpsest of representation. However, the representations of women's voices in the Hebrew Bible, such as Daughter Zion's, are "women's writing" in that they provide a "Other" that resists the dominant theological strains in the Hebrew Bible while offering compelling, embodied alternatives. The erasure of women's writing in the Hebrew bible's consequences represents a flattening of the biblical text that has repercussions for today's flesh-and-blood women.

Poetry, Reception, and Gender

Within this project, the contrast between poetry and prose figures significantly. The book of Lamentations is poetry, and therefore, when Daughter Zion speaks, her words emerge in poetic form. Additionally, as I will argue, I notice a difference in the way that poetry and prose

⁸⁰ Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets*, 27.

⁸¹ Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, 44.

treat Lamentations and Daughter Zion's voice within it. Poetic consequences of Lamentations are more likely to preserve Daughter Zion's voice favorably, while in contrast, prose usually stigmatizes her, if it mentions her at all. As I will explore, this difference owes to the divergent ways that poetry and prose have been gendered in the eras of interpretation following the writing of Lamentations (with poetry associated with emotion and femininity and prose associated with reason and masculinity).⁸² Here, then, I outline both how scholars have studied Hebrew poetry of the bible and, more generally, how literary study has linked poetry, gender, and emotion.

Biblical Hebrew Poetry and Reception

Any discussion of biblical poetry is incomplete without mention of Robert Lowth. Lowth's greatest contribution to the study of Hebrew poetry is his insistence that Hebrew poetry should be examined in its own right, not merely in the same category with other classical (Greek and Latin) works.⁸³ While in Lowth's earlier lectures, his examples stem from Greek literature, the emerging awareness of his work is that Hebrew verse needs to be studied on its own terms.⁸⁴ The most distinctive feature of Hebrew verse that he finds is pervasive presence of *parallelismus membrorum* throughout. As O'Connor notes, *parallelismus membrorum* is not a discovery of Lowth, and yet his connection of parallelism to meter and versification is seminal.⁸⁵ As Legaspi

⁸² While I will explore the notion of the gendering of prose and poetry both in this chapter and in chapters 5 and 6, a more exhaustive discussion can be found in Raymond Barfield, *The Ancient Quarrel Between Prose and Poetry* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁸³ Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews: Translated from the Latin of the Right Rev. Robert Lowth*, trans. G. Gregory (London, J. Johnson, 1787).

⁸⁴ Michael C. Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 112.

⁸⁵ Michael Patrick O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure*, (Eisenbrauns, 1980), 4.

writes, “From the time of Lowth on, parallelism has been seen as the literary marker *par excellence* of Hebrew poetry.”⁸⁶

Most major volumes on Hebrew poetry have not significantly diverged from Lowth’s work, instead devoting even greater attention to parsing permutations of verses and lines. For example, Michael O’Connor’s classic text *Hebrew Verse Structure* taxonomizes possible structural features of poems, with relatively little attention given to the artistic effect of these features or their engagement of the reader’s senses. Wilfred G.E. Watson’s *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* is similarly structured. This book, like *Hebrew Verse Structure*, at times seems more like a litany of all possible variations of parallelism and contrast than a creative engagement with Hebrew poetry. The approach seems to be scientific rather than artistic. Such precise technical study of Hebrew poetry is needed for a thorough analysis. Yet what is lacking in these works seems to be a treatment of Hebrew verse as an art form with emotional content. Dobbs-Allopps’ *On Hebrew Poetry* and Alter’s *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, which I will discuss below, present a major challenge to this trend, which I will build upon as I bring to bear the reception and feminist methodologies discussed above on Hebrew lyric verse.

The reception history approach that I take flows smoothly into the study of poetry, where literary lineage as apparent as in any other type of literary work.⁸⁷ While Harold Bloom’s approach is quite different from mine--particularly in his polemic against poetry “being consumed by ideology”—Bloom’s model of poetry is fundamentally based on the idea of literary influence. He writes, “But what is the origin of that light [of thought] in a poem...? It is

⁸⁶ Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture*, 114.

⁸⁷ Here, I can build upon the important work already done in Kugel’s *The Idea of Hebrew Poetry* and Berlin’s *Biblical Poetry through Medieval Jewish Eyes*, both of which begin to use a reception approach. However, I believe these works do not address theoretical questions about the relationship of poetry to interpretation in the way that I hope to do.

OUTSIDE the writer, and stems from a precursor, who can be a composite figure. In regard to the precursor, creative freedom can be evasion but not flight.”⁸⁸ Bloom understands the craft of poetry-writing as an agonistic struggle in which an author struggles to escape the creative shadow of an earlier writer. At risk is the “possibility of imaginative death, of being entirely possessed by a precursor.”⁸⁹ However, poetry is produced not by escaping the possession, but rather, by creatively misinterpreting—either purposefully or inadvertently—other poets.

The interrelationship of poetry that Bloom expresses suggests that a comparative approach to poetry may be required. Thus, I draw upon the work of Dobbs-Allsopp in *On Hebrew Poetry*. Dobbs-Allsopp seeks to examine Hebrew poetry as “just another” of the world’s great poetic traditions, while also recognizing the particular contextualization of Hebrew poetry. He writes,

As such, there is nothing particularly special about how biblical scholars approach the business of criticism, or at least nothing methodologically or theoretically that would distinguish biblical studies (in all its many facets) from any other area-oriented studies in the humanities...what sets this field apart from others is the distinctiveness of its objects of study—in this case, the poetry of the Hebrew Bible. This poetry stems from a particular time and place, the Levant during the first millennium BCE, comes enmeshed in local practice as custom, and eventually gets written down in a specific script and language, Hebrew.⁹⁰

Dobbs-Allsopp approaches his analysis of Hebrew poetry as a “free verse” tradition, which bucks the tradition of attempting to force Hebrew poetry into rigid prosaic patterns. In his chapter on lyric poetry, Lamentations plays a crucial role, as Dobbs-Allsopp frequently draws on

⁸⁸ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 6.

⁸⁹ Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, 8.

⁹⁰ F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *On Biblical Poetry*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), .6

it to illustrate his argument that the principal characteristic of lyric poetry is its capacity to convey emotion.⁹¹

Robert Alter's *The Art of Biblical Poetry* can also aid a reception approach to Hebrew poetry due to its comparative posture and emphasis on the interaction between poetry and readers. As the title suggests, Alter engages Hebrew poetry as an art form for enjoyment rather than a scientific experiment to be taxonomized. The weight of Alter's analysis falls on the way that formal elements produce meaning in an artistic sense. He writes, "There is a certain affinity, let me suggest, between the formal properties of any given prosodic system or poetic genre and the kinds of meaning most readily hedged through that system of genre."⁹² Furthermore, Alter acknowledges previous scholarship's shortcomings in treating poetic elements as ends in themselves rather than means to an end, as he intends to "suggest an order of essential connection between poetic form and meaning that has for the most part has been neglected by scholarship."⁹³

Gendered Poetry

Lyric poetry has the particular quality of engaging its readers in an emotional experience. More than other art forms, the poem is *expected* to produce an emotional response in its audience, and if it does not do so, it is perceived as a failed work.⁹⁴ For this reason, poetry's ability to evoke emotion has made it the subject of suspicion. While "masculine" prose was the language of rational philosophy, "feminine" poetry was too emotional to be a reliable guide in

⁹¹ Dobbs-Allsopp, *On Biblical Poetry*, 12.

⁹² Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 75

⁹³ Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 256.

⁹⁴ Multu Konuk Blasing, *Lyric Poetry: The Pain and Pleasure of Words* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 70.

the pursuit of truth.⁹⁵ Western intellectuals' preferences of poetry over prose found its roots in a stereotyping of women as emotional (and an accompanying misogyny of this perceived "emotionality") which then mapped itself onto literary forms. With poetry and women both essentialized as sharing this "emotional" quality, poetry, as the bearer of "women's emotion," could not be wholly trusted.

The gendering of poetry thus opens a fertile field for feminist literary criticism.⁹⁶ Feminist theorists have begun to reclaim the domain of poetry's emotionality, demonstrating how poetry's emotional power and connection to constructed femininity can actually subvert patriarchal constructions of "rational" (read: emotionally superior) prose. As in the case of Lamentations, poetry can give license to the expression of a type of emotion rarely voiced elsewhere. It is here where poetry finds its real power. Multu Konuk Blasing writes,

Poetic conventions socially sanction a kind of language that undoes, even as it reinstates, the illusion of meaning in language; they carry a history of communal acknowledgment of a shared trauma of individualization/socialization. Like post-traumatic stress repetitions, they keep the unassimilable trauma--the truth of the subject--still audible: they make for the audibility of the truth of history. Thus the return of lyric poetry to an earlier relationship with words is not a regression but a *willed* return to a site of pain. For it is the affirmation of a history and the possibility of a history.⁹⁷

Thus, though patriarchal forces have been responsible for the gendering of poetry's emotive qualities, poetry crosses the lines of mainstream society and voices socially disruptive emotion.

⁹⁵ In the forthcoming chapters, I will provide examples of how this mistrust of poetry plays out in both the Jewish and Christian traditions, especially as it has influenced the consequences of Lamentations and its neglect.

⁹⁶ Contesting the naturalizing of gendered stereotypes is one of the crucial tasks of feminism. Rosemary Radford Ruether writes, "Feminism is a critical stance that challenges the patriarchal gender paradigm that associates males with human characteristics defined as superior and dominant (rationality, power) and females with those defined as inferior and auxiliary (intuition, passivity)" [Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The emergence of feminist Christian theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*, ed. Susan Frank Parsons (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3].

⁹⁷ Blasing, *Lyric Poetry*, 62.

Feminine, poetic disruption of masculine order figures in Kristeva's writing.⁹⁸ Kristeva charts human development from a semiotic stage to a symbolic stage via the thetic break. The semiotic "precedes meaning and signification" and belongs to the realm of drives, which is also the realm associated with the maternal body. After the thetic break accomplishes the separation between self and mother, a person enters the realm of the symbolic, which includes the drives of the semiotic, but entails language construction and falls under paternal law.⁹⁹ Even though the symbolic ultimately dominates the semiotic, the semiotic still remains; Kristeva envisions "the semiotic as inherent in the symbolic--but also going beyond it and threatening its position."¹⁰⁰ Especially within poetic discourse, the feminine semiotic may transgress the masculine symbolic.

The case of lament is particularly unique, as lament has been, historically, a special sphere of women's influence.¹⁰¹ Considering specifically the relationship of women to the lament genre of poetry, bell hooks writes, "The academic study of poetry has yet to study women's emphasis in our writing on lamentation. It would be impossible to do that without

⁹⁸ While Kristeva herself was suspicious of the term feminism, Kristeva's work is frequently concerned with issues central to feminism, such as the relationship between gender and language and the return of the body to language.

⁹⁹ Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 48-49, translated Margaret Waller. trans. of *La Révolution du langage poétique* (Editions du Seuil, 1974).

¹⁰⁰ Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 81.

¹⁰¹ While I will deal with this argument at length throughout this dissertation, see also Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in the Greek Tradition*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1974 and Gail Holst-Warhaft, *Women's Laments and Greek Literature* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

looking at the impact of domination, particularly patriarchy, on women's psyche."¹⁰² Here, hooks recognizes that lament holds great potential for a study of "women's writing."

Dobbs-Allsopp's approach in *On Hebrew Poetry* is compatible with this feminist lens. Lyric poetry, a genre of poetry which Dobbs-Allsopp convincingly argues Lamentations shares some qualities, if not belonging to it entirely, is characterized by emotional identification of the reader with the poem's speaker.¹⁰³ Often in lyric poetry, the use of first-person dialogue achieves this identification. The result is a temporary identity shift, in which the reader comes to assume the emotional experience of the poetic speaker. In Ribeiro's phenomenological consideration of a reader's encounter with a poem, she writes,

When listening to or reading a poem, we begin by hearing someone else's voice, by attending to what the poetic persona might have to share with us. Without presuming to account for *all* poetry reading experiences, I submit that, typically by the end of the poem, we have come to identify with that voice...I mean an identification in the sense that we feel that we *could* have written those words.¹⁰⁴

Poetry invites its readers to relate to an individual account of an emotional experience. In Lamentations, the figure of Daughter Zion is given license to express emotion on behalf of her constituent people, voicing painful trauma which might be censured coming from male lips. As readers, we are then invited to participate in her emotional experience.

Conclusion

While effective tools in their own right, when brought together, the concerns of reception history and feminist criticism can provide powerful insight into the legacy of Lamentations'

¹⁰² bell hooks, "the woman's mourning song: a poetics of lamentation," in *Dwelling in Possibility: Woman Poets and Critics on Poetry*, ed. Yopie Prins and Maera Shriesber (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1997), 297.

¹⁰³ Dobbs-Allsopp, *On Biblical Poetry*, 204.

¹⁰⁴ Ribeiro, "Toward a Philosophy of Poetry," 69.

Daughter Zion. The study of Lamentations' history of consequences opens the door to viewing the book not merely through the dominant strains of its interpretation, but also through more neglected reading. Feminist literary criticism can suggest possibilities for reading Lamentations that take into account the presence of "women's writing," despite the dominant patriarchal readings of it. Thus, in palimpsest-fashion, both the reception history and feminist components of my methodology explore Lamentations as a multi-layered text. My two-pronged approach offers exciting possibilities for studying the poetry of Lamentations, both within the book (itself a reception of Mesopotamian poetry) and within its consequences. As I consider the consequences of Lamentations, I will often make reference to the distinct gendering of prose (as masculine) and poetry (as feminine). Overall, the representation of the female voice within the prose Lamentations traditions drops out, yielding interpretations that correlate of sin and suffering. Where the female voice is retained, mainly in poetic afterlives, the protest inherent in Lamentations' poetry can remain.

Ch. II

A Displaced Goddess: Daughter Zion and Mesopotamian City-Lament

Introduction

Reading Lamentations in light of Mesopotamian city-laments has major consequences for understanding the characterization of Daughter Zion. When Daughter Zion receives consideration as the descendant of the Mesopotamian city-goddesses central within the earlier laments, blaming her entirely for the destruction of Jerusalem does not make sense. Instead, Zion emerges as an authoritative participant in a theological conversation. The poetry of Lamentations creatively appropriates the Mesopotamian framework to produce a morally complex portrait of Zion who can be guilty of sin without deserving the treatment she encounters.

I will begin this chapter by considering the goddess figures central to the city-lament genre, arguing that Woman Zion's portrayal in the city-laments reflects a recrafting of the weeping and raging of Mesopotamian goddesses. Then, I will discuss how the voices within the first two chapters of Lamentations interweave to produce a nuanced characterization of Zion. I will start with the narrator's voice, then shift to the enemies I identify within 1:7-9, but ultimately focus on the voice of Zion herself in 1:11-22 and 2:20-22. Through the positioning of Daughter Zion as a descendant of goddesses and as a speaker among others within Lamentations, I will contend that the first two chapters of Lamentations, while not acquitting Zion, should not sentence her to abuse, either. Zion defies categorization within the false dichotomy of virgin versus harlot. Regardless of what she has done, the sexual assault she experiences and the suffering of her people are unjust.

City-Lament in the Mesopotamian Context

The Sumerian city-laments are the founding works of a genre specific to the Ancient Near East.¹ Nili Samet writes,

The rareness of the genre of laments over cities and temples in world literature could be explained by the historical circumstances that gave rise to these laments. They emerged out of the destruction of the old, defeated political regimes, which were often replaced by rival regimes. One would not expect poetry bewailing the old world to thrive under the rule of new authority; it was only under special circumstances that these texts could be composed and could survive for many generations as part of the literary canon.²

Political shifts spelled the end of the Ur-III period, bringing the Sumerian dynasty, as it stood then, to a catastrophic close in 2004 BCE. Details from within the laments themselves help to historically situate the works. The *Lament over Sumer and Ur* explicitly mentions Ibbi-Sin, the last king of the Ur-III period, and the identification of the enemies responsible for the destruction, Elam and Shimashki in the Lament over Ur and the Lament over Sumer and Ur set this period as the historical context of reference.³

With several scholars, including Jahnou, Dobbs-Allsopp, and Ferris, I understand Lamentations as sharing a genre of “city-lament” with these other ANE works. However, given the geographic and temporal distance between Lamentations and Mesopotamian lament, the nature of the relationship between the two is contested, with Kramer as an early defender of their connection:

But there is little doubt that the biblical *Book of Lamentations* owes no little of its form and content to its Mesopotamian forerunners, and that the modern orthodox Jew who utters his mournful lament at the “western wall” of “Solomon’s” long-destroyed Temple,

¹ There are at least five of these compositions currently known: The Lament over Ur, the Lament over Sumer and Ur, the Eridug Lament, the Eridug Lament, and the Nippur Lament. These laments are typically organized according to *kirugus* (“songs” or “stanza”). [Nili Samet, *The Lamentation Over the Destruction of Ur* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014): 3-4.]

² Nili Samet, *The Lamentation Over the Destruction of Ur* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 2.

³ Samet, *The Lamentation Over the Destruction of Ur*, 3.

is carrying on a tradition that began in Sumer some 4,000 years ago, where “By its (Ur’s) walls as far as they extended in circumference, laments were uttered.”⁴

Kramer is satisfied to explain the bridging through a rather vague “penetrat[ion] of the Bible through Canaanite, Hurrian, Hittite, and Akkadian literature.”⁵

However, the linkage of the Mesopotamian classics to Lamentations is not a consensus position. Thomas McDaniel argues that the major fourteen motifs used by scholars (at the time of his writing) to argue for Sumerian influence upon Lamentations cannot actually be employed to make such an argument. This is because the motifs appear elsewhere in biblical literature or in Syria-Palestine. Simultaneously, key themes of the Sumerian laments, such as the “evil storm,” are conspicuously absent in Lamentations. Similarities that do exist can be accounted for through the common experience of defeat at the hands of foes. The commonalities are a function of the shared lamentation genre rather than a shared literary heritage.⁶

Particularly relevant for my own project is McDaniel’s argument that the female figures in the biblical Lamentations and Sumerian lament are different: “In the former, it is the personified city, Jerusalem which weeps and mourns, but in the latter, Ur is never personified and the one who weeps and mourns is the goddess Ningal.”⁷ Furthermore, McDaniel contends the city goddesses in Mesopotamian lament are blameless; their prior actions have nothing to do with the carnage. This, however, is not entirely true; in Kirugu 7:374-77, she does receive some blame.⁸ Although Ningal, unlike Zion, is not accused of causing the city’s suffering through her

⁴ S. Kramer, “Sumerian Literature and the Bible,” *AnBib12 (Studia Biblica et Orientalia)* 3 (1959), 1.

⁵ S. Kramer, *Sumerian Literature: A General Survey* (Routledge: 1961), 190

⁶ Thomas McDaniel, “The Alleged Sumerian Influence on Lamentations,” *VT* 18. 2 (1968), 200.

⁷ McDaniel, “The Alleged Sumerian Influence,” 200.

⁸ Samet, *The Lament Over the Destruction of Ur*, 29.

indiscretions, she leaves the city to its fate. She has not fulfilled the responsibilities expected of a patron goddess, instead abandoning her people to the elements.⁹

Finally, McDaniel argues that the spatial and temporal gap between the Sumerian laments and the writing of Lamentations makes Hebrew knowledge of the Mesopotamian classics unlikely.¹⁰ W.C. Gwaltney and Dobbs-Allsopp have responded to this argument by contending that McDaniel oversimplifies the concept of “transmission.” While McDaniel attempts to refute the idea that there is evidence of *direct* transmission, this is not the only possible channel for the transmission of the laments. The *balag* and *ershemma* compositions, derivative and highly formulaic laments named for their constituent instruments and used in the Babylonian period, may bridge the distance in time and space. While these compositions were also written in Sumerian (with Sumerian operating as a “classical language) or Sumero-Akkadian bilinguals, they were religious texts used and re-used in Babylonian culture until the Hellenistic era. Gwaltney is quick to point out that these compositions are not identical in purpose or content with the city-laments. While the city-laments are composed for a particular occasion and then “retired afterwards to the scribal academy as a classical work,” the *balag* and *ershemma* compositions were created for liturgical use and tend to be more general in content. They are

⁹ An interesting point of comparison here to explore the nature of Ningal’s “failure” as a mother is that of the creation myth of Enki and Ningal produced within the late Old Babylonian period. In this myth, the intoxication of the deities during conception produces handicapped progeny, a major divergence from the generality that the offspring of a goddess are physically perfect. See Julia M. Asher-Greve, *Goddesses in Context* (Vandenhoeck: Academic Press Fribourg, 2013), 141-145.

¹⁰ McDaniel, “The Alleged Sumerian Influence,” 207.

also not all laments; some are composed in praise of the god.¹¹ At the time of McDaniel's writing, the *balag* and *ershemma* compositions were not widely available.¹²

Dobbs-Allsopp puts forward three points that address McDaniel's skepticism about the relationship between the Sumerian laments and Lamentations. First, he argues that the parallels examined by these authors are too narrow. Second, he contends that more literary texts beyond the "Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur," "Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur," and "Curse of Agade" need to be considered. Finally, and, in my opinion, most critically for McDaniel's argument, he critiques the concept of literary dependence that McDaniel is attempting to refute. He writes,

To begin with, the very assumption of literary dependence rejects the possibility of polygenesis, wherein a genre may originate independently in two different literatures, and it also underestimates the notorious difficulties involved in establishing that a relationship of literary dependence exists.¹³

Dobbs-Allsopp contends that, even though there may be "intermediaries" between the Sumerian and biblical bodies of literature, this does not disprove the idea that Sumerian works are the "emitters" of literary influence of which the biblical texts are the receivers.¹⁴ Thus, bilingual Sumero-Akkadian texts can have served as intermediaries. To address the issue of the geographic and temporal separation, Dobbs-Allsopp points out the role that orality played in the transmission, and additionally the fact that "the connection between the two traditions was ongoing and mutually influential, not limited to a single place, date or direction of borrowing."¹⁵

¹¹ W.C. Gwaltney, "The Biblical Book of Lamentations in the Context of Near Eastern Lament Literature," *Scripture in Context II*, ed. Hallo, et al. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 197.

¹² Gwaltney, "The Biblical Book of Lamentations," 208.

¹³ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (Rome, IT: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993), 6.

¹⁴ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter Zion*, 6.

¹⁵ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter Zion*, 6.

As to the difference in female figures in the Mesopotamian laments and Lamentations that McDaniel notices, Dobbs-Allsopp sees little issue in viewing Lamentations' Woman Zion as a melding of city and goddess imagery in city-laments.¹⁶ For Dobbs-Allsopp, in both traditions of city-laments, the female figure's voice gives the poetry a unique emotional tenor, which is usually expressed in Emesal, "women's language."¹⁷ This raises another crucial issue in the study of Mesopotamian laments: whether there is an explicit women's language, and if so, how the existence of that language factors into the poetry of Lamentations. Throughout the body of Sumerian literature, Emesal is commonly used in dialogue spoken by a woman, whether mortal or goddess, suggesting that Emesal is a dialect specifically for women.¹⁸ However, as Gonzalo Rubio points out, a major criticism of this theory is that the genre of the works in question could play a larger role in determining the use of Emesal than the gender of the speakers, as love poetry and laments are the main places where Emesal is used.¹⁹ This seems to give rise to a chicken-and-egg problem: is Emesal used for women's dialogue because of the genre, or does the genre use Emesal because these particular genres are generally the province of women?

Jerrold S. Cooper takes up the question, exploring the issue of the (male) *gala* priests' involvement in lament production and the gendering of Emesal. For Cooper, the *gala* priests' officiation over ritual lament (signaled by pieces of evidence such as the priests' *balag* drum) suggests the female origins of Emesal. It appears that the *gala* priests assumed the language of

¹⁶ McDaniel, "The Alleged Sumerian Influence," 32.

¹⁷ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter Zion*, 36.

¹⁸ Jerrold S. Cooper, "Gender, Genre, and the Sumerian Lamentation," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 58 (2006): 44

¹⁹ Gonzalo Rubio, "Inanna and Dumuzi: A Sumerian Love Story," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121, no. 2 (2001), 270.

Emesal for the performance of the laments. They are not necessarily “hemaphrodites” or “eunuchs.”²⁰

Rather, the *gala* priests fulfill a distinctive function of consoling the goddesses through their “active listening”; their participation in lament allows the goddesses to feel understood in their own grief.²¹ Through their performance of gender transgression, the *gala* priests enact a powerful religious phenomenon. As Will Roscoe argues, “The violation of social boundaries, especially those as fundamental to daily life as male and female, tears the very fabric of reality for those who witness it.”²² The fact that the *gala* priests can defy gender categorization in this way indicates that in ancient Mesopotamia, “the underlying conceptualization of gender implied by these taxonomies is at variance with the idea that physical sex is fixed, marked by genitalia, and binary.”²³ An additional complicating factor to gender categorization in Sumer is the reality that “Sumerian constructions of masculinity are rooted in class distinctions and socially understood age parameters.”²⁴ This gender fluidity appears not only within the realm of human interactions and identity, but extends to the divine, a concept which Julia Asher-Greve notes as a qualification to avoid essentialism in her study of Mesopotamian goddesses.²⁵ Thus, though avoiding simplistic categorization of male or female, the *gala* priests could, taking on the lament of the goddesses, perform the “musical province *par excellence* of women” across cultures.²⁶

²⁰ Cooper, “Gender, Genre,” 45.

²¹ Will Roscoe, “Priests of the Goddess: Gender Transgression in Ancient Religion,” *History of Religions* 35.3 (Feb. 1996), 213.

²² Roscoe, “Priests of the Goddess,” 204.

²³ Roscoe, “Priests of the Goddess,” 220.

²⁴ Joan Goodnick Westenholz and Ilona Zsolnay, “Categorizing Men and Masculinity in Sumer,” *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity*, Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East, ed. Ilona Zsolnay (New York: Routledge, 2017), 30.

²⁵ Asher-Greve, *Goddesses in Context*, 17.

²⁶ Cooper, “Gender, Genre,” 43.

The evidence is most compelling in favor of understanding Emesal as “women’s language,” in other words, as reflective of the speech of real women, although most likely not written down by women directly. Unfortunately, there is no comparable dialect of Hebrew that signifies the presence of women’s voices, nor can we easily make claims about female authorship of Lamentations or any other part of the Hebrew Bible. The “voices of women” I identify in Lamentations are those which the narrator identifies as spoken by women *within* the text. However, just as the goddesses’ speech in lament contributes the emotional intensity that Dobbs-Allsopp observes, Daughter Zion’s lament unleashes an intensity of emotion as gendered as the Emesal dialect. This gendered element could be communicated more easily through performance than through written text, as performers could use gestures, tones of voice, props, and the like to indicate changes in speakers and their accompanying gender identities.

Mesopotamian Precedents for Characterization of Daughter Zion

Lamentations evinces its generic connection to the Mesopotamian laments through Daughter Zion’s voice, which shows a similar pattern of emotional response as within the Mesopotamian laments. Dobbs-Allsopp has considered this connection through his analysis of the “weeping goddess” motif.²⁷ Here, I wish to build upon his work by arguing that the shared emotional pattern is even more extensive. The goddesses in a Mesopotamian city-lament do not only weep; they also rage. Attention to the plight of the most vulnerable city inhabitants evokes an emotional response from the goddesses. They are initially too immobilized by grief to act on behalf of their cities. Through the progress of the poetry, they become active protagonists, interceding with the male deities for the city’s rescue.

²⁷ See Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter Zion*.

The *Lament over the Destruction of Ur* is the most intact of the extant city laments, so I will use its foregrounding of the goddess Ningal to frame my discussion. As well as having her own lament monologues in Kirugu III and IV, Ningal is featured in each of the introductions of the three laments within Kirugu VII. Kirugu VII's portrayal of Ningal outlines the pattern of the goddess' activity. She appears in the first introduction as a lamenting spectator, standing outside the city that was her home and client, weeping (II. 254-56). Her lament becomes more active in the second introduction as she tears out her hair, beats her chest, and weeps (II. 299-301). Finally, in the third introduction, her lament transitions to active protest, as she advocates with Ningal to restore her city (II. 311-14). Thus, over the course of the poem, Ningal moves from pure weeping to protest. Ningal is a more empowered agent than the discussion of the "weeping goddess" motif might initially suggest. Her descendant, Daughter Zion, will claim this heritage.

Ningal observes the full extent of her people's suffering, especially that of the most vulnerable. In the goddess' telling of the destruction, Ningal does not shrink from graphic descriptions of the carnage. Piles of corpses, fat, and blood figure prominently in Ningal's lament:

Its people--though not potsherds—littered its sides.²⁸
 In its walls, breaches were made—the people moan,
 In its lofty city gates, which were accustomed to promenades, corpses were piled.
 In its boulevards, which were built in grandeur, heads were sown like seeds.
 In all its streets that were accustomed to promenades, corpses were piled.
 In all the places where the dances of the land had taken place, people were stacked in
 heaps.
 The land's blood filled the ditches like copper and tin.
 Its corpses, like sheep fat left in the sun, of themselves melted away (*Kirugu* 5:211-
 218).²⁹

²⁸ Jacobsen points out that the potsherds here refer to the scraps left by previous levels of occupation. Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 460. The people are taking the place of potsherds as the worthless leftover evidence of conquest.

²⁹ Samet. *Lament over the Destruction of Ur*, 67.

Ningal observes how the slaughtering of the storm dehumanizes its victims; the flesh and blood of humanity degrades into meaner substances of pottery and metal.

The goddess attends to the individual bodies that are destroyed along with the shattering of the entire city. Within Ningal's litany of bodies, the plight of women in their roles as bereaved wives and mothers appears to touch the goddess particularly deeply, along with the vulnerable position of children:

The weak and the strong of Ur, both perished in famine,
Old women and old men who could not leave the house were consumed by fire.
Little ones lying in their mother's bosom, like fish were carried off by the waters;
Their nursemaids with strong embrace--(their) embrace was pried open.
The land's good sense vanished--the people moan,
The land's counsel was swallowed by a swamp--the people moan,
The father turned away from his son--the people moan.
In the city, the wife was abandoned, the child was abandoned, possessions were scattered
about (Kirugu 5:227-35).³⁰

Samet comments, "The abandonment of helpless persons and separation of children from their parents or wives from their husbands are taken as signs of the loss of the land's 'good sense' and 'counsel'--that is, the breakdown of the most basic social systems."³¹ Portrayal of the abandonment of the fundamental tenets of society can help Ningal argue to the male gods that their verdict is a mistake. In Lamentations, this disintegration of mores will first appear in Daughter Zion's depiction of cannibalism in 2:20.

As Ningal is mother to Ur, the poem represents both children and adults as being birthed as her progeny. The poem uses cruelly reversed imagery of childbirth to depict the people in their death: "As if in the place where their mothers gave birth to them, they lay in their blood" (Kirugu 5:222).³² The deaths of the inhabitants of Ur affect Ningal as significantly as if they

³⁰ Samet, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*, 68.

³¹ Samet, *Lament over the Destruction of Ur*, 24.

³² Samet, *Lament over the Destruction of Ur*, 67.

were the biological children that she bore, thus generating her outrage and protest to the male gods.

Ningal, viewing her husband Nanna as defeated by the storm, extends her protest to others on the council of gods, namely, Anu and Enlil:

I shed my tears before An,
I myself made supplication before Enlil.
“Let not my city be destroyed!” I said to them,
“Let not Ur be destroyed!” I said to them,
“Let not its people perish!” I said to them (Kirugu 3:145-149).³³

The council of gods is hard-hearted and cannot take Ningal’s plea seriously: “But An would not change that word, /Enlil would not soothe my heart with that ‘It is good; so be it’” (Kirugu 4, 150-151).³⁴ Her efforts are in vain; the gods destroy Ur, down to the last individual within the city. Samet writes, “The irreversible nature of the great gods’ decision finds expression in the magical power ascribed to their words.”³⁵ Ultimately, though she is also divine, she cannot change the verdict that the male gods have issued.

Lamentations patterns its characterization of Woman Zion using the same shift present in the portrayal of Mesopotamian city goddesses. Woman Zion surfaces first as a victim who is too overwhelmed by her bereavement to do anything except weep. However, over the course of the first two chapters of Lamentations, her lament expands to encompass rage as well. She takes to task YHWH, gendered as male, for the injustice of punishing her disproportionate to any crimes (especially those involving sexual promiscuity and unfaithfulness to YHWH as the absent

³³ Here, Jacobsen uses “ravaged” in place of “destroyed,” a translation which, in English, suggests a sexual connotation to the destruction (*The Harps that Once*, 457).

³⁴ Samet, “Lament over the Destruction of Ur,” 63.

³⁵ Samet, *Lament over the Destruction of Ur*, 22

spouse) she may have committed.³⁶ This close patterning after the Mesopotamian goddesses' role in the laments suggests she is more than just an echo of the goddesses: She still bears some vestige of the goddesses' divinity, and her words signify authority.

Lamentations' appropriation of the grieving-to-protesting goddess motif is not passive. Instead, Lamentations re-works the motif to wrestle with the Deuteronomistic framework of much of the Hebrew Bible.³⁷ The moral status of Woman Zion herself comes into question. However, through the identification of Daughter Zion with the goddesses' authoritative role (albeit still couched in a framework acceptable to the Deuteronomists), she can emerge as an authoritative voice in the midst of her accusers' cacophony.

Characterization of Daughter Zion in Lamentations

The Narrator's Perspective

At least explicitly, the narrator identifies Woman Zion as only the personification and not the deity of her city. However, echoes of goddesses' voices, reflective of an appropriation of the Mesopotamian laments, remain in Lamentations. Dobbs-Allsopp writes, "One of the

³⁶ My view of Zion as protesting her treatment at God's hands is consistent with the trauma-informed reading of Lamentations that Yansen offers. He argues that "[c]hallenging structures of power and authority is a prominent feature of the trauma process," and that many of the rhetorical features of Lamentations serve this end. [James W. S. Yansen, *Daughter Zion's Trauma: A Trauma Informed Reading of Lamentations* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2019), 128.]

³⁷ Gottwald writes, "Direct divine control of the events of history was the passionate substance of that [the Israelite] faith, but the serious challenge created by the chaos of unrequited evil and innocent suffering was more than even the Deuteronomistic constructions could indefinitely gloss over. As long as a simple correspondence was assumed between virtue and reward, between evil and punishment--just so long suffering as a problem could not arise. Yet when the old coherences began to crumble, it was inescapable that the whole fabric of life's incongruities should be questioned." [Norman K. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book of Lamentations* (Chicago: Alec R. Allenson, 1954), 49.]

consequences of the city-lament genre having been transplanted to Israelite/Judean soil was the metamorphosis of the city goddess into the personified city (presumably because of the theological pressures associated with ancient Israel and Judah's monolatrous culture).³⁸ I further surmise that the metamorphosis from goddess to personification is not complete. The voice of the goddess is not totally subsumed.

The narrator's personification Zion as a woman begins in Lamentations 1:1 :

אֵיכָהּ | יֹשֶׁבֶת בְּלֹד
הָעִיר רַבַּת לְעַם
הָיְתָה כְּאַלְמָנָה
רַבַּת בְּגוֹיִם
שָׂרָתִי בַמְּדִינֹת
הָיְתָה לְמָס:

Alas, she sits alone,
the city great of people,
She has become like a widow,
formerly great among the nations,
A princess among the provinces
has become a forced laborer.

As this personification further unfolds, the similarity between Daughter Zion and the Mesopotamian city-goddesses emerges, including Daughter Zion's association with the temple. For female figures in both Lamentations and the Mesopotamian city-laments, destruction of temples spells disaster. As Daughter Zion appears to sit homeless in Lamentations following the razing of the temple, Ningal is no longer dwelling in her house after the city's destruction, as in LU 307: "I Ningal--I am one who has gone forth from the house, I am one who can find no dwelling place."³⁹ The destruction of the temple is a violation of personal space. For example, consider Lam. 1:10:

יְדוֹ פָּרַשׁ זָר

³⁸ F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 50.

³⁹ Samet, *Lament over the Destruction of Ur*, 71.

עַל כָּל־מִחְמָדֶיהָ
כִּי־רָאָתָה גוֹיִם
בָּאוּ מִקִּדְשָׁהּ
אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָה
לֹא־יָבֹאוּ בְּקִהְלֵךְ לָדָּ:

The enemy has stretched out his hand
over all her desirable things
Surely she has seen the nations
enter her sanctuary,
Those whom you forbade
against entering into your assembly.

The first time the sanctuary (מִקְדָּשָׁהּ) is mentioned in the book of Lamentations, the feminine suffix marks it as belonging to Daughter Zion. The sanctuary is “Zion’s” in a sense more profound than just a statement of its location. Instead, like other Ancient Near Eastern patron goddesses regard temples as their home in their respective cities, “her sanctuary” suggests that the personification of Daughter Zion carries an authority that approaches divinity.

There is the difficulty that elsewhere in Lamentations, the temple is referred to as belonging to YHWH. In 2:20, the poet asks YHWH to consider whether his actions are just, “if priest and prophet should be killed in the sanctuary of YHWH.” Here, YHWH rather than a female figure possesses the temple. However, where the narrator’s focus is Zion’s personification, as it is mainly within the first chapter of Lamentations, the temple constitutes both Zion’s home, and even more personally, her own body, which perceives both the rigors of birth as well as the pain of torture. Thus, when the narrator speaks of the enemy invasion and destruction of the temple, he casts them as a sexual assault. בָּאוּ and מִחְמָדֶיהָ can belong to the semantic field of sexual intercourse under suggestive circumstances, and as this “entrance” is

carried out by unwelcome invaders, they can add to the telling of the rape.⁴⁰ Woman Zion is so intimately associated with the sanctuary that its destruction becomes her rape.⁴¹ Mintz writes, “The force of this image of violation is founded on the correspondence body // temple and genitals // Inner Sanctuary.”⁴² While YHWH may retain a comfortable distance from destruction, Woman Zion experiences it in her person, because it is *her* sanctuary. Just as Ningal experience the razing of the city as the pain of childbirth, so Daughter Zion bears the agony of Jerusalem’s doom in her own body.

The narrator’s retention of divine characteristics in his portrayal of Zion sets the stage for a positive, regal reading of her. If the poems of Lamentations hold poetic continuity, the narrator’s attitudes towards Zion appear to shift over the course of the book. Middlemas writes that by chapter 2 of Lamentations, “the narrator shifts away from his impartial stance...The narrator too feels the agony of the present distress. Moreover, the extent of Zion’s personal pain has convinced him to adopt her perspective about Yhwh as the active force behind the

⁴⁰ See Adele Berlin, *Lamentations: A Commentary*. The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 55: “The image is both of a woman violated and of the desecration of holy objects and holy space.”

⁴¹ Rape imagery is pervasive throughout the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible. F. Rachel Magdalene argues that this imagery originates in ANE treaty curses: “The public stripping or rape of the female cities of Israel and Judah is a perfect medium to convey the message that Israel has breached its covenant with God and that the natural consequences, well known to all because treaties were publicly announced documents, will flower therefrom. In a patriarchal system where God is the chief patriarch, he has total access to the females of his underlings, including its cities.” In future study, it would be fruitful to investigate whether reception of treaty-curses may also figure in Lamentations as well. F. Rachel Magdalene, “Ancient Near Eastern Treaty- Curses,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield University Press, 1995), 347

⁴² Alan Mintz, “The Rhetoric of Lamentations and the Representation of Catastrophe,” *Prooftexts* 2. 1 (January 1982): 4

disaster.”⁴³ Linafelt concurs that the narrator shifts his perspective as well, moving away in chapter 2 from any mentions of Zion’s sin towards a focus on the destruction which YHWH carries out.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, there remains a distinction between the narrator’s stance and Daughter Zion’s. The city-woman remains far more accusatory towards God, emphasizing YHWH’s responsibility for the murder of innocents to a degree unknown to the narrator.⁴⁵

The Enemies’ Perspective

Feminist biblical scholars have emphasized Lamentations’ polyphonic nature, placing Daughter Zion on par with male voices who accuse her.⁴⁶ Usually, Daughter Zion is understood as in conversation with a “narrator” or “observer” who is sympathetic but skeptical of her innocence. This approach has done much to rehabilitate Zion from the slut-shaming and erasure she has experienced in the history of consequences. However, still more can be done in this respect by recognizing the voices of Daughter Zion’s enemies in Lamentations 1:7-9, verses that seem to explicitly blame the woman for her sexual assault. The assumption that the narrator is excoriating Zion here especially tarnishes her image. Berlin writes that in Lam. 1:8-10, “Jerusalem’s sin is the cause of her exile, and her exile is the cause of her shame. Just as her sin is expressed in the sexual terms of unfaithfulness, so her shame is expressed in the sexual terms of nakedness (sexual disgrace) and sexual abuse.”⁴⁷

⁴³ Jill Middlemas, “Speaking of Speaking: The Form of Zion’s Suffering in Lamentations,” in *Woman Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response*, ed. Mark J. Boda (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 49.

⁴⁴ Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, 49.

⁴⁵ Kim Lan Nguyen, *Chorus in the Dark: The Voices of the Book of Lamentations* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2013), 102.

⁴⁶ E.G. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets: A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations*. Gina Hens-Piazza, *Lamentations*, Wisdom Commentary, ed. Barbara E. Reid (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017).

⁴⁷ Berlin, *Lamentations*, 52.

Resisting the tendency to blame Zion for the assault, feminist commentators have deemed the graphic description of the woman's exposed body as the voyeuristic gaze of spectating males or even pornographic.⁴⁸ Gordon and Washington write, "The pornographic model helps to answer these questions: the pattern here is of objectification of women, sexual domination and abuse, and defilement."⁴⁹ Even so, they have not attributed these words specifically to the voyeurs, the ones who are raping the woman, themselves. For reasons of consistency in characterization, I believe this is an oversight.

For the narrator to speak 1:7-9, an abrupt change in tone would have to take place, especially concerning the use of *נִקְיָה* in verse 8. Here, the term, which suggests menstrual bleeding is used "rather unsympathetically as a metaphor for sin," as Barbara Bakke Kaiser suggests.⁵⁰ While the narrator normally makes use of female imagery in a non-condemnatory fashion, seeing female physicality as an opportunity for sympathy (e.g. the narrator's comments about the weeping woman in Lam. 1:2), verses 8-9 turn elements of the female bodily experience into an opportunity for condemnation. Even if sin is not suggested through the imagery of menstruation, a female biological process contributes to an "othering" of the city-woman.

More generally, Kim Lan Nguyen notes that the harshness of the narrative voice in 8-9 are inconsistent with the general tone of the poem's narrator: "Even if it is true that the lamenter in Lamentations 1 once wished to focus on Zion's filthiness to draw forth outrage and contempt from the audience (1:8-9a), he generally displays considerable sympathy for her."⁵¹ The derisive

⁴⁸F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 62.

⁴⁹ Harold C. Washington and Pamela Gordon, "Rape as a Military Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 308..

⁵⁰ Barbara Bakke Kaiser, "Poet as 'Female Impersonator': The Image of Daughter Zion as Speaker in Biblical Poems of Suffering," *The Journal of Religion* 67, no. 2 (1987): 176.

⁵¹ Nguyen, *Voices in the Dark*, 191.

tone of verses 8-9 is absent from the narrator's comments elsewhere, even when he alludes to her "transgressions" in 1:5.

Attributing verses 8-9 to Zion's enemies removes the need to account for the aberration in the narrator's tone. William F. Lanahan comes closest in stating that the speakers in 1:8 and 2:15-16 constitute one of five *personae* in Lamentations: "Now there reappear in vss 15-16 [of Lam. 2] those passersby who mock the nakedness of Jerusalem in ch. 1 (v. 8) and to whom Jerusalem has addressed the opening phases of her soliloquy (v. 12)."⁵² However, Lanahan does not elaborate further.

Verse 7 invites a recognition of the enemies' voices in 8-9. In verse 7, the narrative voice states the woman is ruminating on the experience of her rape:

זָכְרָהּ יְרוּשָׁלַם יָמֵי עֲנָיָהּ וּמְרוּדֶיהָ
כָּל מַחְמֵלֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ מִיָּמֵי קָדָם
בְּנֶפֶל עַמָּהּ בְּיַד־צָר וְאִין עֹזֶר לָהּ
רְאוּהָ צָרִים שָׂחָקוּ עָל מִשְׁבֹּתֶיהָ:

Jerusalem remembers, in the days of her rape and wandering,
All of her precious things which were in the old days.
When her people fell into the hands of the enemy, she had no helper;
The enemies saw her; they mocked over her downfall.

An issue regarding the translation of ענה is that it refers to a larger category of social shame than merely sexual violence, although here, I think its translation as "rape" is mandated. At times, even when sexual intercourse is concerned, it is not clear whether rape is involved. For example, in the Gen. 34 story of Dinah (v. 2), the Hivite prince Shechem וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֶתֶּהּ וַיַּעֲנֶהּ ("took her and laid with her and shamed her"). Here, I have chosen not to translate ענה as rape, because there is no explicit mention of physical coercion, and additionally, Dinah's dialogue is not heard;

⁵² William F. Lanahan, "The Speaking Voice in the Book of Lamentations," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93, no. 1 (1974): 43.

she does not tell the readers whether the sex act is consensual or not.⁵³ The occurrence of ענה in Gen. 34:2 can therefore be understood as a form of cultural humiliation from illicit--while not *necessarily* coercive—sex.⁵⁴

Contrast this occurrence of ענה with the story of Tamar and Amnon in 2 Sam 13. Tamar makes her voice clearly heard before the rape even begins, protesting in 2 Sam 13:12, אֶל-אָחִי אֵל, הֲעִנִּי (“No, my brother, do not rape me!”). As Sandie Gravett notes, this is the only explicit female refusal of sex in the Hebrew Bible, which points to the overall lack of an ancient concept of female sexual agency.⁵⁵ Amnon refuses to listen, and the rape continues: וַיִּחַזְקוּ מִמֶּנָּה וַיַּעֲבֹדוּהָ וַיִּשְׁכַּב: אֵתָהּ (“he was stronger than she was and he raped her and laid her.”). With the combination of Tamar’s refusal and physical coercion in place, the situation is less ambiguous than in Gen. 34. When physical coercion, sexual contact, and ענה appear together, ענה can be translated as rape.⁵⁶

However, this “rape” may be understood as such only by more contemporary readers. The translation of ענה as “rape” assumes a context in which both men and women have sexual agency and that mutual consent should govern sexual interactions. This notion of sexual agency

⁵³ This is not at all to say that silence can be interpreted as consent. Nevertheless, as outsiders to the literary context in which the scene is unfolding, it is possible to imagine a nonverbal course of events unfolding in an either coercive or mutual direction. Sandie Gravett is among those who point out that implicit in Dinah’s silence is the reality that she knows she will not be heard, as in the case given in Deut. 22:23-29 Sandie Gravett, “Reading ‘Rape’ in the Hebrew Bible: A Consideration of Language,” *JSOT* 28.3 (2004)]. For a strong argument against reading Gen. 34 as a rape narrative, see Lyn Bechtel, “What if Dinah was Not Raped?,” *JSOT* 62 (1994), 19-36.

⁵⁴ My reading here draws on Ellen Van Wolde’s semantic analysis, which concludes that “this verb is used as an evaluative term in a juridical context denoting a spatial moment downwards in a social sense.” [Ellen Van Wolde, “Does ‘innâ denote rape? A Semantic Analysis of a Controversial Word,” *VT* 52.4 (543).] However, contextual clues can let us know if the translation of “rape” is warranted in a particular situation, and such a translation may be needed to let readers know the seriousness of what is transpiring.

⁵⁵ Gravett, “Reading ‘Rape,’” 280.

⁵⁶ Athalya Brenner, *The Intercourse of Knowledge: On Gendering Desire and Sexuality in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Brill, 1997,), 96, n. 14.

and mutuality are unknown within the Hebrew bible itself. Female sexuality is largely a commodity, the exchange of which is regulated by men (cf. Deut. 22:12-29, which details how a woman's virginity is a valuable possession of her father and subsequently husband). As Susan Brooks Thistlewaite writes, in the Hebrew bible, "rape...is the theft of sexual property."⁵⁷ Nevertheless, I think that the translation of ענה as "rape" here does justice to the sequence of events taking place in certain texts and is an important signpost for readers that what is happening falls under the contemporarily understood umbrella of sexual violence.⁵⁸ What follows in Lam 1 will be a graphic description of Daughter Zion's enemies violating her body.

With the context of both metaphorical rape and historical plunder already set, מַחֲמֵלֶיהָ, "her precious things," both refers to the artifacts of the temple that the Babylonians have carted into exile and to the woman's genitals.⁵⁹ The occurrence of the phrase in Song 5:16 helps to forge the connection with genitalia. Previously, the woman enjoyed proper sovereignty over her own body. Her "precious things" were her own. However, the introduction of adversaries (צָרִים) violates her agency. The statement in Lam 2:4-5 when YHWH is said to act "like an enemy" might cause us to think back to this 1:10, wondering whether YHWH is the accomplice in the enemies' rape of Daughter Zion.

The final verb in the stanza, שָׂחָקוּ ("they mocked") invites readers to experience the subsequent two stanzas as the words of the subject of the verb, צָרִים. Nancy C. Lee demonstrates

⁵⁷ Susan Brooks Thistlewaite, "You May Enjoy the Spoil of Your Enemies': Rape as a Biblical Metaphor for War," *Semeia* 61 (1993), 62.

⁵⁸ As Gravett writes, "Choosing 'rape' in an interpretive moment does not make it the standard for every reader or reading, but it does allow some critics and readers to perform an act of political resistance to ideologies dominant in the biblical period" (Gravett, "Reading 'Rape,'" 298).

⁵⁹ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 65.

the use of קחש as enemy behavior in the context of warfare.⁶⁰ Additionally, קחש has an auditory connotation, signified by the possibility of translating the verb as either “mock” or “laugh,” thus indicating that words that follow קחש are the spoken response of the enemies of Daughter Zion. The content of their mocking spans from verse 8 to verse 9.

Verses 8 and 9, where the enemies speak, accuse Daughter Zion with an unparalleled vitriol. I translate verse 8,

קטא קטאה ירושלם על-כן לנידה⁶¹
 היתה פל-מכבדיה הזילה פי-ראו ערנותה
 גם-היא נאננה ונשבו אחר:

8 Jerusalem sinned a sin, therefore she has become an impurity;
 All who honored her revile her,⁶² for they have seen her nakedness.
 She herself groans, and turns her back.

Dobbs-Allsopp writes, “Among the most notable differences between 1:8-9 and the prophetic motif on which these stanzas draw is how in the former the logic of the prophetic deployment is exploded. For example, sin is attributed to Jerusalem (1:8a), but it is not specific (she is never accused of adultery or whoring).”⁶³ While Dobbs-Allsopp departs from this point to argue that the narrative voice in Lamentations is more sympathetic than that of the prophets, I argue that the difference is because the enemies are speaking the accusation. The enemies are foreign to the thought-world of the narrator, non-practitioners of the religion of YHWH. The precise nature of what Daughter Zion did to “deserve” her punishment is irrelevant. The enemies do not even

⁶⁰ Lee, *The Singers of Lamentations*, 101.

⁶¹ In my translation, I will amend the text to נדה, to match the usage in verse 17. This better reflects the context of sexualized mocking, signaled through Daughter Zion’s “nakedness” and the uncleanness in her skirts in verse 9.

⁶² My thanks to my advisor Dr. Choon-Leong Seow for pointing out the wordplay here with זלל and זלל. זלל can be used for the shaking of the head in disgust, so the verb can suggest something repugnant.

⁶³ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 64.

feign righteousness through conjecturing about the nature of her sin; their sole interest is reveling in the rape that YHWH has licensed them to perform.

Among the enemies' taunts of Zion, נִיָּגָה is an item of particular interest. There have been three main understandings of the word. First, deriving from נִגַּח, which Berlin believes to be the correct root, נִיָּגָה could either suggest banishment or mockery. Alternatively, if the root is taken to be נִגַּח, as it is for נִיָּגָה in verse 17, the connotation is that of impurity, especially related to menstruation.⁶⁴ The enemies initially identify Zion as a wanderer, successfully identifying those who assault Zion with those who forced inhabitants of Jerusalem into exile. However, simultaneously, נִיָּגָה is close to נִיָּגָה ("impurity," especially related to menstruation), to continue the sexualized mocking of Zion.⁶⁵

Paired with the shameful introduction of עֲרֹוּתָהּ ("her nakedness"), the enemies are making sport of the women's subjection, whether specifically because the assault has made her bleed like a menstruant or simply because she is exposed to the scornful public eye. Berlin writes, "Seeing someone's nakedness was the height of indecency in the ancient world, and so to use the term "nakedness" had a much more devastating effect on the ancient reader than it did on the modern one."⁶⁶ I would qualify Berlin's statement to argue that nudity in the ancient world is not *inherently* shameful, and yet in the specific context of divine punishment of city-women, masculine enforcers of divine wrath exploit the vulnerability of nudity in a manner that produces shame.⁶⁷ The woman's nakedness further sets the line in the semantic field of sexual assault.

⁶⁴ Berlin, *Lamentations*, 53.

⁶⁵ BHQ helpfully notes, that the form present in M probably originated from a corruption that resulted from "assimilation of לְנִיָּגָה to לְנִיָּגָה" (R. Schäfer, *BHQ Megilloth*, 115.)

⁶⁶ Berlin, *Lamentations*, 53.

⁶⁷ For an exploration of the wide range of instances of nudity within the bible and the ANE context, see Christoph Berner, et al, ed., *Clothing and Nudity in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: T&T Clark, 2019). For a specific study of the role of nudity in the punishment of "sinful"

The last line in verse 8 continues the rapists’ triumphant voyeurism. Having commented on her nakedness, they now mock her submissive vocalizations and bodily posture. Daughter Zion’s reaction to the rape is to “scream aloud,” to borrow Dobbs-Allsopp’s translation of נִאָנְחָה, with the נָא functioning to intensify the verbal action of groaning.⁶⁸ The woman’s turning of her back is equally plaintive. Her nakedness exposed in the rape, she attempts to restore her dignity by turning away. Her enemies take her cries and her pitiful movements as further signs of their triumph and gloatingly reports her subjection. In verse 13, Daughter Zion, speaking in her own voice at last, will report that it was YHWH who הָשִׁיבֵנִי אָחֹזֵר “turned me back.” In repeating the language used in verse 8 to describe the events surrounding Daughter Zion’s rape, she implicates YHWH. However, even in the enemies’ recounting of Daughter Zion’s reaction to the rape, her voice begins to infiltrate the poem. For the first time in Lamentations, the gravity of the assault emerges through the confrontation with Zion’s pain. Dobbs-Allsopp writes, “As a woman raped and defiled, who survives and speaks, Zion provides a powerful witness to pain and suffering, and thus the reader is forced to reckon with the human consequences of the punishment (however legally justified) that was inflicted on Jerusalem...”⁶⁹ Seeing her agony should call into question the “justice” of her punishment.

Yet witnessing the agony of Daughter Zion goads the enemies on instead of compelling them to stop. Their mocking continues in Lam. 1:9:

טמאתה בשוליה
לא זכרה אחריתה
ותרד פלאים
אין מגתם לך

city-women, see Anja Klein, “Clothing, Nudity, and Shame in the Book of Ezekiel and Prophetic Oracles of Judgment,” in *Clothing and Nudity in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Christoph Berner, et al (New York: T&T Clark, 2019): 499-524.

⁶⁸ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 65.

⁶⁹ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 64.

Her uncleanness is in her skirts;
 She did not consider her progeny.⁷⁰
 She went down awfully;
 And she had no comforter.⁷¹

The first line, “Her uncleanness was in her skirts,” does much to suggest sexual assault. טְמֵאָתָהּ here translated as “her uncleanness,” could refer metaphorically to sins that she has committed. However, as Woman Zion appears as a flesh-and-blood woman, טְמֵאָתָהּ could refer menstrual flow. In the context of the assault, it may refer to bloodstains left by her rapists’ attack that resembles the blood of menstruation.⁷² Coupled with the language of שְׂוֹלְיָהּ (“skirts”), which are raised over a city-woman’s head Nahum 3:5 and Jeremiah 13:22, 26 as sexual abuse is used as a punishment, the suggestion of assault is particularly strong.⁷³ The enemies attempt to normalize their heinous crime by casting it as a biological process rather than an act of violence.

Furthermore, in the second line of the quatrain, the enemies accuse the woman of neglecting to consider her children. While some commentators prefer to translate אֶחָרִיתָהּ as “her future,” I translate it “progeny,” given the frequent casting of Zion as a mother of children in Lamentations 1 (e.g. Lam. 1:16, 18). This accusation of maternal neglect runs counter to Zion’s self-presentation. When Daughter Zion has a chance to speak for herself, she specifies that the reason she weeps is her children’s absence and death. Verse 16 reads,

עַל־אֵלֶּהָ | אָנִי בֹכֶּהָ
 עֵינַי | עֵינֵי יְרֻדָה מַיִם
 כִּי־רָתַק מִמֶּנִּי מְנַחֵם
 מִשִּׁיב נַפְשִׁי

⁷⁰ Such a translation אֶחָרִיתָהּ as “her progeny” reflects a tradition of usage widely throughout the prophetic writings and poetry of the Hebrew Bible, including in Jer 31:16, Ezek 23:25, Amos 4:2 and 8:10, Ps 109:13, and Dan 11:4.

⁷¹ At this point in the verse, the speech shifts to Daughter Zion herself. I will explore the rest of this verse in a subsequent section. Given that 1:7-9 is set within Daughter Zion’s personal remembrance of her rape, I do not find this shift in speaker overly shocking.

⁷² Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 64.

⁷³ Berlin, *Lamentations*, 55.

הָיוּ בְנֵי שׁוֹמְמִים
כִּי גָבַר אֹיֵב:

For these things I weep,
my eyes, my eyes flow water,
For far from me is a comforter,
a restorer of my soul.
My children have become desolate,
for the enemy has prevailed.

The contrast between the accusation of Daughter Zion as a neglectful mother in verse 9 and her own words in verse 16 is stark. Just as Ningal is accused in Kirugu 7 of abandoning her city, while her own account tells how she experience its pain like childbirth, the accusation of Zion fails to take into account her own testimony. To a bereaved mother, there could be no greater insult than being charged with forgetting her children. True to Daughter Zion's statements that the children are שׁוֹמְמִים, their names are removed, as in Assyrian treaty-curses.⁷⁴ These are not the words of a relatively sympathetic narrator, but instead, those of Daughter Zion's enemies.

Having insulted her in the cruelest way, Daughter Zion's enemies proceed to celebrate her downfall. According to the enemies' mocking voices, she went down "wonderfully" (פְּלֵאִים). The root פלא can relate to the dealings of God with humans, even encompassing instances of miraculous acts, as in Ex. 15:11 and Is. 29:14. Here, it is the enemies' rape of the woman that causes her to "go down," and when she does, her descent is as wonderful to them as an act of God. Her descent is not spiritual downfall, but of being physically crushed by rape.

The last line in the stanza, "and she has no comforter," echoes the narrator's words in verse 2. However, the context of the phrase is very different between the two verses. In verse 2, the narrator seems to describe Daughter Zion sympathetically and sensitively, plaintively noting tears on her cheeks. Here, however, the enemies repeat the narrator's sensitive phrase cynically

⁷⁴ My thanks to Prof. Annalisa Azzoni for pointing out this connection to me.

in order to wound. In light of the previous line of the stanza (“she went down wonderfully”), the enemies’ echoing of the phrase functions as a hurtful mocking rather than a reaffirmation of the narrator’s words.

At the end of verse 9, the woman’s recollection of the enemies’ voices ends. She speaks directly to readers and to YHWH for the first time in the poem, crying out, “See, O Lord, my rape, for the enemy has become great!” Despite the traumatic memory of the rape, her pain leads her into protest. Even when the enemies speak within the poetry of Lamentations 1, it is the woman’s memories that frame their words. The assignment of verses 8-9 to the enemies’ voices has a somewhat fragmentary effect on traditional understandings of the structure of the poem. Bo Johnson’s work on Lamentations 1 represents a typical view of the poem’s structure. He writes,

This chapter obviously consists of two halves, as is noted by most commentaries...The first eleven verses describe the calamities up to the hunger in verse 11...Against this background, the ‘I’ of the chapter, i.e. Jerusalem, in the second half of the chapter describes what happened, but now from the point of view that it emanated from the Lord.⁷⁵

Obviously, the insertion of the enemies’ voices in verses 8 and 9 troubles this straightforward structure.

However, it is still possible to understand Lamentations 1 as having poetic cohesion. While the introduction of disparate voices breaks the flow of the poem, the choppy succession reflects the fragmenting effect of trauma as a unifying principle, as Salters has argued that “balance statements” are incompatible with extreme grief.⁷⁶ The fragmentation into polyphony

⁷⁵ Bo Johnson, “Form and Message in Lamentations,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 97, no. 1 (1985): 62.

⁷⁶ Robert B. Salters, “Structure and Implication in Lamentations 1?,” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 14, no. 2 (2000): 300.

reflects a different kind of cohesion than structural: thematic unity through trauma's fragmentary capacity.

Daughter Zion's Voice? 1:11-22 and 2:20-22

Sexual Assault

Zion's speech in chapter 1 continues the suggestion of assault initially introduced in the narrator's discussion of Zion and the enemies' smug recounting. Just as the narrator had previously mentioned the "precious things" of Zion (1:7), functioning literally to indicate the treasures of the temple and figuratively to suggest the violation Zion's intimate parts, so Zion's people also experience invasive assault in 1:11. This time, however, the people trade **מִתְמוּדֵיהֶם** in exchange for food, suggesting both the pandering of temple goods and the giving of sexual favors for sustenance.

As the poem progresses, the attention shifts from the enemies' assault to YHWH's. Zion describes herself as **הֵיָה**. While frequently translated blandly in English as "faint," **הֵיָה** is used in Lev. 15:33, Lev. 20:18, and Isaiah 30:22 to reflect the condition of menstruating women, which is heightened when considered in conjunction with **הֵיָה**. Furthermore, given the other images of assault in the poem, the blood flow could be the product of sexual assault. Zion is left bleeding from the assault in the same way that she would from a menstrual period.

Whereas human enemies were the perpetrators of Zion's rape in verses 7-9, in verses 12-13, Zion describes *YHWH's* assault in sexual terms. The violence of YHWH leaves Zion **הֵמָּה**, "devastated," or, more descriptively, "ravished." This is the same word that describes Tamar after Amnon's assault; after Amnon rapes her, Tamar remains **הֵמָּה** in the house of Absalom (2 Sam. 13:20). The narrator has already hinted at the rape of Zion's body in 1:4, in which the "gates" of Zion are **הֵמָּה**. This gate imagery can be sexually suggestive of women's genitalia in

prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible, as the “gates” are the opening through which enemies invade the personified city.⁷⁷ The occurrence of *הַמְּשִׁי* in 12-13 shifts the locus of the violence from the narrator’s more abstract reference to physical structure to Zion’s body. Here, as Mintz remarks takes place through Lamentations 1-2 overall, “What was a personification becomes more like a person.”⁷⁸ In verse 16, her children become *הַמְּשִׁי* as well, as children horrifyingly bear the weight of YHWH’s unjust assault.

The imagery of assault continues in 17 with *הַנְּדָה*. This time, there is no confusion regarding the sexual undertones of the word: Zion identifies herself as ceremonially impure due to her menstrual-like bleeding. While Zion frames her condition as one related to pre-menopausal women’s typical biological processes, her use of *הַנְּדָה* within the recounting of her rape de-naturalizes her bleeding. Nevertheless, Zion is not calling herself “filthy.” Berlin writes, “The term has its basic meaning as a menstruating woman, and it continues the metaphor of Jerusalem as a woman. Moreover, *הַנְּדָה* is not synonymous with filth. Filth is not associated with menstruation (except in the minds of modern scholars), but impurity is.”⁷⁹ The contamination she experiences is the product of the enemies’ brutal assault.

Daughter Zion frames YHWH’s assault against Jerusalem as that of a man against a young woman: *גַּת דְּרָבָה אֶלְנִי לְבַת־יְהוּדָה*: (“Like a winepress the Lord has trodden maiden daughter Judah.”). While *בְּתוּלָה* can simply mean “young woman,” there is also a connotation of sexual inexperience; a *בְּתוּלָה* is a woman who still lives in her father’s house and has not yet wed.⁸⁰ Thus, in this instance, the narrator does not portray Daughter Zion as an unfaithful wife

⁷⁷ Magdalene, “Ancient Near Eastern Treaty- Curses,” 333.

⁷⁸ Mintz, “The Rhetoric of Lamentations,” 5.

⁷⁹ Berlin, *Lamentations*, 58.

⁸⁰ Tikva Frymer-Kensky’s study of virginity in the Hebrew Bible makes clear the diversity and variability of usage of the term *betulah*. There are clear instances in the Hebrew

to YHWH. The narrator takes up this appellation for Zion's in chapter 2, where, though initially, he only refers only the *inhabitants* of Jerusalem as virgins (2:10), he ultimately refers to Zion as a virgin as well (2:13). These characterizations of Daughter Zion as a young, unwed woman seem in tension with the suggestion of female unfaithfulness across Lamentations' reception history. Returning then to Lam 1:2 ("among all her loved ones, she has no one to comfort her"), the typical English translation of אֶהְבֵּינָהּ as "lovers" seems uncalled for; Daughter Zion's "loved ones" may be members of her family in God's household, who now have abandoned her or been killed.

Self-Incrimination?

For those close to survivors of sexual assault, Daughter Zion's speech may feel all too familiar, as the city-woman may appear to assume the blame for her sexual assault. But I argue that Daughter Zion's confession figures separately from her account of the rape. Whatever Daughter Zion's disobedience or sexual sin has been, she does not see herself as deserving her sexual abuse or bereavement. She cries in verse 18,

צַדִּיק הוּא יְהוָה
 כִּי פִּיהוּ מְרִיתִי
 שָׁמַעוּ-נָא כָּל-עַמִּים
 וּרְאוּ מַכְאֲבֵי
 בְּתוֹלְתֵי וּבְחוּרֵי הַלְכוּ בְּשֹׁבֵי:

YHWH is right,
 for I have defied his mouth;
 Hear, all peoples,
 and see my trouble:
 My virgins and my young men go into captivity.

Bible in which *betulah* is unrelated to physical characteristics connected with virginity, as in Joel 1:8, which refers to a widow. Fryer-Kensky writes, "When a text wants to emphasize the virginal state of a girl, it adds the phrase, 'who has not known a man' " Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 79. Thus, Daughter Zion may merely be a "young woman" rather than a woman has not had sexual intercourse.

This thread of confession continues through the end of Lamentations' first poem. Even while calling for YHWH to rain justice down upon her enemies, Zion refers to moral missteps:

תבא כל-רעתם לפניך ועולל למו
כאשר עוללת לי על כל-פשעי
כי-רבות אנהתי ולגי דגוי:

22 Let all their evil come before you and abuse them
Just as you have abused me concerning my every transgression;
For my groans are many and my heart is menstruous.

From a feminist perspective, arguments for Zion's apparent self-blame are troubling; from a contemporary feminist perspective, her confession appears to be a sign of her disempowerment and participation in the toxic marriage metaphor. For this reason, Mandolfo is one of those scholars who takes pains to show that Zion resists the pressure to self-blame. The confession instead takes an "ironic" turn:

In any case, if a declaration of innocence serves no better purpose than getting her raped and her children slaughtered, it is no wonder that in Lamentations Zion abandons any notion of a straightforward counterattack and, instead, lets her words convey on multiple levels. This may account for the odd juxtaposition of admissions of guilt with scathing attacks on YHWH's justice.⁸¹

Mandolfo's position is close to Nancy C. Lee's, who deems the confession a "sardonic" address to YHWH.⁸² Lee suggests that the translation of verse 18 can be rendered accordingly, with the *כי* translated emphatically as "but":

Innocent is YHWH,
But I have rebelled against his speech!⁸³

צדיק הוא יהוה
כי פיהו מגריתי

⁸¹ Carleen R. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets: A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 95.

⁸² Lee, *The Singers of Lamentations*, 126.

⁸³ Lee, *The Singers of Lamentations*, 123

This translation is rendered problematic by the lack of a clear disjunctive in the Hebrew.

Moreover, John F. Hobbins finds the minimization of Zion's guilt an overstatement, contending that, rather than restoring Zion's voice, the resistance to Zion's confession actually robs Zion of her agency. Hobbins does see an element of protest in Zion's words, though. While Zion is guilty, the punishment YHWH gives is out of proportion to her crime.⁸⁴

Here, I both affirm and extend Hobbins' argument. Working from a feminist perspective, I argue that one should not have to assume Daughter Zion is innocent of wrongdoing in order to contend that her treatment at YHWH's hands is wrong. Indeed, the confession of sin makes Daughter Zion's protest even more bold. No amount of "sin" on Zion's part can justify her rape. In so far as her personification reflects the lived experiences of Judean women, as the lament genre's female roots suggests it does, she could have worshipped every known foreign god, and her rape would still be wrong. As Gina Hens-Piazza points out, there is a double-standard in the treatment of Zion, the accused adulteress, and her enemies, the rapists: "it makes the mechanism of punishment a duplicate of the sinful deed itself. The sexual impropriety of adultery is punished by the sexual impropriety of rape. In the first instance, the woman is indicted; in the second instance, no one is indicted."⁸⁵ Additionally, the description of Zion's "sins" remains vague throughout Lamentations 1, while the outlining of her torturous experiences is detailed and graphic. The imbalance suggests that, whatever sins Zion has committed are insignificant compared to the pain she is experiencing.

⁸⁴John F. Hobbins, "Zion's Plea that God See Her as She Sees Herself," *Daughter Zion, Her Portrait, Her Response*, ed. Mark J. Boda, et al (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2012), 157.

⁸⁵Gina Hens-Piazza, *Lamentations*, Wisdom Commentary, ed. Barbara E. Reid (Collegetown, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017), 12.

Zion's repeated insistence on YHWH as her Enemy who is responsible for her children's removal and death (1:16) and who hands her over to her human enemies to experience rape belies her seeming capitulation in 1:14:

נְשָׂקוֹ עַל פְּשָׁעַי בְּיָדוֹ יִשְׁתַּרְגְּוּ
עָלוּ עַל-צַוְאָרְי הַכְּשִׁיל כְּהָיָה
נִתְּנָנִי אֲדָנָי בְּיַדֵי לֹא-אֹכְלֵי קוֹם

My transgression was bound in a yoke, by his hand they were fastened together,
They weigh upon my neck; he caused my strength to fail.
the Lord gave me into hands which I cannot withstand.

The woman's self-accusation and insistence on YHWH's rightness at one moment and accusation of YHWH at another are consistent with her goals of survival for herself and her children. Confession serves its purposes, and yet it does not function as an explanation for what Daughter Zion has experienced. By her speech in 2:20-22, all hints of a confession are gone; rising up in rage, Zion fully embraces the position that the injustice of the situation makes her confession secondary.⁸⁶

Consuming Daughter Zion, Voice and All

Daughter Zion's voice, though always in danger of male muffling, is primarily one of resistance. A pervasive gustatory motif serves as a potent tool in her rhetorical arsenal. She draws upon the semantic field of food first to demonstrate the desperate situation of her people and herself, and then to accuse God of causing violation of a fundamental mores against cannibalism. Ultimately, Zion herself is the ultimate delicacy that God prepares for consumption. The text performs the consumption it narrates through the erasure of Zion's voice. Just as YHWH and his cronies consume her body, the male-dominated text will come to consume her entire persona. Here, I make use of Derrida's theory of consumption of the Other.

⁸⁶ Henz-Piazza, *Lamentations*, 20.

Derrida argues the consumption of the Other is as inevitable in discourse as it is in everyday life. The question, though, is how one can eat the other “well,” allowing the Other to be *trophe* (consumed for nourishment) rather than *trophy* (consumed purely for the pleasure of conquest).⁸⁷ Derrida’s framework gives language to how, in Lamentations, the male voices of the book perform the consumption of Daughter Zion as their trophy. However, to an extent, their consumption acts as formative *trophe*; even while they obliterate Zion’s voice by the end of chapter 2 in conquest fashion, the male voices also retain key elements of her protest for the rest of the book.

Focusing on the human cost of warfare, Daughter Zion calls attention to those who suffer from hunger, especially women and children. These sufferers, who have little control over the “sin” of the city, bear most heavily the burden of God’s wrath. Daughter Zion challenges this state of affairs, drawing her audience’s attention to innocent suffering. Her use of words contrasting feast and famine conditions accomplishes this goal. The narrator of Lamentations and Zion’s enemies join in the gustatory language as well to depict the exigency of the crisis. An ongoing contrast stands between those are seeking food and those who have it, those who are dying of starvation and those who are gorging themselves on others’ bodies.

The narrator’s use of gustatory language spurs Zion’s initial address to YHWH in Lamentations, and it also forms the content of Zion’s initial protest. I translate 1:11,

כָּל־עַמָּה נֹאנְחִים
מִבְּקֻשִׁים לֶחֶם
נִתְּנוּ מִחַמּוּדֵיהֶם בְּאֶכָּל
לֶהֱשִׁיב גֶּפֶשׁ
רָאָה יְהוָה וְהִבִּיטָהּ
כִּי הִנִּיתִי זוֹלָלָה:

All her people groan,
searching for bread,

⁸⁷ Jacques Derrida, “‘Eating Well,’ or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida,” in *Who Comes After the Subject*, ed. E. Cadava, P. Connor, and J.-L. Nancy (New York: Routledge, 1991).

They trade their precious things for food
to revive their lives.
Look, YHWH, and see:
I have become a glutton!

The word choice here analogizes the desperate hunger of the city's people to the desperation of Zion herself immediately prior in chapter 1 as her enemies sexually assault her. Tying the experience of the starving people to the experience of the raped woman are multiple word pairs. Just as Zion groans (אָנָה) in 1:10, the people groan as they search for food. Just as Zion's precious things are touched by enemy hands, in 1:11 the people trade their precious things for food. This suggests that the people are driven to a point of desperation that they barter sexual favors with their captives for a morsel of bread.

This desperate state of affairs prompts Zion to address to YHWH directly. But her initial self-description as זוללָהּ is cryptic. While many English translations of Lamentations render this term as “worthless,” זולל belongs to the semantic field of eating. Commonly in the Hebrew Bible (Deut. 21:20, Prov. 23:20-21, Prov. 28:7), זולל refers to gluttony or bloating of the belly. Given the context of the starvation conditions highlighted in 1:11, Zion's self-indictment as זוללָהּ is a grave incrimination. She is somehow sated, while her people go hungry. How can this be possible, if Daughter Zion is the embodiment and representative of a starving people? The appalling answer to the question which זוללָהּ raises will not be answered until the end of chapter 2.

While the question of זוללָהּ stays on the table, the emotional intensity of the starvation conditions of the siege continue to rise as children go hungry in 2:11-12. As Hens-Piazza observes, this is the first time the narrator shows emotion in his recounting; the suffering of

children is too intense for him to respond impassively.⁸⁸ The narrator of Lamentations, seeking to elicit Daughter Zion's response, exclaims in 2:12:

לַאֲמֹתֵם יֹאמְרוּ
אֵיךְ דָּגְוּ וַיִּיָּו
בְּהִתְעַטְּפֵם כְּחֶלֶל
בְּרַחֲבוֹת לְעִיר בְּהִשְׁתַּפֵּךְ נַפְשָׁם
אֶל־חֵיק אֲמֹתֵם:

They say to their mothers,
'Where is grain and wine?'
As they faint like the slain
In the streets of the city,
As their life is poured out
On their mothers' breasts.

The heartbreaking question of the children, "Where is bread and wine?" brings to the fore the innocence of their suffering, the reality that they are completely ignorant and removed from any "sins" that might have brought Jerusalem under siege. While they themselves are not participants in the combat, they suffer like they are those on the battlefield. Their mothers' breasts, once a place of nourishment, now become the site of death. The starving and thirsty children, deprived of food and drink, become themselves the libation of YHWH's feast. They are "poured out" like the drink they need and crave.

Just as Zion's speech introduces a strong motif of food imagery in Lamentations, other speakers participate in the gustatory experience. First is the narrator's introduction of YHWH as both enemy of Zion and diner. YHWH's status as a consuming enemy emerges explicitly for the first time in 2:5: *הָיָה אֱדֹנָי | כְּאֹיֵב בֹּלַע יִשְׂרָאֵל* ("The Lord has become like an enemy;/ He has swallowed Israel"). In 2:8, YHWH's position as a diner continues: *לֹא־הִשִּׁיב יְדוֹ מִבֹּלַע* ("He did not

⁸⁸ Hens-Piazza, *Lamentations*, 25.

withhold his hand from swallowing”). In both cases, the use of בלי , “swallow” indicates that God, as the enemy of Israel consumes the person of Zion.

As YHWH’s persona as dining enemy recedes, human foes step up to the plate. Relentless even in the face of dying children, Zion’s enemies dish up some taunts using additional food imagery. In contrast to the status of the Jerusalemites as consumable products, the enemies posture themselves as diners as the narrator introduces them in 2:16:

פָּצוּ עַל־פִּיהֶם כָּל־אֹיְבֵיךָ
 שָׂרוּ בְחִסְרוֹתֶיךָ
 אָמְרוּ בְלִעְנֵנוּ
 אֵךְ הִנֵּה הַיּוֹם שִׁקְוֵיגֵרֵינוּ
 מִצְאָנוּ רְאֵינוּ:

They open their mouth, all your enemies:
 They whistle and gnash their teeth;
 they say, “We have swallowed!
 Ah, this is the day we have hoped for,
 We have found it, we have seen!”

Here, the imagery of the gnashing teeth adds to the semantic field of eating, which is furthered by the use of בלי, “we have swallowed.” This verb also links the human enemies’ eating to that of the chief enemy, YHWH. The fact that the enemies have something to eat while God’s people are starving is a jarring and dissonant reality. But just as the question of how Zion can be זוללָה, a glutton, remains open for now, *what* the enemies have swallowed is menacing but still unclear.

As in the first chapter of Lamentations, the enemies’ nauseous crowing produces a speech from Zion herself in 2:20-22. When she finally speaks in 2:20-22, the brevity of the response and its lateness in the exchange give rise to questions. Why this delay and curtness? And is her speech her a capitulation wrung out of her by the male narrator, or the ultimate accusation of God? Middlemas argues that Jerusalem’s response to the narrator in 2:20-22 is only at the narrator’s prodding and encouragement, as she has “withdrawn” from dialogue, becoming

“reticent” and “bowed down with despair.”⁸⁹ Westermann, committed to a form-critical reading of Lamentations as communal lament, argues that these verses parallel the psalmic lament call to “wait patiently on YHWH,” although it falls short of the praise typically found at the end of psalmic lament.⁹⁰ Linafelt reacts strongly to this proposal of Westermann’s, declaring, “But certainly this final section of chapter 2 no more advocates a patient waiting than it does a stance of praise towards YHWH.”

In my reading of Lam 2:20-22, Zion despairs, but her grief transcends patient waiting and manifests itself in protest, parallel to the goddesses’ behavior in the city-laments. This view is close to Dobbs-Allsopp’s, who writes,

...the pressure of expectation to hear from Zion directly has been building steadily throughout the poem, until, as if at the last possible moment, the poet finally gives the reader what she or he wants. The reader’s pent-up expectation and the highly charged rhetoric of the speech itself combine to give Zion’s only speaking appearance in this poem an explosive feel that goes well beyond the content of her words.

While Zion’s final words in Lamentations 2 come at the narrator’s invitation, they can be understood as some of the most accusatory towards YHWH within Lamentations. In them, Zion puts the icing on cake as she finishes her accusations of YHWH. Her answer ties together the answers to the two unsolved questions of the poetry so far: first, how Zion herself can be זוללָהּ, gluttonous, while her people are starving, and second, what the enemies are “swallowing.”

In this final confrontation with YHWH in 2:20-22, which is also Zion’s last speech in Lamentations, her lament crescendos. Dobbs-Allsopp terms her supplication to God “ironic,” as the poet has already represented God as an enemy in 2:1-8.⁹¹ However, I understand her entreaties as Zion’s recognition that God’s misjudgments are responsible for the crisis.

⁸⁹ Middlemas, “Speaking of Speaking,” 50.

⁹⁰ Westermann, *Lamentations*, 156.

⁹¹ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 98.

Paralleling classic Mesopotamian city-laments, Woman Zion comes before YHWH with her rage. As Hens-Piazza has noted, the narrator has invited Zion to come before God with tears, but instead, she serves him up her undiluted anger.⁹² Her confrontation with God has two parts, each of which answers one of the unresolved earlier questions. I translate 2:20, which horrifically resolves the issue of Zion’s bloating, like this:

רָאָה יְהוָה וְהִנֵּה וְהִבִּיטָה לְמִי עֹלְלֹתָ כָּה
אִם־תֹּאכְלֶנָּה נָשִׁים פְּרִיָם עֲלֵלֵי טַפְחִים
אִם־יִהְרַג בְּמִקְדָּשׁ אֲדֹנָי כִּהְיוּ וְנָבִיא:

See, YHWH, and observe: whom have you abused?⁹³
Should women eat their fruit, the children they produced?
Should priests and prophets be killed in the temple of the Lord?

Here, Daughter Zion foregrounds the situation of children to show how the innocent are suffering because of God’s indiscriminate exercise of anger. She, unlike YHWH, is unable to overlook the suffering of children. In her speech, Zion ironically plays on the root עלל. In the first line of the stanza, the verbal form refers to what YHWH has done, behaving abusively to children. In the second line, the substantivized form of עלל refers to the children being eaten by their mothers. The poet suggests that the children’s consumption is a direct consequence of YHWH’s abusive behavior.

The food motif also plays out through the use of פְּרִיָם, “their fruit,” to refer to the children. The children have literally become food, merely an appetizer that figures into the meal YHWH is preparing to serve to Jerusalem’s enemies in punishment of Zion. The disclosure that mothers are eating their own children finally answers the mystery of זוללה raised earlier.

⁹²Hens-Piazza, *Lamentations*, 34.

⁹³ I draw the translation of עֹלְלֹתָ as “abused” from Tod Linafelt’s *Surviving Lamentations*. He points out that the same verb is used in Judges 19:25 in the story of the Levite’s concubine (57).

Daughter Zion, identified with the Jerusalem mothers, has revealed the shocking reason for her fullness: She is among those women who have consumed her own children.

The violation of cultural mores against cannibalism cannot compare to any apostasy that Jerusalem could have committed previously to prompt God's reprisal. It hyperbolically shows the degree of traumatic rupture that the Judeans have experienced.⁹⁴ Daughter Zion's portrayals of cannibalism recall the dire warnings of Deut 28:53-57 and Lev 26:29, in which consumption of the flesh of sons and daughters illustrates the distance which God's people have wandered from YHWH. Daughter Zion brings up this horrific image, which will be presented even more explicitly in Lam. 4:10, to shock YHWH into reversing his unjust punishments. Even if the horror of the image is not enough on its own, Zion's words should demonstrate to YHWH that his punishment makes his people's crimes even worse. While shockingly, unbelievably, women may have become diners on their children's bodies, causing Zion's diseased gluttony, it is God who set the table for them.

Yet the question still remains of whom or what the enemies of 2:16 have swallowed. Zion discloses this reality as well in her final accusation of YHWH. In verse 21, she protests,

שָׁכְבוּ לְאֶרֶץ חוּצוֹת
גֶּזֶר וְזָקֵן
בְּתוֹלְתֵי וּבַחוּרֵי
נָפְלוּ בְּחֶרֶב
הָרְגָהּ בְּיָוֶם אֶפְדָּה
טְבַחְתָּ לֹא תִמְלֹת:

21 They lie down on the ground outside,
young man and old,
Virgins and young men,
they fall on the sword.

⁹⁴ Yansen, *Daughter Zion's Trauma*, 87. Yansen also argues that the stereotypical and hyperbolic imagery here is a direct consequence of trauma. Whether or not the cannibalism has a direct historical referent, the language can be understood as historical in that it points to the rupturing effect of trauma in people's lives (104).

You killed on the day of your anger,
you slaughtered without sparing.

Here, as Hens-Piazza observes, **הרג** generally appears in reference to the killing of animals for consumption. The use of the verb in reference to humans “not only bespeaks of an act of cruelty but even suggests intention of consumption.”⁹⁵ If the children were the appetizer, these slain adults are now the entree. Yet Zion still has not disclosed the full details about the meal for which the Jerusalemites are being prepared.

In verse 22, the host, menu, and date come together. Not done yet, Zion continues her accusations:

תִּקְרָא כִּיּוֹם מוֹעֵד מִגּוּרֵי מִסְבֵּיב
וְלֹא הָיָה בַּיּוֹם אֶפְיֹהָהּ פְּלִיט וְשֹׁגֵרִיד
אֲשֶׁר־טִפְּחָתִי וְרִבִּיתִי אִבִּי כָלָם:

22 You invited as on the feast day my terrors from all around;
And there was no fugitive or survivor on the day of YHWH's anger;
My enemy has destroyed those whom I bore and raised.

Here, Zion explicitly links YHWH as host of the banquet to her “terrors,” which I read as her enemies, as guests, who have appeared both earlier in Lamentations 1 and 2 and at the end of this verse. At this banquet, the people Jerusalem are the items on the menu. This realization provides the dramatic concluding note of the second poem of Lamentations. There are no leftovers at YHWH's feast; “finishing” (**כלה**) the meal, the enemies clean the plates that YHWH has set.

But there is yet one more course to the cannibalistic feast that YHWH has prepared. Daughter Zion is herself the ultimate delicacy to cap off the meal. After verse 2:22, she does not speak for the remainder of Lamentations. It follows that Daughter Zion herself is eaten as the

⁹⁵ Hens-Piazza, *Lamentations*, 35.

dessert of the festival meal. In true Derridan fashion, she is the Other consumed within the poetry of Lamentations.⁹⁶

For the most part, YHWH, her enemies, and the narrator consume Zion not for proper nourishment, *trophe*, but as their prize, their trophy. Male voices supercede Zion's for the remainder of Lamentations. Abruptly at the beginning of chapter 3, a new figure, the גִּבּוֹר ("man") emerges, who, despite his significant sufferings and moments of despair, toasts a YHWH "whose kindness never ceases, whose goodness never comes to an end" (3:22). And yet, while Zion's own voice has been consumed and is gone, parts of chapters 4 and 5 of Lamentations hint that her body, via consumption, has been absorbed into the persona of the narrator. In brief moments, the narrator espouses a deepened perspective on suffering produced through his digestion of Zion. For instance, in 4:10, the narrator recognizes the suffering of women and children, mothers driven to cannibalism by sheer despair. Even after she has been demolished, Zion's protests still grumble from the stomachs of her consumers. As Derrida recognized, we are what we eat.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ At this point, the gustatory images that I trace ceases from a textual perspective. The "meal" is in effect over. While, in Lam 4-5, a communal voice resumes, and it could be argued that this voice "includes" women's writings within it, this type of absorption is not identical to the type of testimony that Daughter Zion provides in the first two chapters. Women's voices in the ancient world do not hold the same weight as men's, so in a mixed group as that which appears in Lam 4-5, the perspective emerging will still lean masculine. The fact that grammatical gender in Hebrew works in this way (a mixed group of men and women is usually gendered as masculine, taking masculine verb forms) reflects on a morphological level this social reality.

⁹⁷ While, in this chapter, I have chosen to focus on the more embodied aspects of Zion, the exploitation of which results in her sexual assault and bereavement, Lam. 2:1-8 details the deconstruction of Zion as a city. Just as enemies assault Zion's human body, YHWH and his armies break down her city. Of course, these Daughter Zion's embodiment and architectural features of connected. Yet while Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah will depict the reconstruction of Zion's architecture into a glorious city, her body and voice will not undergo this process. The consumption of Daughter Zion I have laid out here suggests that, even within the remainder of Lamentations after Ch. 2, parts of Daughter Zion's voice, reflective of flesh-and-blood women, remains unrecoverable.

Conclusion

Daughter Zion vanishes in Lamentations after her exposé of YHWH's hosting of the cannibalistic banquet at the end of chapter 2. Just as her body is "swallowed" by her enemies, her voice is "swallowed" by that of males that follow. However, before she goes, Lamentations' Zion ensures that her voice is not forgotten. The first two chapters' patterning of her after Mesopotamian city-goddesses suggest that Zion need not be condemned or beautified; she, speaking as a flesh-and-blood woman, should not be punished by rape, nor should her people suffer. While physically and emotionally vulnerable, she is an authoritative figure advocating on behalf of her people, and those enemies who oppose her are regarded as untrustworthy.

Reading Lamentations' Zion as an authoritative literary afterlife of the goddesses of Mesopotamian city-laments runs counter to much of the interpretive tradition of the work in both Jewish and Christian communities, as I will show in subsequent chapters. Zion's emotional account of the city's calamity, coupled with her perceived culpability, also puts her at odds with what tradition has perceived as "reasonable" male responses to Jerusalem's destruction, particularly that of Jeremiah. Even in more recent scholarly interpretation of Lamentations, Zion's emotionality fails to serve as an adequate response to the calamity, necessitating the introduction of other (male) voices. For example, Mintz writes that as the poet despairs of finding words to express the emotional weight of the events through Zion's voice, the "man" of Lamentations 3 must come forward: "And now acts of reasoning and cognition are the necessary equipment for undertaking the desperate project of understanding the meaning of what has happened."⁹⁸ However, in Zion's emotional lament lies a wisdom distinct from that of

⁹⁸ Mintz, "The Rhetoric of Lamentations," 9.

philosophical argument, unveiling the depth of suffering and the necessity of her audience's emotional involvement.

With such a confluence of clashing voices in Lamentations, the motif of comfort, indicated by נחם in the piel, provides a unifying thread. Concerning this refrain of comfort, Dobbs-Allsopp argues that the repetition builds the intensity of the insistence that there is no comforter, while also evoking the response as God as comforter.⁹⁹ However, there are differences in inflection dependent on the speaker. The narrator's initial statement of the refrain is emotionally ambiguous. While on one level a sympathetic response to Zion's tears, the statement is also somewhat accusatory; the narrator understands Zion's weeping as the product of lovers' absence and thus her unfaithfulness to YHWH (1:2). Next, the enemies mock any degree of sympathy which the narrator held towards Zion through incorporating the phrase into the description of her rape. They crow over the fact that she has no comfort (1:8). Finally, as the first poem of Lamentations approaches its closure in 1:21, Zion brings the refrain to its culmination by simultaneously echoing the narrator and referring to the enemies: שָׁמְעוּ כִּי נִאֲנָה לִּי אֲנִי אֵין מְנַחֵם לִּי ("They heard how I was groaning/for I have no comforter."). Thus, Lamentations' poetry interweaves its constituent voices through the motif of comfort.

Significantly, Zion herself does not ask for comfort within Lamentations; such comfort is impossible. Rather, as Yansen argues, Zion's request in her final address to YHWH in 2:20-20 is to "join with her in bearing witness to her trauma."¹⁰⁰ Even though the narrator is relatively sympathetic to her situation, he cannot help her. Whether the poet...fulfills his role as the comforter of Zion or not, his attempt to comfort her is clear.¹⁰¹ She remains comfortless through

⁹⁹ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 56.

¹⁰⁰ Yansen, *Daughter Zion's Trauma*, 214.

¹⁰¹ Nguyen, *Voices in the Dark*, 73.

Lamentations as a protest to YHWH's injustice.¹⁰² Nevertheless, Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah will renew the efforts to succor Zion, as I explore in the next chapter.

¹⁰² Charles William Miller, "Reading Voices: Personification, Dialogism, and the Reader of Lamentations 1," *Biblical Interpretation* 9, no. 4 (2001), 402.

Ch. III

Zion Comforted? Isaiah 40-55 and 56-66

Introduction

Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah are rife with allusions to Lamentations, particularly to the figure of Daughter Zion.¹ In alluding to Lamentations, Isaiah does not merely copy or reverse the sorrow of Lamentations' Daughter Zion; instead, by alluding to Lamentations, Isaiah effects a change in how Lamentations itself is read. Though Deutero-Isaiah draws upon Lamentations' presentation of Zion, the referent of "Zion" has changed somewhat in the intervening period. Within Lamentations, Zion signifies both the people and the city. In Deutero-Isaiah, while the people are still referenced, the emphasis has shifted to the city as the dwelling place of God as understood in Zion theology.² Furthermore, while Deutero-Isaiah prominently depicts the restoration of the physical structure of Zion, the humanity within her personification that lends

¹ Obviously, arguing that Isaiah alludes to Lamentations relies on a dating of the constituent parts of Isaiah as prior to the writing of Isaiah. Like any attempt to date biblical material, such a dating is by no means certain. However, based on the arguments of Dobbs-Allsopp concerning the relatively early dating of Lamentations, and the arguments Tiemeyer and Dille have made about the impulse to "rehabilitate" Daughter Zion from her presentation in Lamentations due to the presence of the returnees in Jerusalem, I believe that Deutero-Isaiah comes after and has literary dependence upon Lamentations. I also consider Newsom's argument (in response to Gottwald's) concerning the provenance of the two works and Isaiah's subsequent dependence on Lamentations particularly convincing. Sarah J. Dille, *Mixing Metaphors: God as Mother and Father in Deutero-Isaiah* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004) F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Linguistic Evidence for the Date of Lamentations," *JANES* 26 (1998). Norman K. Gottwald, "Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40-55: An Eagletonian Reading," *Semeia* 59 (1992). Carol A. Newsom, "Response to Norman K. Gottwald, 'Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40-55,'" *Semeia* 59 (1992). Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, "Geography and Textual Allusions: Interpreting Isaiah xl-lv and Lamentations as Judahite Texts," *Vetus Testamentum* 57 (2007).

² Maggie Low, *Mother Zion in Deutero-Isaiah: A Metaphor for Zion Theology* (New York: Peter Lang, 2013), 69.

her voice remains in shambles. With Zion portrayed as a bride, mother, and queen, the representation of Zion is more optimistic in Isaiah than in Lamentations. However, though Zion's image is recuperated from Lamentations, the force of her lament is largely diluted. Daughter Zion's voice wanes, while YHWH's, absent from Lamentations, advances to provide "comfort" to the destitute people.³

However, "comfort" mutes the protest against divine injustice present in Zion's lament, and yet the restoration which Zion longs for remains absent. In particular, Zion's mothering role is removed from her as God takes on maternal characteristics. Trito-Isaiah seeks to correct this problem by restoring her maternal role, and yet the persona of Daughter Zion as a woman with embodied experiences still diminishes, and her voice is still gone. The removal of Daughter Zion's voice through Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah sets a precedence for the absence of female lament in subsequent consequences in Lamentations.

In this chapter, I will begin by establishing the criteria for allusion and then move on to identify the strongest cases for allusion to Lamentations in Deutero-Isaiah. Next, I will proceed to show how, the linkage between Isaiah and Lamentations established, the passages concerning personified city-women reflect Isaiah's creative re-reading of Lamentations. I will finish by discussing how, moving forward, Isaiah's re-readings of Lamentations will shape the trajectory of interpretation.

³ Another masculinized voice, that of the Suffering Servant, emerges in Deutero-Isaiah which stands alongside and ultimately supplants that of Daughter Zion as a primary servant and messenger. In a future project, I would like to spend more time analyzing the interplay of the Suffering Servant and Daughter Zion, building upon the important work done by Knud Jeppesen, "Mother Zion, Father Servant: A reading of Isaiah 49-55," in *Of Prophets' Visions and the Wisdom of the Sages*, ed. Heather A. McKay and David J.A. Clines (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1993).

Allusions to Lamentations in Deutero-Isaiah

Establishing Allusion

The allusions to Lamentations in Deutero-Isaiah follow the pattern of reversing the doom which Lamentations describes. The reversal of Lamentations' imagery does not mean that Deutero-Isaiah disagrees with the messages of the poetry which it appropriates. Rather, it confirms the justice of the punishment which God has meted out in Lamentations, but reveals how that punishment is at an end. Thus, the allusions to Lamentations serve to "furnish a credential" of Deutero-Isaiah.⁴

This allusive relationship between Lamentations and Deutero-Isaiah has been closely examined already. Patricia K. Tull conducts the most extensive contemporary study on the intertextual relationship between Deutero-Isaiah and Lamentations. First, she contends that Lamentations would have been part of a body of literature readily available to writers of Isaiah. Second, the two represent prophetic literature dealing with a shared topic: the sacking of Jerusalem. Third, the two share the trope of the personification of the city as a woman. Finally, and most specifically, Deutero-Isaiah demonstrates a "tight relationship" of the repetition of "comfort" with Lamentations, which is also "accompanied by other reversals of language and imagery of Lamentations."⁵

Mary Donovan Turner, like Tull, has conducted an extensive study on the intertextual relationship between Deutero-Isaiah and Lamentations. She finds evidence for this relationship on three levels. First, there are shared phrases used exclusively in Lamentations and Deutero-

⁴ Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40-66* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 158.

⁵ Patricia K. Tull, *"Remember the Former Things": The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 132.

Isaiah, which I will discuss in detail later: “children faint at the head of every street” (Lam 2:19, Isa 51:20) and the repeated plural commands of “depart, depart” (Lam 4:15, Isa 52:11). Second, there exist phrase pairings in which the lament tone of Lamentations finds reversal in Deutero-Isaiah, as when Daughter Babylon “does not remember her future” (Lam 1:9, Isa 47:7) in Deutero-Isaiah as Daughter Zion did not in Lamentations. Deutero-Isaiah seems to deliberately effect these reversals of Lamentations’ meaning. Finally, there are parallelisms between Lamentations and Deutero-Isaiah that are not unique, “but complement the unique commonalities,” such as shared thematic references to comfort.⁶

Benjamin D. Sommer provides helpful guidelines for identifying allusions within Deutero-Isaiah. He stresses that shared vocabulary alone is insufficient to indicate an allusion; a shared topic or genre, such as lament, held in common between Lamentations and Deutero-Isaiah, may necessitate similar word usage. Additionally, shared usage may simply be coincidence if the words in question are common. Therefore, if shared words are uncommon, the presence of an allusion may be more likely. Especially when shared, uncommon word usage occurs in concert with known Isaianic allusive style, the likelihood of allusion grows even more. Sommer identifies Isaiah’s allusions as commonly having a split-up pattern (in which non-shared words are inserted between words of quoted text), sound and word play, and shared word order with the alluded-to text.⁷

In his outlining of the purposes of the use of older material, Sommers identifies revision and allusion as intentions at cross-purposes of one another: allusions make use of an older text to

⁶ Mary Donovan Turner, “Daughter Zion: Lament and Restitution” (PhD diss., Emory University, 1992), 156

⁷ Sommers, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 160.

bolster their claims, while revision involves altering the claim of the older text in some way.⁸ However, I argue that all allusions, as consequences of older material, are inherently a form of revision as well, although the alluding author is not necessarily conscious of revising the older text. In alluding to a text, a writer is making a connection between the older words and his or her own context, or “horizon,” to use Gadamer’s terminology. This connection creates a new meaning for the older text which did not exist before. As an author cannot have access to the first writer’s intentions when he or she was creating the older text, even allusion that seems intended to concur with the older text results in a revision. Thus, though from the perspective of the writer of Deutero-Isaiah, the allusion to Lamentations may “furnish a credential,” the result of the allusion creatively adapts Lamentations.⁹

Following Ben-Porat (whose methodology I discuss in Ch. I), in this chapter, I will begin by identifying what I believe are some of the most persuasive instances of allusions to Lamentations in Deutero-Isaiah. I will bring to bear the referent texts of Lamentations on the allusive texts in Deutero-Isaiah, in order to identify the revisionary consequences of the allusions. Then, I will consider how, on the whole Deutero-Isaiah recrafts the figure of Daughter Zion.

“Strong” Allusions to Lamentations in Deutero-Isaiah

Lam 1:1, 9 in Isa 47: 7, 8

⁸ Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 29.

⁹ Responding to Sommer’s methodology of identifying allusions, Nurmela argues for greater emphasis to be placed on strict verbal parallels; he finds Sommer’s search for split word-pairs at times to produce vague results. However, I think that Sommer’s methodology is useful precisely because of the ingenuity of biblical writers in creatively appropriating earlier biblical texts. With too much emphasis merely on “strict verbal parallels,” important allusions can be missed. [Risto Nurmela, *The Mouth of the Lord Has Spoken: Inner-Biblical Allusions in Second and Third Isaiah* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2006)]

Isa 47:7, 8 recycles the imagery characterizing Zion within Lamentation to characterize Daughter Babylon after Jerusalem's restoration. Two points of connection exist. First, both Daughter Babylon and Daughter Zion do not זָכַרְתָּ אֶת־רִיבֶיךָ: (“remember her future”). The argument for the allusion to Lamentations is made stronger by the fact that the feminine third person singular suffix on in Isaiah 47:7 appears misplaced or referring to an abstract entity absent from the text. Twenty Hebrew manuscripts and the Vulgate have a reading of “your future,” demonstrating the fact that the Masoretic reading here is a difficult one.¹⁰ The fact that the Masoretic text preserves this reading persuades me that Isaiah is here alluding to Lamentations 1:1, 9, in which the suffix refers to a concrete entity. Additionally, in both Lamentations and Deutero-Isaiah, the female personification is associated with a widow. In Lam. 1:1, this association is by way of simile (הִי־תָהּ כְּאַלְמָנָה), while in Isa. 47:8, Lady Babylon claims she will not sit as a widow (לֹא אֶשֶׁב אֶלְמָנָה). This construction appears only elsewhere in Gen. 38:11, but this expression contains בַּיִת as well, with אֶלְמָנָה appearing only as a circumstantial qualifier.¹¹ The expression “dwell a widow” is unique to Isaiah and Lamentations.

The direction of influence seems to flow from Lamentations to Isaiah. The pitiful conditions of Daughter Zion herself are no more once God's wrath has spent itself. Her suffering is then transferred to Daughter Babylon, who must now endure the same humiliation to which her people subjected Daughter Zion. The use of allusion allows Isaiah to make the point about the dramatic reversal of conditions for the two personified women. As I will go on to discuss in more detail, the allusive connection here invites a more complete consideration of the figure of Daughter Babylon in light of Daughter Zion.

¹⁰ Nurmela, *The Mouth of the Lord Has Spoken*, 45

¹¹ Nurmela, *The Mouth of the Lord Has Spoken*, 45.

Lam 2:19, 4:1 in Isa 51:20

The expression בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל־חֻצוֹת (“at the head of every street”) appears in Isaiah 51:20, Nahum 3:10, and Lamentations 2:19 and 4:1. Additionally, as Nurmela notes, Isaiah 51:20 uses “lie” and “streets” together, a combination only appearing in Lam. 2:21, indicating that Isaiah alludes to Lam 2 rather than Lam 4. The Nahum allusion to Lamentations may in fact be a gloss, as it could be omitted without changing the meaning of the passage, most strongly suggesting that Isaiah is drawing upon Lamentations. The passages from Isaiah and Lamentations share thematic coherence; both concern the perishing of the city’s children while Jerusalem is under siege. For Nurmela, the setting of Lamentations imagery within the destroyed city strongly suggests that the direction of influence is from Lamentations to Isaiah.¹²

Lam 4:15 in Isa 52:11

The proclamation in Lam 4:15, סֹרְרוּ טִמְאָה קְרָאוּ לָמוּ סֹרְרוּ אֶל־תִּגְעוּ (“Away! Unclean!” people shouted at them; “Away! Away! Do not touch!”) is creatively reappropriated through allusion in Isa 52:11. While in Lamentations, the Judean exiles are the unclean thing, in Isaiah, it is the invaders’ contaminating presence that is banished: סֹרְרוּ אֶל־תִּגְעוּ (“Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing!”). The words סֹרְרוּ and טִמְאָה are repeated, displaying sufficient verbal paralleling to establish the allusion. While the verbal parallel connects Lamentations and Isaiah, the context reflects Num 16:26 as well, in which the Israelites are bidden to “turn away” from the tents of the wicked and refrain from touching their goods.¹³ This allusion is another instance of Deutero-Isaiah’s usage of the language of Lamentations in order to reverse the book’s pronouncement of doom. Rather than indicating that Lamentations is

¹² Nurmela, *The Mouth of the Lord Has Spoken*, 68

¹³ Nurmela, *The Mouth of the Lord Has Spoken*, 75.

incorrect, however, Isaiah's citation of it indicates that the terms of the penalty have already been satisfied.

Lam 3:31-32 in Isa 54:6-8.

As Tull notes, these passages from Lamentations and Deutero-Isaiah are the only places in the Hebrew Bible where זנח ("reject") and קבצ ("gather") appear in combination with each other.¹⁴ This text meets the criteria for allusion set forward by Sommer because, though "reject" is a commonly used word within the lament genre, "gather" is not, and hence the unique combination of the two, set as they are within the context of Deutero-Isaiah's frequent quotation from Lamentations, appears to be an allusion. Here, as Deutero-Isaiah reframes the use of these words to frame the marriage metaphor, the nature of the lament of Lam 3:31-32 is substantially changed: "YHWH's abandonment, though actual, was by no means either enduring or excessive. The laments had lodged their protest during the brief moment in which all was not yet seen."¹⁵ Thus, even though Deutero-Isaiah reverses the usage of the words in Lamentations' gloomy outlook, Lamentations' message still stands affirmed within Deutero-Isaiah.

Isaiah 40-55

Ben-Porat's analysis of literary allusion invites readers, once the allusions and their source texts have been identified, to reread larger sections of works in light of the source texts. Thus, having established that Deutero-Isaiah alludes to Lamentations, Deutero-Isaiah can be read using Lamentations as a backdrop. In particular, I am interested in the passages of Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah that elaborate on cities personified as women. Biddle has noted the existence of

¹⁴ Tull, *Remember the Former Things*, 234.

¹⁵ Tull, *Remember the Former Things*, 235.

eight passages concerning female personifications of cities in the latter part of Isaiah; four in Isaiah 40-55 and four in Isaiah 56-66. He sets out to demonstrate the relationship between these passages, examining how, in each, the imagery of Zion and her counterparts builds sequentially.¹⁶ Through the passages concerning Zion and her female cohorts, Deutero-Isaiah aims to show how the “comfort” sung of in Isaiah 40 comes to pass for Daughter Zion. The comfort which Daughter Zion receives in Deutero-Isaiah involves a substantial reshaping of her complaints in Lamentations, particularly her refusal to be comforted in Lamentations. In the process, the voice of Daughter Zion herself, so poignant and resounding in Lamentations, begins to recede in relation to that of the poetic narrator’s.

Isa 47:1-15

As R.N. Whybray notes, Isaiah 47 has the distinction of being the only oracle of judgment against another nation within Deutero-Isaiah, with, in this case, the judgment directed at Daughter Zion’s counter (or “alter ego,” as Biddle puts it), Daughter Babylon.¹⁷ This passage includes a number of allusions to Lamentations and is also parallel to Lamentations’ crafting of Zion’s persona in its overall form. Thus, in this case, the Deutero-Isaiah passage does not displace Daughter Zion’s voice, but instead transfers her suffering to a different city-woman. While the transfer appears to answer Daughter Zion’s petition in Lam 1:21-22 for her enemies to undergo her own suffering, the passage ultimately opens more problems than it solves for feminist interpreters.

¹⁶ Mark E. Biddle, *Lady Zion’s Alter Ego: Isaiah 47:1-15 and 57:6-13 as Structural Counterparts*,” in *New Visions of Isaiah*, ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney (Atlanta: SBL, 1996), 127.

¹⁷ R. N. Whybray. *Isaiah 40-66* (London: Oliphants, 1975), 118.

Isaiah 47 is among those passages in which Norman K. Gottwald claims that the “affinities between the two books strike deeper than mere verbal parallelism. They reveal stylistic features and forms of expression...”¹⁸ Among the verbal parallelisms are the “sitting in silence” which both city-women perform (47:5, 2:10); failure to “remember [her] end” (an accusation of both women); and the “dwelling as a widow.” The passage illustrates the degeneration of Daughter Babylon from queen to slave. The shame and suffering which Daughter Zion experiences in Lamentations 1 is now transferred to Babylon.

Daughter Babylon too experiences devastating sexual torture (47:2-3) that echoes the humiliating revelation of the uncleanness of Zion’s skirts (Lam 1:9):

גְּלִי צִמְתָּךְ חֲשַׁפֵי־שֵׁבֶל גְּלִי־שׁוֹק עֲבְרֵי נְהָרוֹת
תִּגְלֵ עֲרוֹתֶךָ גַּם תִּרְאֶה תִרְפָּתְךָ

Remove your veil; bare your skirt; uncover your thighs, pass through the rivers.
Uncover your nakedness and your shame will be seen.

However, Deutero-Isaiah greatly expands on the motif of sexual abuse present in Lamentations; as disturbing as Lamentations’ portrayal of Daughter Zion’s rape is already, Deutero-Isaiah takes pains to display Daughter Babylon’s exploitation with even more pornographic detail. Daughter Babylon’s abuse intertwines the language of slavery with that of sexual abuse. The text directs a series of imperatives at her in verses 2-4, each of which combines the ideas of material poverty and servitude with sexual exploitation. She “grinds” (טחן) the grain of another, suggesting a double entendre of agricultural and sexual imagery. Blenkinsopp, citing Samson’s forced grinding in Judges 16:21, argues for grinding’s use as gender specific activity that also reflects a degrading and “coercive sexual activity,” as appears to be the case as well in Job 30:11. Thus,

¹⁸ Norman K. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book of Lamentations* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 45.

the agricultural and sexual references work together to form a “dreadful double entendre.”¹⁹

This sexual innuendo is confirmed by what follows, as Daughter Babylon is to lift up her skirt to “pass over” rivers.²⁰ The gradual denuding of the city-woman, taking place titillatingly slowly, gives the sense that the reader is voyeuristically participating in her stripping. Daughter Babylon, once the lofty queen of the nation, is now portrayed like slave girl in sexual bondage, the plaything of a new master.²¹

The depth of Daughter Babylon’s fall matches the heights of her portrayed arrogance. Twice in the verse, she makes the idolatrous claim that “I am...and there is no one beside me,” language that recall’s YHWH’s self-presentation in Deutero-Isaiah (Is. 45:5, 6, 18, 22; 46:9). Additionally, in verse 5, Daughter Babylon is commanded to enter in silence and sit “in utter darkness” (שָׁבִי דוֹמָם וּבְאֵי בְחֹשֶׁךְ). This silence and darkness, Sweeney argues, is reflective of the darkness of the Holy of Holies, where YHWH dwells. Thus, Daughter Babylon’s arrogance comes back to haunt her in the taunt.²² Like Zion in Lam 1:1, Daughter Babylon is to sit in the “dust” as she considers her doom.

Deutero-Isaiah portrays Babylon’s abhorrent treatment as restorative because Babylon is the obverse of Lamentations’ Daughter Zion: whereas Jerusalem begged for her suffering to be seen, Babylon is confident that her wickedness goes unseen (47:10); she declares אֵינִי רְאֻנָּה (“no one sees me”). Here again, Daughter Babylon’s confidence that she can see without being seen

¹⁹ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 280.

²⁰ Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 40-66* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 133.

²¹ Sweeney, *Isaiah 40-66*, 134.

²² Sweeney, *Isaiah 40-66*, 135.

suggests her God-like hubris.²³ The two will suffer equally as well, Zion, by her misery going unseen, and Babylon, revealed humiliatingly to her tormentors.

By verse 8, the terminology for Daughter Babylon has changed; while originally, she was portrayed as “virgin daughter Babylon,” vulnerable to violation by rape, now she is Daughter Babylon the wife and mother. Just as Zion has been widowed and bereaved in Lamentations, so will Babylon be through God’s meting out of justice, in spite of her declaration, אָנִי וְאֶפְסֵי עוֹד לֹא אֶשֶׁב אֶלְמָנָה וְלֹא אֶדַע שְׂכָרָל (47:8). The loss of both children and spouse was an unparalleled blow to a woman in this context, making her especially vulnerable to an enslaved condition.²⁴ In Deutero-Isaiah YHWH has heeded Daughter Zion’s cry in Lam 1:21 through inflicting harsh treatment upon her enemies.

However, while here Deutero-Isaiah seems to respond to Zion’s prayer from Lamentations, the “comfort” does not resolve Daughter Zion’s indictment of God. The reason why innocents suffer in Lamentations remains obscured. Daughter Babylon is not herself the root of the problem of Jerusalem’s suffering. YHWH, the speaker in Isaiah 47, freely admits that it is he, not Babylon herself, to blame for Zion’s suffering; he “profaned” his inheritance and gave his people “into [her] hand.”²⁵ Thus, the real enemy, YHWH himself, goes unpunished. Meanwhile, the torture of Daughter Babylon creates another victim of YHWH’s violence.

Isa 49:14-26

While Isaiah 47 depicts the systematic, voyeuristic stripping of Daughter Babylon, Isa 49 depicts the dressing of Daughter Zion as a bride. Yet even in light of the punishment for

²³ Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 123.

²⁴ Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 122.

²⁵ Claus Westermann. *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 191.

Daughter Babylon that has taken place, the Zion of Deutero-Isaiah herself remains inconsolable. The reason for her grief emerges and becomes the subject of argument through Isaiah's employment of the disputation form, in which a claim is presented and then argued against in the style of a courtroom debate.²⁶ Here, the two disputing parties are Daughter Zion, whose lament that YHWH has forgotten and forsaken her is the thesis initially presented, and YHWH, who deconstructs her argument through the assurance of his continued care.

Thus, the subject of the disputation is whether Daughter Zion's lament remains valid even after God seems to have accomplished restoration. The argument being disputed is lament itself. Westermann writes, "The connection between disputation and proclamation is contrived thus: the assertion made by Israel, which is disputed, is presented in the form of a lament, and the disputation is the word of salvation in answer to the lament."²⁷ God's response to Daughter Zion is the attempt to quell the lament that continues to sound from her lips.²⁸

Deutero-Isaiah tries to address Lamentations' concerns by using allusive echoes of Lamentations. 49:18 contains YHWH's promise that "those who swallowed you up will be far away" (וְרִקְקוּ מִבְּלַעֲיָךְ) which acts as rebuttal to Zion's enemy's triumphant cry that "we have swallowed!" (בִּלְעָנוּ) in Lam 2:18. Continuing the motif of consumption as a representation of military defeat, YHWH declares in 49:26, "I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh," (וְהִאֲכַלְתִּי אֶת-מוֹנְיָךְ אֶת-בְּשָׂרָם) a sinister echo of the Jerusalemite mothers who consume their own children, driven mad by hunger (Lam. 2:20, 4:10).

God contends against the accusation of his neglect through intertwining the portrayals of Daughter Zion as bride and mother, and YHWH as husband and mother. Daughter Zion's

²⁶ Sweeney, *Isaiah 40-66*, 191.

²⁷ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 218.

²⁸ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 219.

lament here stems primarily from her sense of maternal loss. Despite the general silencing of her pain in Deutero-Isaiah, in 49:14, Zion speaks at last: וַתֹּאמֶר צִיּוֹן עָזַבְנִי יְהוָה וְאֵלֶיךָ שָׁכַחְנִי (“But Zion said, ‘YHWH has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me.’”) Her speech alludes to Lam 5:20. Yet the prophet alludes to Lamentations in order to refute the continued relevance of Daughter Zion’s lament. Deutero-Isaiah has reshaped the question of Lam. 5:20 as a perfect-tense declarative statement, emphasizing the “pastness” of the situation.²⁹ For Tull, Zion’s lament here “exhibits blindness to all that God has been doing to renew and restore,...”³⁰ However, from the perspective of Zion’s experiences detailed in Lamentations, I argue that her concerns remain unaddressed, and her lament retains its validity.

In response to Zion’s lament, YHWH rises to his own defense by self-presenting as the consummate mother in 49:15:

הַתְּשַׁכַּח אִשָּׁה עוֹלָה מְרִחָם בְּוִבְטָנָהּ
גַּם-אֵלֶּה תִשְׁכַּחְנָה וְאַנְכִי לֹא אֶשְׁכַּחְךָ

Can a mother forget her nursing child,
Or show no compassion³¹ for the child of her womb?

²⁹ For Gruber, the purpose of this maternal language is to draw women attracted to other ANE religions’ use of female goddesses back to the religion of YHWH. [Mayer Gruber, “The Motherhood of God in Second Isaiah,” *Revue Biblique* 90.3 (1983), 2.] More recently, Claasens has explained the presence of the maternal language for the divine as a means of compassionate subversion of empire. [L. Juliana M. Claassens, *Mourner, Mother, Midwife : Reimagining God’s Delivering Presence in the Old Testament*. 1st ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013).]

³⁰ Tull, “Remember the Former Things,” 84.

³¹ Here, the use of מְרִחָם is a particularly intriguing issue. In the plural, it signifies a woman’s reproductive organs. These are the seat of emotion and signify compassion. Equated as they are with female biological sex, their assignment to persons gendered as female *and* male in the Hebrew Bible invites a consideration of the possibility that the Hebrew Bible does not rigidly conflate sex and gender. [Dorothea Erbele, “Gender Trouble in the Old Testament: Three Models of the Relationship Between Sex and Gender,” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 13.1 (1999), 136.] This is one juncture at which queer critique of feminist criticism becomes very useful, as Erbele moves beyond second wave feminist identification of women’s imagery towards an appraisal of gender binaries.

Even these may forget,
But I will not forget you.

The maternal language for God here is not the first time it appears in Deutero-Isaiah. God's nurturing behavior is the logical successor to the image of God as a laboring mother that appears in Isa 42:10.³² The portrayal of God here becomes even more compelling when we understand its rarity, for which Mayer Gruber argues through an exploration of Hebrew poetry's avoidance of "gender matched synonymous parallelism" in order to skirt presenting a maternal God (e.g. Mal. 1:6).³³ However, the question remains whether YHWH is comparing or contrasting himself with a human mother. Schmitt stands strongly in support of the idea of Zion's maternity influencing Deutero-Isaiah's portrayal of God in a positive sense: "It seems to me that the tradition of Zion's role as mother inspired the prophet to make motherhood an aspect of God."³⁴ Meanwhile, for Dille, Zion's motherhood inspires Deutero-Isaiah's portrayal of God as a mother in a negative sense. Zion's failure as a mother who has "forgotten" her children spurs the need for YHWH to assume maternal characteristics.³⁵

I argue that YHWH claims his assumption of maternal characteristics while also surpassing them in order to render obsolete the need for Zion's maternal lament. As YHWH, not Zion, is the biological mother of the forthcoming children, it is YHWH's job to weep, not Zion's. While the tactic of replacing Zion as mother does not actually comfort Zion, it does work

³² As Dille observes, the application of the child-bearing metaphor to YHWH is unexpected, as it generally appears as the people's distressed reaction to bad news, especially that of a city under siege. In the context of Deutero-Isaiah, the Babylonian exile represents a time of siege from which the Judeans have not yet been released, and accordingly, the image of labor is appropriate. [Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 2004), 150]

³³ Gruber, "Motherhood of God," 353.

³⁴ John J. Schmitt, "The Motherhood of God and Zion as Mother," *Revue Biblique* 92.4 (1985): 563.

³⁵ Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 150.

effectively to silence Zion’s lament after Isaiah 49. Yet the absence of her speech should not be taken as a sign of her comfort. YHWH has appeared to overlook the mothers’ precarity within Lamentations. Mandolfo observes, “His metaphor may fall on deaf ears, however, since Zion, as reported within Lamentations, has seen mothers ‘forget’ to the point of cannibalizing their own children, but YHWH appears unaware of the irony.”³⁶ YHWH’s revived roles and husband and mother are no help when famine and warfare conditions spur mothers to harm their own children. Furthermore, as Low contends, Deutero-Isaiah presents Zion herself as “a blameless newborn and as a remembered bride” rather than the scapegoat of her people’s sins, these attributes make her more vulnerable when read in light of Lamentations.³⁷ Infants are eaten and virgins are raped as consequence of YHWH’s determination to punish his people.

YHWH’s reassurance to Zion is that her children will repopulate her desolate space, to the point where the area will become too crowded for everyone to dwell there. Despite the poet’s re-framing of Zion’s childless state, Zion herself retains a critical outlook on divine actions regarding her children. In verse 21, she wonders incredulously,

ואמרתי בלבבי
מי ילד-לי את-אלה
ואני שכולה וגלמודה גלה וסורה
ואלה מי גדל הן
אני נשארת לבדי
אלה איפה הם:

But you said in your heart,
“Who has borne me these?
Yet I was bereaved and barren, exiled and wandering—
so these, who has reared them?
I was barren and left alone—
these, where have they come from?

³⁶ Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*, 108.

³⁷ Low, *Mother Zion in Deutero-Isaiah*, 85.

Mandolfo, reading Deutero-Isaiah through the lens of Zion's speech in Lamentations 1-2, interprets the city-woman's final speech here as skeptical: "[I]t can be read more plainly as doubt about the possibility of children rising from the dead."³⁸ Zion recognizes the disconnect between her bodily experiences and the claims of the speaker of Deutero-Isaiah. Whoever these children are, they cannot replace the ones she has lost.

In Daughter Zion's response to YHWH, לָלֵךְ is masculine singular, raising the issue of the referent of this verb. Is Daughter Zion inquiring about the progenitor of the children or the identity of their birth mother? While the gender of the verb would suggest that Zion is inquiring about the absent father who "begot" the children, Zion appears to be speaking about her *own* state of not having given birth to any children who are still alive. Additionally, when "beget" is meant, the verb usually appears in the hiphil, while here, לָלֵךְ is qal. Thus, it seems that she is asking who birthed the children. Therefore, identity of the bearer is a matter up for debate. Blenkinsopp suggests that host countries are the surrogates for Zion's children,³⁹ but Whybray demurs that it is pushing the limits of the metaphor to inquire about the specific identity of the birth mother at all.⁴⁰ More compelling to me is Low's argument that the qal masculine singular form suggests YHWH is the one who bore Zion's children, as the qal masculine singular which appears in 49:21 can occasionally be used for males giving birth. Here, according to Zion theology, God as creator of the world engages in birthing. The echoing of לָלֵךְ between 42:10 and 49:21 leads me to think that YHWH is indeed depicted as the surrogate giving birth to Zion's children.⁴¹

³⁸ Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*, 109.

³⁹ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 312.

⁴⁰ Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 146.

⁴¹ Low, *Mother Zion in Deutero-Isaiah*, 112.

With YHWH implied as the one who gave birth the Zion's children, YHWH must only tell Zion who "raised" her children. Here again, YHWH contends, Zion need not worry; kings and queens are responsible for the rearing of the children. They are being returned to Daughter Zion as royalty, not as displaced exiles. Thus, as YHWH has responded in his own fashion to the elements of Daughter Zion's lament, the assumption seems to be that her mourning is now resolved. Accordingly, her lament is silenced. Zion herself does not speak again in Deutero-Isaiah after 49:21. However, the disjuncture between her reported experience and the supplied "comfort" remains. The children "returned" are not ones whom Daughter Zion can recognize, whom she bore and raised. Even more troublingly, Lamentations, as a major source text of Isaiah, has raised the question of whether YHWH could be trusted as a parent for these supposed new children, as he himself is responsible for the original children's disappearance. While Zion's lament fades to oblivion by the end of chapter 49, comfort for her remains elusive.

Isa 51:17-52:10

This passage, addressed to female personified Jerusalem, begins with yet another proclamation that draws heavily from the lament genre. Westermann goes so far as to reconstruct these verses into an "original" lament from which Isaiah is quoting.⁴² Zion herself is not the one into whose mouth the lament is placed; her voice has already been quelled. Yet the passage still makes ample use of imagery alluding to Lamentations. Notably, as already discussed, Zion's children are lying "at the head of every street" (51:20); this phrase is identical with Lam. 2:19 and 4:1.

Yet the parallels extend even from this close correspondence. Daughter Zion is inebriated from drinking "the cup of God's wrath" (אֶת־כּוּסֵי חַמָּתוֹ) a term which resonates broadly

⁴² Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 245.

within the prophetic tradition. The cup's role in making women more vulnerable is reinforced by possible allusion to ANE literature as well. Blenkinsopp argues that the Ugaritic tale of Aqhat offers a parallel to the portrayal of Zion as a drunkard without help. In it, the initially childless king Daniel is bereft because he has no son who "takes him by the hand when he's drunk/ Carries him when he's sated with wine" (ANET 150).⁴³

The cup's role in compromising its victims appears then in biblical literature, most fully developed in Jeremiah 25:15-29, wherein the "cup of wrath" (אֶת־כּוֹס הַיַּיִן הַחַמָּה הַזֶּה) is offered first to the nations and then to Jerusalem, resulting in numerous physical and psychological maladies. In another case of extended imagery, Ohola and Oholibah share the cup in Ezek 23:31-33; it incites Oholibah to tear her own breasts, which once she used to entice lovers illicitly. Lamentations is yet another source from which Deutero-Isaiah can borrow in order to portray Daughter Zion as the drinker of the cup punished by YHWH. Lam 4:21-22 details the experience of another city-woman, Daughter Edom, whose drinking of the cup results in her sexual exploitation: גַּם־עָלֶיךָ תַעֲבֹר־כּוֹס תִּשְׁכָּרִי וְתִתְעַרְרִי ("To you also the cup will pass; you will become drunk and strip yourself").

With the precedent for the connection of sexual abuse with the cup already set, the reference to the cup in Deutero-Isaiah suggests that its drinker there, Daughter Zion, has indeed been subjected to sexual abuse, verifying Lamentations' claims about her treatment. Thus, in Isaiah 51:17, when Zion is one drunk from YHWH's "cup of wrath," she joins the ranks of many other literary figures who have suffered its dregs:

הַתְּעוֹרָרִי הַתְּעוֹרָרִי קוּמִי יְרוּשָׁלַם
אֲשֶׁר שָׁתִיתִּי מִיַּד יְהוָה אֶת־כּוֹס חַמָּתוֹ
אֶת־קִבְעַת כּוֹס הַתְּרַעְלָה שָׁתִיתִּי מִצִּית:

⁴³ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-44*, 337.

Rouse yourself, rouse yourself! Stand, Jerusalem,
You who have drunk from the hand of YHWH the cup of his anger!
The dregs of the cup of reeling, you have drunk down.

Here, the assault which Daughter Zion recounts in Lamentations 1 gets a new setting in Isaiah 51, portrayed as a date rape. The cup which made Daughter Zion, inebriated involuntarily, vulnerable to assault is passed to none other than her “tormentors” in 51:23, who demand total physical submission: “Bow down, and we shall pass over you” (שָׁקְוִי וְנַעֲבֹרָהּ). Interestingly, as Blenkinsopp points out, the verb here is נָגַה in the hifil, which in Lamentations is only used for God’s assault on Daughter Zion. Thus, the ones who assault Zion are identified with YHWH himself.⁴⁴

While in Lamentations 1:10, the enemies “enter” her sanctuary and profane her “precious things,” Deutero-Isaiah prophesies that “the unclean and uncircumcised will enter you no more” (יֹסְרִיף יְבֹא־בָהּ עוֹד עֶרְלֹ וְטָמְאָא). The shared language of penetration in both cases positions Daughter Zion as a raped woman, but in Deutero-Isaiah, the assault is to end. Zion, the raped and stripped woman, now puts on beautiful garments in Isaiah 52:1, as queen and herself the “holy city.” Zion’s restored splendor stands in contrast to the degradation of Babylon that has emerged in chapter 47; as Jeppesen points out, these reversals show “how Jerusalem and Babylon change roles in the preaching of Deutero-Isaiah.”⁴⁵ Thus, this passage draws on tropes familiar from Lamentations in order both to validate Daughter Zion’s accounts of her suffering while also rendering that lament irrelevant.

Isa. 54:1-17

⁴⁴ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 336.

⁴⁵ Knud Jeppesen, “Mother Zion, Father Servant: A reading of Isaiah 49-55,” in *Of Prophets’ Visions and the Wisdom of the Sages*, ed. Heather A. McKay and David J.A. Clines (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1993): 118.

Isaiah 54 does not name Zion explicitly as the female figure addressed. However, the absence of her name does not indicate a difference in addressee from the earlier passages; rather, as Oosting writes, “this passage wants to emphasize the close connection between the themes related to the designation ‘Zion’ and ‘Jerusalem.’ ...the return to Zion and the rebuilding of Jerusalem go hand in hand.”⁴⁶ This passage sequentially treats the three roles of mother, wife, and queen that define Daughter Zion and shows how these roles are interconnected. In each case, Deutero-Isaiah’s explication of Daughter Zion’s role serves to render lament irrelevant and unnecessary.

First, Daughter Zion’s role as a mother comes to the fore. Here, even while Deutero-Isaiah reprises motherhood’s centrality in Daughter Zion’s portrayal, the source of her maternal grief is different than it is in Lamentations. Never in Lamentations is Zion characterized as a childless woman. However, in the eyes of the narrator of Deutero-Isaiah, Zion becomes a “barren one” (עֲקָרָה); she has never birthed or mothered the children whom she claims to have in Lamentations. For example, in 54:1, the narrator exhorts Daughter Zion to rejoice as an infertile woman who now has children:

רְגִי עֲקָרָה לֹא יָלְדָה
פָּצְחִי רִנָּה וְצַחֲלִי לֹא-חֻלָּה
כִּי-רַבִּים בְּנֵי-שׁוֹמְמָה
מִבְּנֵי בְעוּלָה אָמַר יְהוָה:

Cry out, barren one who did not bear,
Break out into song and shout, you who have not labored!
For many will be the children of the desolate woman,
more than that of the spouse, says the Lord.

⁴⁶ Reinoud Oosting, *The Role of Zion/Jerusalem in Isaiah 40-55 a Corpus-Linguistic Approach* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 203.

Daughter Zion's portrayal as an infertile woman can help explain her earlier surprise in Isa. 49:21, as she exclaims in shock when her children return, "Who has borne me these?" Considering the contrast between the portrayal of Zion here as infertile and her fecundity elsewhere, her childlessness is surprising. Oosting notes that in all other instances of the Zion/Jerusalem personification outside of Isaiah 40-55, the personified woman has children, even if they are gone.⁴⁷

Deutero-Isaiah is creatively intertwining the trope of the personified city with that of the infertile woman divinely granted children from narratives of the Hebrew Bible. In appropriating this trope, several changes have occurred, which Callaway notes. Unlike in the narratives, the woman herself is addressed; the literary form has changed from prose to poetry; the namelessness of the woman and children generalizes the promise of new life (yet, Callaway holds, the woman addressed is unequivocally Daughter Zion), and it prophecies rather than recounting history already passed.⁴⁸ The infertility of Zion in this passage helps to explain the reference to Sarah in Isaiah 51:1. Sarah is the material figure after whom Zion should see herself modeled: Sarah is barren for many years, only to finally bear Isaac, and from him, a multitude (51:2).

The framing of Zion as an infertile woman in Isaiah works as a theodicy that corrects Lamentations' accusations of God. Zion is childless because she is barren, not, as in Lamentations, because God has participated in the kidnap, abuse, murder of her children. Furthermore, the fact that Zion becomes a mother of surprise suggests that she, like Sarah,

⁴⁷ Oosting, *Zion/Jerusalem*, 237.

⁴⁸ Mary Callaway, *Sing, O Barren One: A Study in Comparative Midrash*, SBL Dissertation Series 91 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 63-64.

Hannah, and other infertile women of the bible, can purely credit her pregnancy to divine intervention.⁴⁹ God is on her side, not working against her.

However, earlier in Deutero-Isaiah, Daughter Zion presents her *own* explanation of her children's absence. In language in much closer accord with Lamentations' account of her childlessness, Zion maintains that she was *שְׁכַוְלָה*, "bereaved," which precedes *וְגִלְמוּדָה*, "barren" (49:20). This word order suggests that her greatest sorrow stems originally from the death of her children; any "barrenness" proceeds from her children being removed from her by death. Thus, Zion's *self*-presentation in Deutero-Isaiah strongly echoes Lamentations, in which the children's death renders them irretrievable and irreplaceable. Lamentations leaves no room for doubt of the biological relationship between Zion and other mothers of Jerusalem and their children. The children are the "fruit" of the mother (2:20). Yet while Deutero-Isaiah briefly allows Zion to give her own account, it is this lament that Deutero-Isaiah silences; the problem of "barren" Daughter Zion appears to be addressable by supplying her with miraculously-conceived children.

The mention of "reproach" (*חַפְרָה*) in 54:4 links the first section of Isaiah 54, which concerns motherhood, with the next section, which concerns Zion's status as wife. The "disgrace" or "reproach" of widowhood reflects the importance ascribed in patrilinear society to producing a male heir; if a woman's husband has died and she has no heir, the line cannot continue, and the woman has limited means of support. This situation is reflected in both the narrative and prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible (Isa 4:1, Gen 30:23, Jer 31:16-22). Thus, the idea of the stigma attached to Daughter Zion's (temporary) situation of childlessness helps to bridge the transition between the presentation of Daughter Zion as a mother and the presentation of her as wife.

⁴⁹ Jeppesen, "Mother Zion, Father Servant," 122.

While Daughter Babylon receives the brunt of YHWH's anger in Deutero-Isaiah instead of Daughter Zion, the book still works to justify YHWH's brutality according to the framework of the marriage metaphor. While Zion's "sins" remain only vaguely referenced, the reversal of her dismissed status depends upon the idea of her past unfaithfulness. In 54:6-8, YHWH's faithfulness as the ideal response to Zion's sins comes into view:

כִּי־כֹאשָׁה עָזוּבָה וְעֶצְוֹבַת רִוּחַ קָרָאָהּ יְהוָה וְאִשָּׁת נְעוּרֶיהָ
 ; כִּי תִמָּאַס אָמַר אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 בְּרִגְעַת קֶטַן עָזַבְתִּיךָ
 ; וּבְרַחֲמַיִם גְּדֹלִים אֶקְבָּצֶךָ
 בְּשִׁפְזָרְךָ קָצַרְתִּי כִּגְבִי רִגְעַת מִמֶּנִּי
 : וּבְתִקְוַת עוֹלָם רָחַמְתִּיךָ אָמַר גְּאֻלְךָ יְהוָה

For the Lord has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit,
 like the wife of one's youth when she is rejected, says your God.
 For a brief moment I abandoned you,
 but with great compassion I will gather you.
 I hid my face for a moment in overflowing wrath,
 but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,
 says the Lord, your redeemer.

While the father of Zion's children remains in absentia, her husband in the text of Deutero-Isaiah becomes YHWH himself.⁵⁰ The "wrath" (קָצַרְתִּי) and "rejection" (תִּמָּאַס) present here allude to Lam. 5:22. Tull writes, "In view of the strong correspondences between the books of Deutero-Isaiah and Lamentations it can hardly be a coincidence that the *last* text in Isaiah 40-55 which deals explicitly with Zion, takes up motifs from the *last* verse of the book of Lamentations."⁵¹ This recycling of Lamentations' vocabulary within the context of the marriage metaphor aims to

⁵⁰ Jeppesen, "Mother Zion, Father Servant," 124.

⁵¹ R. Abma, *Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery (Isaiah 50:1-3 and 54:1-10, Hosea 1-3, Jeremiah 2-3)*, (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1999), 102.

reverse Lamentations' proclamation of Zion's alienation from YHWH's protection. Marriage restores the intimacy and permanency of the pair's bond.⁵²

Also significant are the juxtaposition of “reject” (סָרַת) and “gather” (אָסַף) which, as Tull observes, appear nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible in combination except in Lamentations 5:19-20. Here, as Deutero-Isaiah reframes these words to serve his purpose in mounting the marriage metaphor, the lament of Lamentations 5:19-20 is now irrelevant. As Tull writes, “YHWH's abandonment, though actual, was by no means either enduring or excessive. The laments had lodged their protest during the brief moment in which all was not yet seen.”⁵³ Deutero-Isaiah's depiction of YHWH's perfection as husband renders lament unnecessarily and inappropriate. However, the concerns which Zion has raised in Lamentations remain unaddressed. The comfort she is offered as a reconciled wife does not fit with her assessment of her situation, which concerns primarily the stolen lives of her people.

The thematic link between the ideas of a marriage covenant and the covenantal relationship between God and a city allows for a smooth transition to the third image of Daughter Zion in this text: as a queen.⁵⁴ Interestingly, it seems in verse 11 that YHWH acknowledges the portrayal of Daughter Zion in Lamentations as he sets out to promise her restoration to queenship. The first title which he uses for her in 54:11, עֲנִיָּה, is from עָנָה, which, as I have discussed, is sometimes best translated as “rape” as in Lam. 1:9. Also, in a move unique within Deutero-Isaiah, Zion is called לֹא נִחְמָתָהּ (‘‘Not comforted’’), which closely reflects the repeated insistence in Lamentations that Daughter Zion remains inconsolable.⁵⁵ This claim that

⁵²Abma, *Bonds, of Love*, 109.

⁵³ Tull 235.

⁵⁴ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66*, 364.

⁵⁵ Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 188.

Jerusalem is still not comforted is particularly significant given the emphasis on YHWH's comfort throughout the rest of Deutero-Isaiah, which spells out God's role as comforter in 40:1, 49:13, 51:12, and 52:9.. However, as Deutero-Isaiah comes to a close, God's comfort does not seem to have been sufficient. In Trito-Isaiah, Jerusalem herself will emerge as the comforter (66:13).⁵⁶

Finally, the restoration of Daughter Zion as queen circles back to her portrayal as mother: וְכָל-בְּנֵי יְהוָה לְמוֹדֵי יְהוָה וְרַב שְׁלוֹם בְּנֵיךְ (“All your children shall be taught by YHWH//And great shall be the prosperity of your children.”). Thus, the three major images of Daughter Zion within Deutero-Isaiah are interlocked to show the unity of her figure as a whole. While this aspect of Deutero-Isaiah's portrayal of Daughter Zion seems coherent, other questions remain unsatisfactorily answered. Can YHWH truly comfort Daughter Zion, given their contentious history? Does Daughter Zion really bear new children, or are the old ones miraculously returned to her? Trito-Isaiah recognizes these incongruities and makes new attempts to solve the issues.

Isaiah 56-66

The images of Zion and YHWH in Trito-Isaiah interact allusively with those in Isaiah 40-55, thus creating a dialogue both between these texts and with Lamentations. Yet the portrayals are not identical. Rather, a progression has taken place that further develops the imagery in an attempt to address unresolved theological issues stemming from Deutero-Isaiah. Ultimately, Daughter Zion must emerge as a mother alongside YHWH because of the insufficiency of YHWH's comfort.

Isa 57:6-13 and 60:1-22

⁵⁶ C.F. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66*, 365.

The first passage, 57:6-13, does not name Zion or Jerusalem directly as its referent. However, given the continued invocation of the prophetic marriage metaphor, which the sexual language of נָאָה and זָנָה indicate, the continued involvement of the city-woman seems likely. This sudden harshness of tone represents a major break from the generally positive view of Zion present elsewhere in Trito-Isaiah. Trito-Isaiah reminds readers that, although restoration is in motion, God's acts of kindness are not a function of human worthiness. God is not indicted for the suffering the city-woman has experienced, even though the book displays a greater degree of sympathy for her than found in most applications of the marriage metaphor.

In 60:1-22, where Zion is once again directly addressed, the language returns to more grounds of comfort and restoration. Yet while the language itself stays consistent, the idea of Zion has shifted. Childs contends that Trito-Isaiah makes substantial changes to the portrayal of Zion: "The new Jerusalem is not a rebuilt earthly city, but the entrance of the divine kingdom of God, the creation of a new heaven and earth."⁵⁷ Personified Daughter Zion, then, though she still figures as the addressee of the speech in chapter 60, no longer is needed as a witness of her embodied experience of trauma. The entrance of the "new Jerusalem" overcomes her voice.

60:1-22 opens with the call of Zion to "arise" (קוּמִי) a feminine singular imperative form that invites comparison with Isaiah 47:1, in which a feminine singular imperative directs Daughter Babylon to "sit in the dust."⁵⁸ All references to sinfulness on Zion's part, insinuated in 57:6-13, are past. Zion's absolution comes as a result of her shedding of the embodied persona. As the recipient of divine light, suggested through the vocabulary of the rising of the sun, Zion is

⁵⁷ Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 500.

⁵⁸ Andrea Spans, "Construction of Space for Personified Zion: Space and Figure in Isaiah 60," *Holy Places in Biblical and Extrabiblical Tradition*, ed. Jochen Flebb (Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2016): 51.

now appointed not only as queen of Jerusalem, but also the sharer of the Servant of YHWH's task to be a light to the nations.⁵⁹

A number of keywords and themes help to connect this passage to Lamentations. The “walls” and “gates” of the city, formerly monuments to Zion's total devastation, now are completely rebuilt and now called “salvation” and “praise,” respectively in 60:18 (וְקִרְיַת יְשׁוּעָה) (חֹמֹתַי וְשַׁעְרֵי תְהִלָּה). The “sanctuary,” formerly defiled, is now rebuilt with wood to beautify it (לְפָאֵר מְקוֹם מְקַדְּשִׁי). Zion, once “despised,” is now venerated once again, as the queen Lam. 1 has told its readers that she is. The deserted city introduced at the beginning of Lamentations, perceived as abandoned and deserted by both people and YHWH himself in Lamentations, is now the hub of activity by verse 15.

For all this glorious restoration, the motherhood of the reconstituted Zion recedes into the background. Meanwhile, her role as the lived space for worship comes to the forefront of the personification. As Spans points out, “there is no difference made between the sanctuary and the (personified) city; in fact, the city itself fulfills the function of the temple and is the only site of God's presence.” The religious rites described are directed in a sense *to Zion*, as in 60:7, the rams of Nebaioth minister “to you” (i.e., Zion).⁶⁰ The walls and gates of Zion, formerly contested territory in Lamentations, now serve as signs of Zion's centrality and the demarcation of her holiness. Strangers, who were Zion's attackers in Lamentations, now contribute to the building and rebuilding of the walls, pressing the theology of Isaiah towards integration of outsiders.⁶¹

Isa. 62:1-12

⁵⁹ Spans, “Construction of Space,” 51.

⁶⁰ Spans, “Construction of Space,” 55.

⁶¹ Spans, “Construction of Space,” 57.

As Westermann argues, the announcement of this oracle of salvation closely relates to the genre of communal lament.⁶² The announcement of salvation is to replace the tradition of lament—which includes Zion’s voice—that comes before. As discussed above, Daughter Zion does not speak after Isaiah 49. However, in this chapter, a new voice emerges as an advocate for her, declaring a position of solidarity with Zion.⁶³ The speaker in verse 1 seems to assume his (her) prior silence to contrast with the current state of affairs. For this reason, God appears to be the best candidate for speaker, countering his previous silence in Lamentations with the two first person imperatives, *לֹא אֶשְׁכֹּחַ* and *לֹא אֶשְׁקַט*), “I will not be silent” and “I will not be still.” As Brueggemann writes, “It is as though Yahweh has now gone public in solidarity with Israel, to let the nations know that the abusive treatment of Israel will not be tolerated any longer.”⁶⁴

YHWH’s emergence as Zion’s advocate in the absence of her voice tries to correct the issues of his indifference or even malignance that Lamentations raises. However, with God’s voice now heard, Daughter Zion transitions from being a speaking subject, as she is in Lamentations and even in parts of Deutero-Isaiah already considered, to being an ornamental object. She is to be a “crown” (*עֲטֹרֶת*) and a “diadem” (*וִצְנוֹן*) for YHWH, his decoration rather than a speaker. The imagery of a city as crown for the patron deity is known from the prayer of the Urigallu-priest during the Mesopotamian new year festival.⁶⁵ This incantation reads, “Your dwelling is the city of Babylon, your tiara is the city of Borisippa.”⁶⁶ While in Lamentations and

⁶² Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 373-374,

⁶³ Whether this speaker is the prophet or YHWH himself has been a matter of debate. Blenkinsopp argues that the role of the sentinels and their “anxiety” about prophecy’s fulfillment points to prophetic speech taking place here (234). However, with Brueggemann, I argue that God speaks here in direct counterpoint to his previous silence in Lamentations. [Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press), 220.]

⁶⁴ Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press), 220.

⁶⁵ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 55-66*, 236.

⁶⁶ ANET 331.

even earlier in Deutero-Isaiah, Daughter Zion is portrayed metonymically with objects, e.g. “walls,” “gates,” even these gates are shown as belonging to Daughter Zion herself. Now, she is the property of YHWH: a crown on *his* hand and a diadem on *his* hand.

As Anderson argues, the precise terminology for “crown” and “diadem” serves the dual effect of connecting the portrayal of Daughter Zion both to royalty and to marriage.⁶⁷ These terms serve to show that Daughter Zion is both crown *and* bride. Song of Songs 3:11 and Prov. 12:4 help to demonstrate this dual linkage; Solomon is bedecked with a crown at his own wedding; and “A good wife is the crown of her husband.” The multivalence of these terms is echoed in the fluidity of the roles of each participant in the royal wedding scenario; YHWH is both bridegroom and officiant, the one who holds the crown ready to place it on the head of the groom as the ceremony unfolds; but the “sons” of Zion who have been returned to her are also to marry her. Thus, Zion is not only mother, as she is portrayed predominately in Lamentations and Deutero-Isaiah, but she is also the bride. Anderson urges his readers not to be alarmed by these rapid role reversals; the fluidity of the imagery is one of the hallmarks of Isaiah.⁶⁸

Possession by YHWH is the price Zion pays for the reversal of her sufferings in Lamentations. While both Lamentations 5 and Isaiah 49 involve the claim that Zion is “forsaken,” Isaiah 62 declares, “No longer will you be called ‘forsaken’” (לֹא-יִאָמַר לְךָ עוֹד עֲזוּבָה). Additionally, echoing the statement from Lamentations that Zion is שְׁמָמָה, desolate (a term loaded with the connotation of having suffered sexual violence), Isaiah 62 announces the ending of this status in 62:4.

⁶⁷ T. David Anderson, “Renaming and Wedding Imagery in Isaiah 62,” *Biblia* 67.1 (1986), 79

⁶⁸ Anderson, “Renaming and Wedding Imagery,” 79.

In 62:7, the call goes out to “give no rest” to God’s ears (אַל־תִּתְּנֵנוּ דְמִי לֹ), which appears to be an invitation to lament. Unlike in Lamentations, sentinels, posted on the walls, are the ones who will take up the cry (62:6). Their role is that of “activating God’s memory,” of constantly reminding YHWH of his obligations to Israel.⁶⁹ Zion’s speaking role has become obsolete.

The transformation of Daughter Zion’s persona culminates in a complete re-naming. The “new name” which she receives circumscribes her identity in terms of a relationship with YHWH. In creative re-interpretation of the opening imagery of Lamentations, where Daughter Zion sits “like a widow,” her new names define her strictly in terms of her marriage with YHWH. Interestingly, while in Lamentations, the widow imagery stands in counterpoint to the figure of Daughter as a “queen” among the nations, Deutero-Isaiah reverses Daughter Zion’s abandonment by making her a wife. There still is a crown involved—and yet this crown is a wedding ornament, not a signifier of real authority. Using the language familiar from covenantal renamings (e.g. Gen. 32:28), Isaiah succeeds in renaming Daughter Zion in 62:4 with new titles that convey her relationship to YHWH.⁷⁰ She is to be called הַמְּצִי־בָהּ (‘‘My Delight is in Her’’) and her land תְּבַעַל (‘‘Married’’), terms which, verse 5 goes on to explain, refer directly to YHWH’s marriage to Zion:

כִּי־יִבְעַל בָּחֹרֶת בְּתוּלָה
 יִבְעֹלוּ בָּנָיָהּ
 וּמִשׁוֹשׁ חֲתָן עַל־כַּלָּה
 יֵשֵׁשׁ עַל־יָדָהּ אֱלֹהֶיהָ:

For as a young man marries a young woman,
 Your sons will marry you,
 And as the groom rejoices over the bride,
 your God will rejoice over you.

⁶⁹ Breuggemann, *Isaiah*, 222.

⁷⁰ Anderson, “Renaming and Wedding Imagery,” 77.

The passage concludes with yet one more name for the city that appears to allude to the characterization of Zion in Lamentations: דְרוּשָׁה עֵיר לֹא נִעְזְבָה (“Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken,” 62:12). Through marriage, the complete reversal of Zion’s bereft state is accomplished. Yet at the consummation of the marriage, the woman’s voice loses its subjectivity.

Isa 66:6-13

In this chapter, Zion comes to the fore as the primary mother figure at last. However, keeping consistent the disembodiment of Zion seen earlier, her motherhood is absent the physical sensations that characterize the experiences of most human mothers. While in Deutero-Isaiah, specifically, Isa 49, Zion had not given birth to new children, but was surprised by the arrival of children whom she had not born and raised, in Isa 66:7-8, Zion gives birth through a miraculous, instantaneous labor free of pain:

בְּטָרֶם תִּחִיל יִלְדָה
בְּטָרֶם יָבֹוא תִבֶּל לָהּ וְהַמְלִיטָה זָכָר
מִי־שָׁמַע כְּזֹאת
מִי רָאָה כְּאַלֶּהָה
הַיּוֹסֵל אֶרֶץ בְּיוֹם אֶחָד
אִם־יִגְלַד גּוֹי כְּעַם אֶתְתּ
כִּי־תִלְדָה גַם־יִלְדָה צִיּוֹן אֶת־בְּנֶיהָ

7 Before she labored, she gave birth,
Before her pangs came, she delivered a male.
8 Who has heard of such a thing?
Who has seen such as these?
Can a land writhe in one day,
And can a nation be born in a moment?
Yet writhed and also gave birth
Did Zion her children.

Maier argues that the characterization here owes directly to Lamentations’ crafting of Zion as a mother; once bereft of children as a result of the exile, Zion now becomes mother to a multitude.

These different presentations of Zion's children suggest, Christl Maier argues, divisions in the post-exilic community concern who could be considered a child of Zion; solely Judeans who had been displaced by the Babylonian invasion, who are seen to return miraculously in Isaiah 49, or those children who were newly born to her after the exile was over.⁷¹

The malleability of the roles of YHWH and Zion within Isaiah becomes apparent, as YHWH emerges as the midwife and Zion as the laboring mother:

הֲאֶנִּי אֲשַׁבֵּיר וְלֹא אוֹלֵיד יֹאמֶר יְהוָה
אִם־אֶנִּי הַמּוֹלֵיד וְעַצְרָתִי אָמַר אֱלֹהִים:

“Shall I break open and not deliver?” says the Lord.
“Shall I who induce labor also prevent it?” says your God.

God comes to Zion's assistance as the ideal midwife who “will not delay bringing new life in the world.”⁷² God will not abandon Zion mid-labor; God will see the travailing mother through the time of her delivery. This imagery of God as a faithful midwife can help to position the return from exile alongside the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt. Just as the courageous midwives Shiphrah and Puah, through their deception of the Egyptian authorities, prevented the genocide of the Israelites through the killing of their children (Ex 1:15-21), so God delivers Israel yet again by himself becoming the midwife.

After the birth, the body of Zion is transformed into the space of nourishment, protection, and rest for all who return home from exile.⁷³ The address turns to second person in verse 11, as the returned (and newly born) people of Jerusalem are directly told how Zion will care for them. Zion herself will breastfeed the inhabitants of Jerusalem and continue to raise them. This

⁷¹ Christl Maier, “Zion's Body as a Site of God's Motherhood in Isaiah 66:7-14,” in *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response*, ed. Mark J. Boda, Carol J. Dempsey, and LeAnn Snow Flesher (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 237.

⁷² Claasens, *Mourner, Mother, Midwife*, 53.

⁷³ Maier, “Zion's Body,” 237.

presentation of Zion as the primary caregiver of her children contrasts directly with Isaiah 49, in which Zion must ask in astonishment who was responsible for their flourishing. In Isaiah 66:12, this question is no longer an issue: “And you will nurse and be carried upon the arm; / And upon her knees you will be dandled” (וַיִּנְקֶתְכֶם עַל-צֵדַי תִּנְשָׂאוּ וְעַל-בְּרֵכַי תִּשְׁעָשְׁעוּ).

Yet Zion’s care for her children is couched within God’s maternal comfort of her. In parallel with Zion providing milk from her breasts to nourish the children, in 66:12 God declares, “I am extending prosperity to her like a river, and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing stream” (הִנְנִי נֹטֶה-אֶלֶיהָ כְּנָהָר שְׁלֹום וְכַנְהַל שׁוֹטֵף כְּבוֹד גּוֹיִם וַיִּנְקֶתְכֶם). Just as the milk from Zion feeds the returnees, God too acts maternally in nourishing Zion.⁷⁴ Zion’s nurturing occurs alongside God’s as the two co-parent the Jerusalemite returnees. The necessity of the addition of Zion as a mother alongside God highlights the insufficiency of God’s promises of comfort in light of the suffering that has already occurred.

Conclusion

Tull argues, “Second Isaiah takes on the terms of Lamentations not to continue their prayers but to dispute, reverse, and reinvent them...More often, Second Isaiah acknowledges the validity of the lament’s claims and argues that what has been will no longer be...”⁷⁵ However, in disputing and reversing Lamentations, Isaiah substantially alters the nature of the laments themselves by refocusing Zion’s condition in terms of the marriage metaphor, presenting Zion as an infertile woman, and ultimately, by muting the voice of Zion in favor of male speech. Furthermore, Deutero-Isaiah supplies a comfort to Zion that is not the balm she herself suggests

⁷⁴ Classens, *Mourner, Mother, Midwife*, 53.

⁷⁵ Tull, *Remember the Former Things*, 265.

her wounds demand, because such comfort is irretrievable. The re-establishment of a failed marriage does not erase the violation of sexual abuse. New children, even if they appear, do not replace those who have died.

Given the mismatch between Zion's experiences in Lamentations and the poet's portrayal of them in Isaiah, it is no wonder that the only words explicitly given to Zion in Deutero-Isaiah (in 49:14 and 21) are utterances of continued hopelessness and disbelief. These objections are quickly silenced, and Isaiah's continued insistence that restoration is already here prevents from accusing YHWH of the most serious charge he faces in Lamentations. Zion no longer lifts up her voice in condemnation of the wrongs that she and her children experience. As Isaiah shifts away from lament, the impetus to foreground women's voices lessens. With Deutero-Isaiah's repeated insistence on "comfort" that eradicates the need for lament, women's voices disappear as well.

The erasure of Daughter Zion's voice in Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah represents a major shift in Lamentations' history of consequences, as I will show further in subsequent chapters. The removal of her voice effectively removes the protest elements of Lamentations, and without these crucial pieces, Lamentations degenerates into a victim-blaming tractate. In this perspective that emerges through the history of consequences, any echoes of lament still heard are not valid, as the comfort supplied through God's restorative work in Isaiah has addressed the problem

Ch. IV

Moving Towards Erasure: More Biblical Relatives of Daughter Zion

Introduction

Continuing the trend set in Isaiah, most other biblical works that exist in intertextual tension with Lamentations minimize the speaking role of Daughter Zion.¹ In this chapter, I will consider an group of texts with intertextual links to Lamentations, including Zechariah, the Zion song in 4 Baruch, the apocalyptic pseudepigrapha of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra, and Judith. While eclectic, the common feature of these texts is that they all to some degree involve a female persona linked to that of Lamentations' Daughter Zion. They share in common a minimization of her complex role in Lamentations, and for the most part, these texts eliminate her protest against God. 4 Ezra and Judith uniquely preserve for Daughter Zion a vocal, embodied role reminiscent of and even extending her representation in Lamentations. 4Q179, a Qumranic text that is related but not identical to Lamentations, offers another rare example of a work that both includes women's lament and considers women's suffering as a discrete issue from sin.

After considering these texts, I will assess translations of Lamentations from antiquity. Through these translations, the understanding of Jeremiah as both the author *and* the lamenting voice of the book developed, which emerged in the Old Greek and set the precedent for most other ancient translations as well. Finally, I will consider whether any echoes of Lamentations'

¹ Here, I am using the word "biblical" in a rather broad sense. Rather than referring to any specific canon, I designate works as biblical that have been part of the "Bible" for receiving communities in both Jewish and Christian traditions. This can include works that are now extracanonical in most Christian or Jewish traditions (e.g. 2 Baruch) as well as texts in translation that had liturgical purposes (e.g. Lamentations Targum).

Daughter Zion can be found in the New Testament writings, particularly the Gospels. Here, Jesus' suffering, especially in Matthew, is shaped through the tradition of women's lament.

From these texts, the most consistent precedent is towards minimization and ultimately erasure of Daughter Zion. For the most part, her body and voice remain dissociated, and even when her voice is present, her protest from Lamentations is not. This fragmentation of Lamentations' multidimensional portrayal of Daughter Zion sets the stage for her reception in Christian and Jewish tradition, which draws causal connections between her alleged sins and her suffering.

More Prophetic Removal of Daughter Zion: Zechariah

Zechariah re-interprets Lamentations through direct and sustained allusion appropriate for the context of the temple's rebuilding. Zechariah 8:4-5 is a particularly strong example that exhibits the literary dependence of Zechariah on Lamentations:

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עַד יָשְׁבוּ זָקְנִים וְזָקֵנוֹת בְּרִחְבּוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאִישׁ מִשְׁעֲנֵתוֹ בְּיָדוֹ מִרְב יָמִים: 5 וּרְחִבּוֹת הָעִיר יִמְלְאוּ יְלָדִים וְיִלְדוֹת מִשְׁתַּקִּים בְּרִחְבֵּתֶיהָ:

Thus says YHWH of hosts, 'Again will old men and women sit in the squares of Jerusalem, a staff in the hand of each due to great age. And the streets of the city will be full of boys and girls, playing in the streets.'

Here, as Nurmela notes, there are three lexical similarities which connect Zechariah to Lamentations. The זָקְנִים וְזָקֵנוֹת ("old and old women") recalls Lam. 2:10, בְּרִחְבּוֹת ("in the squares") reflects Lam. 2:12, and יָשְׁבוּ is identical to the verb usage in Lam 2:12. Additionally, there is a synonymic tie, with עֶטֶף עוֹלֵל ("child and nursling") of Lam 2:11 replaced by יְלָדִים וְיִלְדוֹת ("boys and girls") in Zech 8:5.² The direction of influence runs most logically from

² Risto Nurmela, *Prophets in Dialogue: Inner-Biblical Allusions in Zechariah 1-8 and 9-14* (Dissertation: Abo Akademi, 1996), 198.

Lamentations to Zechariah. In Lam 2:10-11, the elders of Daughter Zion sit in lament, with young girls' heads bowed to the ground. Zech 8:4-5 presents the elders, this time both men and women, sitting in Jerusalem, but this time, children are playing in the streets of the city.³ To extend Stead's point, the playing children can invert the imagery of children lying at the head of every street in Lam 2:19.

With Lamentations established as a source text for Zechariah, now other potential allusions, though perhaps more ambiguous, can be considered. Namely, in Zechariah 13:1-2, נָדָה and טִמְאָה appear in combination with each other, a phenomenon that occurs together elsewhere only in Lev 15:25-26; 18:19; Numbers 19:13, Lam 1:8-9, Ez 22 10-15, and Ezra 9:11.⁴ In Zechariah, these words appear in concert to refer to the cleansing from sin that will come to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. While Nurmela argues that this is a "sure allusion" to Ez. 36:27, 22-23, I believe that, given the connection to Lamentations already established, a broader awareness of these terms' use in Lamentations is possible as well.⁵ The uncleanness of which Daughter Zion is accused is reversed through the cleansing of her people in Zechariah.

As in Lam. 2:19, in Zech. 2:10, Zion is directed to voice her emotions to YHWH with the verb רָנַן. While Nurmela argues that the use of רָנַן is "different" from the other addresses in Isa 12:6, Zep 3:14, and Zech 2:10—the "groaning" of Daughter Zion in Lamentations has quite a different connotation than the praise implied רָנַן in the other usages—I do not think this is a strong argument against allusion. As we have seen, reception (a category of which allusion is a part) does not have to replicate the original occurrence. Zechariah seems to stand on the brink of

³ Michael R. Stead, "Sustained Allusion in Zechariah 1-2," *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology*, ed. Mark Boda and Michael Floyd (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 154

⁴ Nurmela, *Prophets in Dialogue*, 148

⁵ Nurmela, *Prophets in Dialogue*, 148.

inviting Daughter Zion to join the conversation. Zechariah 2:14 is one of only 4 places in the Hebrew Bible where רגן occurs in conjunction with Zion, one of which is Lam. 2:19.⁶ However, though the invitation to speak is present, Zion's voice is not, remaining only remembered within Zechariah.

Furthermore, beyond the more direct lexical allusions, Zechariah makes, as Stead has argued "a sustained allusion" to Lamentations 2.⁷ Though lacking evidence of citation, the presence of repeated thematic connection and word repetitions suggests that Zechariah is echoing Lamentations. Here, while the thematic content of Lamentations survives in Zechariah, Zion's voice does not. The voice of Daughter Zion herself is erased in favor of the prophetic narrative. This erasure is done in the name of comforting Zion. As Stead has shown, the pairing of נחם and בחר in Zech 1:17b reverses Daughter Zion's rejection and comfortless-ness in Lamentations, as in Zechariah, YHWH's comfort takes the form of choosing.⁸

Even as Zechariah, like Deutero-Isaiah, seeks to provide the comfort sought in Lamentations, the prophet deconstructs the figure of Daughter Zion. Stead points out a thematic allusion in Zechariah 2:8-9, which can be read as making reference to the "walls" present in Lamentations that constitute Zion's body. In Zechariah, Jerusalem will dwell in פְּרִזוֹת ("unwalled villages") with YHWH's presence rendering walls unnecessary. From the perspective of Zechariah, this is clearly a positive, a reversal of YHWH's decision in Lamentations to "lay in ruin the walls of daughter Zion."⁹ However, the walls reconstituted are

⁶ Risto Nurmela, "The Growth of the Book of Isaiah Illustrated by Allusions in Zechariah," *Bringing out the Treasure: Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 9-14*, ed. Edited by Michael H. Floyd and Mark J. Boda. (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003). 248.

⁷ Stead, "Sustained Allusion," 145.

⁸ Stead, "Sustained Allusion," 149.

⁹ Stead, "Sustained Allusion," 152

not the walls of Zion's own body, but walls that YHWH has made by fire (2:9). The transformation of Daughter Zion from subject to object is complete.

Songs of Zion: 4 Baruch

Within Second Temple Jewish literature, the personified Zion figures as a prominent literary trope. In *Second Temple Songs of Zion*, Ruth Henderson explores the presentation of Zion during this period. She writes,

The conception of Jerusalem as the sacred Temple city, already dominant in biblical thought, continued to be held through the Second Temple period. Veneration for Jerusalem was shared by all streams of Judaism during this period and the city remained the focus of hopes for restoration and redemption at the end of days. This particular attitude towards the city came to be expressed in songs addressed to her. Such compositions were modelled first and foremost on the prophecies from the book of Isaiah addressed to Jerusalem.¹⁰

Henderson includes within this category three compositions among Septuagint books, namely Tob 13:9-19, Bar 4:9-5:30, and Pss. Sol. 11.¹¹

While all these works retain the portrayal of the figure of Zion being restored and venerated as the manifestation of the eschatological city, the process of removing Zion's voice of lament, already begun within Deutero-Isaiah, continues. Of Tobit, Henderson writes, "In this song, however, motifs of the grieving figure have been omitted and the tone has been transformed with the public, universal language of hymnody into a celebration of the future glory of the eschatological city."¹² For the most part in these songs, with the exception of Baruch, Daughter Zion does not voice her lament. While this absence of Zion's voice is itself significant

¹⁰ Ruth Henderson, *Second Temple Songs of Zion: A Literary and Generic Analysis of the Apostrophe to Zion (11QPSA xxii 1-15); Tobit 13:9-18 and 1 Baruch 4:30-5:9* (Boston: de Gruyter, 2014), 1.

¹¹ Henderson, *Second Temple Songs of Zion*, 1.

¹² Henderson, *Second Temple Songs of Zion*, 168.

and part of the history of consequences of Lamentations' Daughter Zion, I will focus on Baruch in the discussion to explore the continued presentation of Zion's voice.

While the dating and provenance of Baruch as a whole is debated, many scholars agree that the portion of the book where Daughter Zion's speech falls, 4.4-5.4, was likely written either in the 2nd cen. BCE or after 70 CE.¹³ These datings are typically the product of the theory that Baruch was written in response to a crisis such as the Hasmonean rebellion or the destruction of the Second Temple.¹⁴ While only extant in Greek, Tov has argued that the book is derived from a Hebrew *Vorlage* and has sought to retrovert the Greek to Hebrew; Davila, in contrast, has maintained that Baruch is an originally Greek composition that derives heavily quotations of the LXX.¹⁵ The book is often understood as divided into a "Historical Introduction" (1:1-14); a "penitential supplication" (1:15-3:8); a call to seek wisdom (3:9-4:4); and an oracle of salvation, of which Zion's voice is the major component.¹⁶ In Baruch 4:9, Daughter Zion emerges as a major speaker. Moreover, the book reflects a borrowing from Deutero-Isaiah, especially concerning its promises of restoration.

However, Zion's speech appears to derive inspiration from more than simply Deutero-Isaiah; while Isaiah's portrayal of Zion's lament consists of only one sentence (49:14), and another analogue may exist in Jeremiah's brief presentations of Jerusalem's laments (4:31 and

¹³ Sean A. Adams, *Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on the Texts in Codex Vaticanus* (Boston: Brill, 2014), 4.

¹⁴ Adams, *Baruch*, 6.

¹⁵ Emmanuel Tov, *The Book of Baruch, Also Called I Baruch* (Missoula: Scholars Press for SBL, 1975), 5. James R. Davila, "(How) Can We Tell if a Greek Apocryphon or Pseudepigraphon has been Translated from Hebrew or Aramaic?" *JSP* 15.1 (2005): 60.

¹⁶ Nuria Calduch-Benages, "Jerusalem as Widow (Baruch 4:5-5:9)," in *Biblical Figures in Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, ed. Herman Lichtenberger and Ulrike Mittman-Richert (New York: de Gruyter, 2009), 155.

28:35), Lamentations provides a far more substantial source for female lament inspiration.

Adams writes,

For this aspect, the only comparable example is found in Lamentations (1:12-22). Although Baruch parallels Lamentations in the amount of speech given to Jerusalem, the content and structure of those speeches are notably different. Nevertheless, it is possible that the size of Baruch's Jerusalem speech was influenced by Jerusalem's presentation in Lamentations.¹⁷

Daughter Zion's own words characterize her as a figure formed via the influence of Lamentations' Zion prototype, and yet distinct from her, as the poets avoid implications of her moral tainting and promise her full restoration.

An important divergence from Lamentations' Daughter Zion in Baruch relates to the assignment of blame for the suffering. While in Lamentations, the possibility is left over to some degree of Zion's culpability, even if the punishment is disproportionate to her crime, in Baruch, it is explicitly Zion's children for whose sin Zion is suffering:

μηδεις ἐπιχαίρω μοι τῇ χήρᾳ καὶ καταλειφθεῖσῃ ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἠρημώθην διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας τῶν τέκνων μου, διότι ἐξέκλιναν ἐκ νόμου θεοῦ,

Let no one rejoice over me, a widow,
Bereaved of many,
I am desolated because of my children's sins,
Because they turned away from God's law (4:12).

While Zion herself is blameless, she recognizes the wrongdoings of her children, and thus her lament does not protest God's decision to punish them.

Another major difference from Lamentations' portrayal of Zion are the addressees of Zion's speech. While Zion in Lamentations addresses the passersby and YHWH himself, the primary addressees of Baruch's Zion are her "neighbors" (αἱ πάροικοι in 4:12) and her children,

¹⁷ Sean A. Adams, "Jerusalem's Lament and Consolation: Baruch 4:5-5:9 and Its Relationship to Jewish Scripture," in *Studies on Baruch: Composition, Literary Relations, and Reception*, ed. Sean A. Adams (Boston: de Gruyter, 2016): 118.

with no address to God at all. Because of the omission of address of God, her character lacks some of the dimensionality of Zion within Lamentations. Daughter Zion in Baruch does not appear to protest her condition or her children's exile, instead citing the children's sin as the logical reason for their removal. She does not address God directly as she does in Lamentations, and instead expresses a confidence in God's ultimate deliverance that lacks an analogue in Zion's speech within Lamentations:

ἐξέπεμψα γὰρ ὑμᾶς μετὰ πένθους καὶ κλαυθμοῦ, ἀποδώσει δέ μοι ὁ θεὸς ὑμᾶς μετὰ χαρμοσύνης καὶ εὐφροσύνης εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

With mourning and lament I sent you away,
But God will give you back to me
with joy and gladness forever (4:23).

The subject of the active verb "sent" (*pempō*), Zion does not experience her children's exile as the victim of God's unjust punishment, but rather appears to be a collaborator with God. Just as, in spite of her mourning, she could appreciate God's reasons for banishing the children, she can have assurance that God will restore them.

On the other hand, while Zion's lament in Baruch lacks the protest dimension that makes Lamentations so powerful, her presentation in the book affords her an expanded role from that which she occupies in Deutero-Isaiah. Calduch-Benages deems her role intercessory: "In the text of Baruch, the intercessor is the city of Jerusalem, mother and innocent widow, directing her supplication to the Lord for her sinful children."¹⁸ However, as Adams points out, within the text of Baruch, Zion's speech is not addressed to God directly, although she speaks *about* crying out to God (4:20). Instead, Adams defines Zion's prophetic role as announcing her children's impending deliverance to them: "[S]he not only laments (4:9b-20), which is an action commonly

¹⁸ Calduch-Benages, "Jerusalem as Widow," 160.

associated with the prophets, but also actively calls out to her children to persuade them to take courage because God is able to rescue them (4:21).”¹⁹ This role for Zion represents a major expansion of Zion’s presentation even in Deutero-Isaiah, where, though Zion is told to “arise” and “lift [her] voice,” we do not actually hear the content of her announcement. Thus, Baruch combines Lamentations’ emphasis on the voice of Zion herself with Deutero-Isaiah’s focus on the children’s restoration.

Daughter Zion Goes Rogue: Judith

In *Judith*, cries of lament resonating with those of Daughter Zion point to the desperate straits of the Israelites in the narrative. *Judith* represents the intersection of two types of stories in post-exilic Jewish literature: that of the rescue tale, in which a courageous and righteous individual saves his or her people from encroachment by outsiders who do not respect Jewish tradition, and the tradition of the “clever and heroic woman.”²⁰ Mixing references to various historical periods (e.g. the Assyrians are identified as the invading army, while the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar is king), *Judith*’s playful ahistoricity allows the novella to speak compellingly about the peril of the Jewish people across a spectrum of unjust situations. While a range of dates have been suggested for the book, a common dating falls within the first century BCE, to correspond with the violent and unjust rule of Antiochus Epiphanes. Extant in Greek in the LXX, some have argued that the book was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic by a Palestinian Jew.²¹

¹⁹ Adams, “Jerusalem’s Lament and Consolation,” 130.

²⁰ Benedikt Otzen, *Tobit and Judith* (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 69.

²¹ Roger A. Bullard and Howard A. Hatton, *A Handbook on Tobit and Judith* (New York: United Bible Societies, 2001), 230-231.

Several features of Judith make it apt for comparison with Lamentations. First, the central role of Judith herself, as a maternal figure who is archetypal of the endangered Israelites themselves (Judith can be translated as “Jewess”) reflects the role Daughter Zion plays in representing both the city of Jerusalem and its people. Judith self-identifies as a χήρα, “widow,” (9:4), recalling the initial presentation of Daughter Zion in Lamentations as a solitary widow. Additionally, the mythical city in Judith is Βαιτυλουα, “Bethulia,” a name recalling the nomenclature of “Virgin Daughter” Zion or Judah in Lamentations. Simultaneously, however, as the nineteenth century theologian Bernhard Welte suggested, the city name can be understood as an odd Greek transcription of *bêt ‘alôah*, ‘House of God,’ which also renders it symbolic of Jerusalem.²² As Caryn Tamber-Rosenau argues, Judith is also probably childless, as no mentions of her children are made.²³ However, as I will show, instead of understanding Judith as totally childless, we can understand her as the mother to all Israel, like Deborah.

These three features of Judith—her virginity, widowhood, and the absence of children—are ones that show Daughter Zion’s powerlessness before her enemies in Lamentations, and yet Judith leverages them all in her performance of gender to defeat the Assyrians.²⁴ Tamber-Rosenau argues that Judith’s association with virginity (she has not remarried since being widowed) can be “a sexual orientation of its own, a radical one by which a woman intentionally distances herself from men and resists the patriarchy.”²⁵ Meanwhile, Daughter Zion’s virginity makes her increasingly vulnerable to abuse by both God and enemies. While Daughter Zion’s

²² Otzen, *Tobit and Judith*, 94.

²³ Caryn Tamber-Rosenau, *Women in Drag: Gender and Performance in the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish Literature* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2018), 134.

²⁴ For the argument that Judith is performing femininity, see Caryn Tamber-Rosenau, *Women in Drag: Gender and Performance in the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish Literature*.

²⁵ Tamber-Rosenau, *Women in Drag*, 185.

sexuality exposes her to shame, Judith deploys hers intentionally to defeat her enemies. Her widowhood, one of the twin causes of Daughter Zion's desolation, affords Judith an unprecedented level of freedom and independence. She leverages this mobility to enact her own plan for Israel's deliverance. And finally, her absence of biological children gives her the mobility to save her symbolic children, the people of Israel. Judith needs no biological children, as she is the mother of all.

The engagement of Judith with the lament genre compounds the likelihood of an intertextual engagement with Lamentations. Flesher has considered how Judith preserves lament into the post-exilic period, contending that, contrary to Westermann's argument that lament segued fully into penitential prayer by this time, lament was still being voiced. In chapter 9, Judith's prayer follows the form of psalmic lament, establishing the connection between Judith and Hebrew lament.²⁶ This connection becomes particularly apparent at the beginning of Judith's prayer:

Κύριε ὁ θεὸς τοῦ πατρὸς μου Συμεων, ᾧ ἔδωκας ἐν χειρὶ ρομφαίαν εἰς ἐκδίκησιν ἀλλογενῶν, οἱ ἔλυσαν μήτραν παρθένου εἰς μίασμα καὶ ἐγύμνωσαν μηρὸν εἰς αἰσχύνην καὶ ἐβεβήλωσαν μήτραν εἰς ὄνειδος· εἶπας γάρ Οὐχ οὕτως ἔσται, καὶ ἐποίησαν·
4 καὶ ἔδωκας γυναῖκας αὐτῶν εἰς προνομὴν καὶ θυγατέρας αὐτῶν εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ...ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐμός, καὶ εἰσάκουσον ἐμοῦ τῆς χήρας.

3 "O Lord, God of my father Simeon, into whose hand you gave a sword for vengeance on another people, who loosed the womb of a virgin to defile her and stripped her thigh for shame; For you said, 'It will not be done, but they did it...'

4 And you gave their wives into captivity and their daughters for booty...O God, my God, hear me, a widow."

²⁶ LeeAnn Snow Flesher, "The use of female imagery and lamentation in the book of Judith: penitential prayer or petition for obligatory action?" In *Seeking the Favor of God*, ed. Mark J. Boda, et al. Atlanta: SBL, 2007.

Judith begins her prayer by invoking her genealogical ties to Simeon, Dinah's brother, who avenged the violation of Dinah through murdering Shechem and his family (Gen 34). Here, in contrast with the use of rape as means of punishment in the prophetic literature and Lamentations, "Judith's prayer might see the ungodliness of the strangers' violation as an upside down use of the style of divine punishment: instead of against the enemy, the unnamed strangers act against Israel when defiling her in her virginity."²⁷ God's own honor is at stake in the rape.

In retribution, Judith reminds God that he retaliated against the broaching of Jacob's patriarchal honor by ensuring the women of the "other people" were susceptible to similar sexual shame. All this she positions as her widow's supplication (9:4), thus both indicating that her prayer will be answered and opening the petition in a manner that recalls Lamentations.²⁸ As Xeravits notes, the identification of Judith as a widow parallels the mentioning of virginity in the previous stanza.²⁹ This parallelism both juxtaposes the helpless virgin Dinah with the vengeful widow and links Judith to the multi-faceted character of Daughter Zion. Her primary concern in this prayer is the temple, as the locus of God's worship; in fact, Christiansen argues that Judith's particular role with the book is as the temple's defender, further tying Judith to Lamentations' cries over the loss of YHWH's/Zion's abode.³⁰

Then, after the Israelites' victory, the maternal language in Judith 16:4 echoes the maternal role that Daughter Zion fills within Lamentations.

εἶπεν ἐμπρήσειν τὰ ὄριά μου
καὶ τοὺς νεανίσκους μου ἀνελεῖν ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ

²⁷ Géza G. Xeravitz, "The Supplication of Judith (Judith 9:2-14), in *A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith*, ed. Géza G. Xeravits (De Gruyter: Boston, 2011), 166.

²⁸ Ellen Juhl Christiansen, "Judith: Defender of Israel--Preserver of the Temple," in *A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith*, ed. Géza G. Xeravits (De Gruyter: Boston, 2011), 79.

²⁹ Xeravits, "The Supplication of Judith," 168.

³⁰ Christiansen, "Defender of the Temple," 82.

καὶ τὰ θηλάζοντά μου θήσειν εἰς ἔδαφος
καὶ τὰ νήπιά μου δώσειν εἰς προνομὴν
καὶ τὰς παρθένους μου σκυλεῦσαι.

He said that he would light my borders on fire,
And take up my young men on a sword,
And dash my nurslings on the ground,
And take my babies as plunder,
And despoil my virgins.

The threat at hand is parallel to that of Lamentations; an external enemy, identified only as “he” (“he” may refer to Nebuchadnezzar, whom Judith ahistorically identifies as the king of the Assyrians). The young men, babies, children, and virgins here appear alongside the possessive pronoun μου (“my”)—a fact that is obscured in translation through translation with the plural possessive “our.” While Bullard and Hatton argue that this translation decision “is able to avoid the shift in persons at 16.6,” the interplay between the personal and the collective reflects the book’s intertextuality with texts like Lamentations, in which a woman stands for an entire city.³¹ Simultaneously, it can refer back to Deborah’s role as “a mother in Israel” (Judges 5:7).³² The four categories of victims threatened here—young men (ἐκλεκτός, c.f. Lam. 1:15, 1:18, 2:21), nursing babies and infants (νήπιον καὶ θηλάζοντα, Lam. 2:11), and virgins (αἱ παρθένοι, Lam. 1:4, 1:18, 2:21)—reflect the language of Daughter Zion as she discusses the fate of her offspring.

However, there are significant differences in the theology of suffering presented in Lamentations and Judith, which, according to Flesher, represents a shift in the tenor of lament while still preserving the genre. Flesher writes, “...one might conclude that the experience of the exile resulted in a shift in theological thinking, the most significant being that God is never the culpable party but is always righteous.”³³ Thus, Judith has shifted away from the protest of

³¹ Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Tobit and Judith*, 501

³² Bullard and Hatton, *A Handbook on Tobit and Judith*, 501.

³³ Flesher, “The use of female imagery,” 103.

God's treatment of the people present in Lamentations. Even while a female figure in Judith, parallel to Lamentations' Daughter Zion, is voicing lament, the content of the lament itself has shifted. The suffering which Judith's people have already undergone is not a matter for which she takes to task God; from her point of reference, God can still be counted on to react predictably and fairly in response to crisis. Furthermore, in order to make sure that Judith and her people are deserving of God's kindness, they are presented as blameless. This shift in tone means that Daughter Zion's voice has been partially silenced through the intertextual echo, its theological challenge removed.

Apocalyptic Restitution: 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra

2 Baruch 3:1-3, 10:16

2 Baruch, also known as the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch, is closely associated with 4 Ezra, sharing its apocalyptic genre replete with visions and heavenly visitors. Like Baruch, it was likely written around the first century C.E. Also, similarly, 2 Baruch takes as its hero a famous figure of biblical literature, Ezra, the scribe of Jeremiah.³⁴ The two books follow a similar outline that narrates the warnings about the destruction of Jerusalem, the destruction itself, and the visions about future restoration. However, Baruch's attitude towards Jerusalem is ultimately less optimistic than Ezra's. The future for which Baruch longs ultimately becomes far more disconnected from the earthly Jerusalem, personified as a grieving mother, than within Ezra's vision.

³⁴ Michael E. Stone and Matthias Henze, *4 Ezra and 2 Baruch: Translations, Introductions, and Notes* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 1.

In contrast to the image of the rejoicing Daughter Zion found in many of Deutero-Isaiah's biblical afterlives, 2 Baruch preserves an image of the desolated mother of Lamentations, Jerusalem. In 3:1-2 Baruch begs God to take his spirit before he must see his own mother's desolation, regardless of what evils she has committed:

1 אֲרֵאזְיָה אֵם חַיָּה חַיָּה לְמִדָּה אֲרֵאזְיָה לְחַלְכַּח דְּאַשְׁמַרְתָּ בְּבִיעֵהּ דְּאַרְבָּן. לֵךְ חַיָּה.

2 אֲרֵאזְיָה אֲשֶׁר־אֲנִי בְּחַיָּה. עַד לְמִסְפָּדָךְ דְּאַרְבָּן לֵךְ לְאֵם אֲבֹתָי. הֲלֵךְ אֲנִי כְּבִיעֵהּ דְּאַרְבָּן.

And I said, ‘O Lord, my Lord, is it for this I have come into the world, to see the evil of my mother? No, my Lord. If I have found favor in your eyes, first take my spirit so I shall go to my fathers and not see the ruin of my mother.

Ultimately, Baruch's wish for death and distance from his mother's destruction will ultimately be granted in God's command to Baruch in 43:1-3; Baruch will ultimately journey to Hebron, the famous gravesite of the patriarchs, in order to abandon the geographic location of his mother and escape the travails of earth for a heavenly rapture. As Lied argues, “When Baruch leaves these spaces behind, the temple is in ruins and Jerusalem is destroyed. 2 Baruch puts no hope in their restoration. Instead, he redirects hope to another world--and to the Hebron location.”³⁵

In 10:16, the lament continues

אֵם לְחַר וְהֵבֵט לְמֵתָא קְטִילָא לְבִישְׁתָּא. אֵם וְזִמְתָּ דְּבִישְׁתָּא לְחַר וְהֵבֵט לְבִישְׁתָּא. אֵם לְחַר וְהֵבֵט לְמֵתָא קְטִילָא לְבִישְׁתָּא.
אֵם לְחַר וְהֵבֵט לְמֵתָא קְטִילָא לְבִישְׁתָּא.

Or why again should people have sons,
Or why again should the seed of their nature be named,
Where this mother is laid waste
And her sons are taken captive?

³⁵ Liv Ingeborg Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel: Imagination of the Land in 2 Baruch* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 153-154.

In agreement with Lamentations' Daughter Zion, who remains comfortless even when Isaiah tries to present her with new children, Baruch contends that the birth and naming of new children is pointless; Zion is still processing the tragedy of the original children's departure. Lied writes, "...there is no longer any joy or blessing in bringing forth children. Reproduction becomes meaningless. The passage thus questions the survival prospects of Israel, since Jerusalem--the mother—is desolate—and her children—the adulterous people—are taken captive."³⁶

Baruch's pessimistic outlook about Jerusalem's diminished capacity as a mother, who can no longer sustain life for the children that she has borne, leads him to shift the locus of his hope away from Zion's restoration. The new "land" (to use Lied's terminology) where restoration for the people will occur will be heavenly, unassociated with the physical structures that gave rise to the personification of Daughter Zion in Lamentations. Therefore, even as Baruch's speech, with its repeated references to the motherhood of Daughter Zion, resembles that of Lamentations, the voice of Daughter Zion herself is gone. She remains spoken about instead of the speaker.

4 Ezra 9:38-10:54

4 Ezra provides a striking and rare reintegration of Zion's body and voice. Most likely written originally in Hebrew, and fragmentarily preserved in Greek, the oldest complete extant versions are in Latin and Coptic.³⁷ Due to the (questionable) citation of 4 Ezra in the *Epistle of Barnabus*, 4 Ezra was likely written by the beginning of the second century C.E. Internal

³⁶ Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel*, 45.

³⁷ Michael Edward Stone, *A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 1.

markers for dating are muddled as well, due to the pseudepigraphal nature of the writing.³⁸ Due to the book's close linkage with 2 Baruch, Israel is often cited as the place of its writing.³⁹

In 4 Ezra, witnessing a woman's grief prompts Ezra to voice his own mourning over the destruction of Zion. As Stone writes, "the access of the woman's grief and the human need to comfort her seem to have channeled Ezra's deep emotions about the destruction of Zion. His worldview is starting on a new process of integration in light of his experiences."⁴⁰ During a waking vision, Ezra sees a woman and asks her why she is weeping (9:40). While she initially declines to explain, upon Ezra pressing her, she relates a story of 30 years of infertility, followed by the birth of her son, who then dies within his wedding chamber. Like Daughter Zion, she declares her inability to be comforted, *sed sine intermissione lugere et ieiunare usque dum moriar*, "but will unceasingly mourn and fast until I die" (10:4).

With this allusion to Lamentations, Ezra *should* tread respectfully with the understanding that he is dealing with a woman who is no less than Zion herself. However, he silences her, in a move that is characteristic of the receptions of Lamentations surveyed thus far. Ironically, he chastises her through referencing Lamentations' Daughter Zion herself—not realizing that this is the woman to whom he is speaking! He declares,

*stulta super omnes mulieres, non vides luctum nostrum et quae nobis contigerunt.
quoniam Sion mater nostra omnium in tristitia contristatur et humilitate humiliata est.
lugete validissime et nunc quoniam omnes lugemus, et tristes este quoniam omnes
contristati sumus. tu autem contristaris in uno filio.*

Most foolish of all women, do you not see our mourning, and what has happened to us? For Zion, the mother of us all, is in heavy grief and greatest humiliation. Rightfully even mourn (pl.) now, because we are all mourning, and to be sorrowful, because we are all grieving; you (sing.), however, are grieving for one son.

³⁸ Stone, *4 Ezra*, 9.

³⁹ Stone, *4 Ezra*, 10.

⁴⁰ Stone, *4 Ezra*, 320.

Following in the tradition of Lamentations, Ezra correctly recognizes the archetypal maternal role of Daughter Zion. However, to his discredit, he believes that a human mother's grief for their children is less significant than that of the (disembodied, according to his attitude) Mother Zion. Therefore, he chides the mother, *nunc ergo retine apud temet ipsam dolorem tuum* "Now then, keep your grief to yourself" (10:15), even as he goes on to litanize the sorrows of Daughter Zion in 10:20-22, in terms highly reflective of Lamentations' language (particularly the rape of virgins and the killing of little ones in 10:22).⁴¹

Tzvi Novick argues that 4 Ezra is structured as a test. The temptation presented to Ezra is to hold to his own righteousness and abandon Israel, and because he resists this temptation, he is rewarded with a vision of the restored Zion.⁴² Indeed, just after he has finished voicing lament on behalf of Daughter Zion, the woman shockingly transforms—in a manner as glorious as the goddesses of whom Daughter Zion is literary heir—into the rebuilt city of Zion herself, with a flash of her countenance and an earthquake (10:25-27). Ezra himself is utterly shocked; he *positus ut mortuus* "lay like a dead man," consciousness lost (10:30).

Fortunately, his trusty angelic guide Uriel is present to interpret the situation for him. Here, it comes to light that this encounter has been part of the "test" which Novick argues gives the book its structural unity. In contrast to Novick, I do not think that Ezra fully passed the test; the transformation of Zion is necessary to complete his learning. Ezra is unable to understand how the grief of a single woman can possibly be connected to the grief of Zion. While he is

⁴¹ As Stone observes 1Mac 2:7-9 is very similar to this text as well, also reflecting the influence of the Zion tradition of lament (*4 Ezra*, 318).

⁴² Tzvi Novick, "Test and Temptation in 4 Ezra," *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha* 22.3 (2013), 242.

comfortable with the idea of Zion as *mater nostra omnium* (“Mother of us all”), and when he meets a mourning human mother, he cannot relate her grief to Zion’s.

This is the misunderstanding which the angel Uriel must correct when he appears to interpret for the stunned Ezra what has just happened. Uriel begins by recognizing that Ezra’s vision is a reward for his righteousness: *Vidit rectam viam tuam, quoniam sine intermissione contristabaris pro populo tuo et valde lugebas propter Sion* (“...he has seen your righteousness, that you have mourned ceaselessly for your people and sorrowed greatly over Zion”) (10:39). However, Uriel then goes on to illustrate Ezra’s mistake: *haec mulier quam vidisti haec est Sion, quam nunc conspicias ut civitatem aedificatam* (“This woman whom you saw is Zion, whom you now see as a built-up city”) (10:44). Each element of the woman’s tale, summarily dismissed by Ezra, corresponds to part of Zion’s own narrative. Her infertility (an attribute stemming from Deutero-Isaiah, rather than Lamentations, as I have discussed), corresponds to the years before offering was given to God in the temple (10:45). The death of her son represents the destruction of Jerusalem (10:48). Finally, her brilliant restoration and transformation of the city represents the cultural restoration for which Ezra himself hopes (10:49-50).

In other words, 4 Ezra demonstrates how Ezra’s silencing of a lone mother’s lament is in grave error. He, like the tradition of inner-biblical allusion to Lamentations before him, has succeeded in dismembering Daughter Zion; for him, as for the tradition as a whole, her flesh-and-blood body has become disconnected from the city of Jerusalem, and gradually, even her voice becomes silenced as well. For this reason, Ezra requires the “assault” on his senses that takes place when the earth shakes, the woman’s face shines, and he subsequently faints. Stone writes that this experience is “unlike anything elsewhere in the apocalypses”; furthermore, the experience is “analogous to the major sort of reorientation of personality that is usually

associated with religious conversion.”⁴³ The reorientation required is the sensitivity and perceptiveness that will allow him to recognize in the grief of a human mother the sorrow of cosmic proportions borne in Daughter Zion herself. With the woman’s transformation into the restored city, Ezra must realize that the personification of Zion is not complete without the referent *and* the human vehicle of the metaphor. Here, then, Daughter Zion becomes recomposed as a speaking and acting subject.

A Poetic Alternative: 4Q179

Qumranic material related to Lamentations includes both fragments of copies of MT Lamentations (3Q3, 4Q111, 5Q6, and 5Q7) as well as fragments of works that seem significantly dissimilar to MT Lamentations in wording but seem to be inspired by similar source material (4Q179, 4Q282, Q445, 4Q453, and 4Q501).⁴⁴ Of these texts, I will focus on 4Q179 due to its parallel yet divergent characterization of Daughter Zion relative to that within MT Lam 1. 4Q179 rereads Lamentations’ Daughter Zion in a particularly unique way, presenting her primarily as the sufferer of much misery in a way that echoes both Lamentations and Deutero-Isaiah (though with Deutero-Isaiah’s convenient resolution of Daughter Zion’s laments).

As Høgenhaven notes, the extant text of 4Q179 shifts in person between sections. While in i I-4 a collective voice (“we”) speaks of “our sins” in the first person plural, “in section i 4-14, the style is descriptive, depicting the desolate city which is spoken of in the third person feminine singular (i 8-10).” While the emphasis in the earlier section is on guilt and penitence,

⁴³ Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 326.

⁴⁴ Adele Berlin, “Qumran Laments and the Study of Lament Literature,” in *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Esther G. Chazon (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 1.

the emphasis in the latter is on suffering as a dramatic departure from past glory.⁴⁵ In fragment 2, which is less substantive in its extant form, the women of Jerusalem are again described.⁴⁶

While the most direct lexical parallels to Lamentations seem to be in reference to Lamentations 4,⁴⁷ the portrayal of Daughter Zion can be regarded as a sustained allusion to Lam 1-2, in which the personification of Daughter Zion in the third person singular primarily occurs.⁴⁸ Here, the perspective on the personified city is overwhelmingly sympathetic. Abundant language portraying Daughter Zion's condition is present in 4Q179 that does not appear in MT Lam. Jerusalem is כמשונאה "like a hated woman" (Fragment 1, Col. ii, line 3); כאשה ערמה כעזובה "desolate like one deserted, and abandoned by her husband" (Fragment 2, line 6) and אשת מרורים וכמסככה a "barren and impoverished one" (Fragment 2, line 7); and אשת מרורים a "woman of bitterness" (Fragment 2 Line 7). Thus, like Deutero-Isaiah, 4Q179 develops the marriage metaphor in connection to Daughter Zion as well as the idea, not present in Lamentations, that she is infertile.

These images of Daughter Zion contribute to a complex characterization of her. Tal Ilan writes,

The deserted and infertile woman of 4Q179 seems to me more human than the sinless virgin or the sinful menstruant of the MT. This means that while the Masoretic Lamentations has not completely moved away from its use of the feminine metaphor, it has shifted its emphasis from a portrayal of what is reminiscent of a real woman to an unequivocal metaphor. Also, the situation of 4Q179's woman is not hopeless. An infertile woman may be blessed with children. A deserted woman may yet be possessed, but the

⁴⁵ Jesper Høgenhaven, "Biblical Quotations and Allusions in 4QApocryphal Lamentations," in *The Bible as a Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judean Desert Discoveries*, ed. Edward D. Herbert and Emanuel Tov (New Castle: Oak Knoll Press, 2002), 117.

⁴⁶ Høgenhaven, "Biblical Quotations and Allusion," 118.

⁴⁷ Høgenhaven, "Biblical Quotations and Allusion," 118-119.

⁴⁸ C.F. Høgenhaven, "In this case the dominant metaphor, the 'hated woman,' does of course echo the imagery of Lamentations as well as a number of biblical prophetic texts, but it is not drawn from one specific quotation or allusion" ("Biblical Quotations and Allusion," 120).

husband of a widow is dead. Lamentations is a much more pessimistic text than 4Q179.⁴⁹

Additionally, the imagery used portrays Daughter Zion is more sympathetic even than Lamentations. Most of the language used for Zion here merely shows her pitiable condition, with the emphasis on *collective* guilt (referred to using first person plural language in fragment 1), while all negative language is framed in terms of simile with the particle ׀.

There are multiple possible avenues of understanding the relationship between 4Q179 and the Hebrew Lamentations reflected in the MT. One possibility is to regard the scribe of 4Q179 as reshaping the text of the precursor to the MT Lamentations. Gideon Kotzé argues, that, even when dealing with works that were regarded as part of the Hebrew Bible canon, “the manuscript evidence shows that ancient scribes enjoyed controlled freedom to introduce variations into the texts they transmitted.”⁵⁰ Exercising this freedom, scribe of 4Q179 could be a “zealous feminist” who expunges the most damning epithets of Zion from the text while also adding other female-centric language.⁵¹

In contrast, Ilan argues that the scribe of 4Q179 is using a source text from which MT Lamentations derives as well, in which women are more central. Such a text would serve as

an example of the kind of texts that an editor of Lamentations had before his eyes when composing the biblical treatise. The choice he made to diminish the role of women, and at the same time make more extreme the character of the female is a common trait in the process of canonizing texts...⁵²

⁴⁹ Tal Ilan, “Canonization and Gender in Qumran 4Q179, 4Q184, 2Q18, 11QPsalms-a,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Contemporary Culture* (Boston: Brill, 2011), 525.

⁵⁰ Gideon Kotzé, *Qumran Manuscripts of Lamentations: A Text-Critical Study* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 8.

⁵¹ Ilan, “Canonization and Gender,” 527.

⁵² Ilan, “Canonization and Gender,” 527.

Thus, for Ilan, 4Q179 represents an important reception of a textual tradition in which Lamentations also shares; “the similarity to the biblical Lamentations derives [not] from 4Q179’s borrowing, but rather 4Q179 is an alternative version of Lamentations, preserved in Qumran before the biblical text received its canonical form and recognition.”⁵³

However, while agreeing with Ilan that the scribe of 4Q179 is probably not a “zealous feminist,” I posit that Ilan’s line of thinking may be overly influenced by the titling of Allegro, the original editor, of 4Q179 as “Lamentations.”⁵⁴ Maurya P. Horgan writes,

In designating this text as Lamentations, Allegro is using the title of a canonical book for an obviously non-canonical fragment. This is certainly misleading, since it implies a closer connection with the biblical book than is warranted by allusions within the text. The work clearly belongs to the literary genre of lament; however, the images are drawn not only from the book of Lamentations, but also from prophetic works, especially Isaiah and Jeremiah...⁵⁵

Horgan’s argument for the discrepancies in the portrayal of 4Q179, which relies on the presence of literary allusions to other prophetic works, is much more straightforward to establish than Ilan’s, which relies on the existence of a non-extant source text for Lamentations and 4Q179. The most blatant differences between the portrayal of Zion between Lamentations and 4Q179 – the emphasis upon Zion’s status as a widow and her infertility, both of which recuperate Zion’s image—are characteristic of Deutero-Isaiah’s reconstruction of MT Lam’s Daughter Zion.

Therefore, I propose that the scribe of 4Q179 is reading Lamentations alongside Deutero-Isaiah, while maintaining the lament genre which Deutero-Isaiah seeks to overwrite. 4Q179’s need to maintain the lament can be understood as a function of its historical context.

⁵³ Ilan, “Canonization and Gender,” 519.

⁵⁴ 4Q179 was originally published in J.M. Allegro, *Qumran Cave 4: I (4Q158-4Q186)*, DJD 5: Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968, 75-77, plate 1.

⁵⁵ Maurya P. Horgan, “A Lament over Jerusalem (‘4Q179’),” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 18.2 (1973): 223.

Berlin argues that the Qumranic text reflects the interpretation of a textual tradition that recrafts Lamentations for a different context, not one in which Jerusalem has just been destroyed, but rather one in which cultural and spiritual alienation have made Jerusalem seem distant from contemporary reality.⁵⁶ Due to 4Q179's revival of the lament genre found in Lamentations, it preserves the female voice receded in Deutero-Isaiah while maintaining the relatively positive picture of Zion found there. Thus, 4Q179 represents a rare example of an overall sympathetic consequence of Lamentations' Daughter Zion.

Lost in Ancient Translation?

Old Greek Lamentations

Translations of the Hebrew Lamentations which became "Bible" for communities of Jews and Christians have played a foundational role in crafting the received figure of Zion. The Old Greek translation of the Hebrew Lamentations markedly reframes the text through presenting the entirety of Lamentations 1-2 as spoken by the prophet Jeremiah rather than by Daughter Zion. This shift flattens the polyphonic nature of these texts. In the Hebrew, there are multiple figures speaking about Daughter Zion, including Daughter Zion herself, the narrator, God, and even her enemies. These various voices evaluate Daughter Zion's relationship with the disastrous event of Jerusalem's destruction in different ways, ascribing different levels of blame to her.

With its positioning of Jeremiah as the primary speaker in Lamentations, the possibility of Daughter Zion's innocence diminishes in OG Lam. The accusations against her, placed in the mouth of Jeremiah, become the truth rather than speculation. Lamentations 1:1 opens in the OG

⁵⁶ Berlin, "Qumran Laments," 17.

with an introduction of the speaker Jeremiah. While in the Hebrew of MT Lam 1:1, Zion herself is the subject of “seated,” and in the next verse is the subject of “weeping,” in the Old Greek, it is Jeremiah who is seated and who weeps: Καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τὸ αἰχμαλωτισθῆναι τὸν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἐρημωθῆναι ἐκάθισεν Ἰερεμίας κλαίων καὶ ἐθρήνησεν τὸν θρῆνον τοῦτον ἐπὶ Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ εἶπεν (“And it happened, after Israel was taken captive and Jerusalem was made desolate, that Jeremiah sat and lamented this lament over Jerusalem and said...”)

Given this introduction, the entirety of Lamentations 1 and 2 can be understood as Jeremiah’s words. Where in MT Lam 1:11, the speaking voice transitions to the first person as Zion speaks, in the OG, first person speaker is understood as Jeremiah. The suffering emphasized in the OG Lam appears to be mainly on the part of Jeremiah rather than Daughter Zion. The fire sent from on high comes into *Jeremiah’s* bones, as the first person pronoun can still be governed by the incipit declaring Jeremiah the speaker (1:13). Thus, the descriptions of Jeremiah’s sufferings in Lam 1 and 2 can transition seamlessly into Lam 3, where the male sufferer who remains anonymous in the Hebrew can most easily be identified as Jeremiah. Thus, when reading OG Lam, Zion’s voice is easily understood as absent; she does not speak up to protest her own pain or that of her children.

OG Lamentations proved influential in the crafting of other translations of Lamentations. The Old Latin translation text was translated from it, and although Jerome’s translation of the Vulgate was based on the Hebrew rather than the Septuagint, his titling of the translation as “The Lamentations of Jeremiah” reflects Septuagintal influence. As Jerome’s Latin translation became the bible of the Western Church, his understanding of Jeremiah as the author of Lamentations was critical for the formation of further Christian interpretation of Lamentations, as I will explore in a subsequent chapter.

The Targum of Lamentations

TgLam represents another major biblical form of Lamentations. Given the references to Rome and Constantinople, the close relationship to Lamentations Rabbah, the apocalyptic outlook, and characteristics of Galilean Aramaic, its likely date is late fifth or early 6th cen. C.E.⁵⁷ The awareness of Lamentations' liturgical setting likely shaped the theological crafting of the Targum; it avoids particular emphasis on the *pathos* of God.⁵⁸ Furthermore, as Christian M.M. Brady argues, the targumist's fundamental goal in TgLam goal is "demonstrat[ing] why Israel deserved its horrific fate and how God's judgement was carried out." In other words, TgLam takes particular care to appropriate the voice of Daughter Zion in such a way that her guilt clearly merits her punishment.⁵⁹

As in the Septuagint, the text sets Jeremiah as the speaker of the text in the first verse: אַמֵּר יִרְמְיָהוּ וְנְבִיא וְכֹהֵנָה רַבָּא ("Jeremiah the prophet and high priest said...")⁶⁰ Furthermore, the Targum replaces "Daughter Zion" with נְשִׂתָא דְצִיּוֹן, "the Congregation of Zion." Presumably to address the concern that God's voice is absent from the book of Lamentations, the Targumim inserts it in 3:57, as well as in 2:20, 1:1, and 4:13. מִדַּת דִּינָא ("strict justice"), speaking for God, placing a heightened emphasis on Israel's sins in order to address the theodicy issue within Lamentations.⁶¹ For instance, in 2:20, where Daughter Zion accuses God of creating

⁵⁷ Philip S. Alexander, trans., *The Targum of Lamentations* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008), 90

⁵⁸ Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations*, 77.

⁵⁹ Christian M.M. Brady, *Vindicating God: The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2003), 17.

⁶⁰ <http://cal.huc.edu>. Accessed Dec. 18, 2020. An additional interesting feature of the Targum's rendering of the first verse of Lamentations is its *derash* interpretation of 11. The consonants of the first word of the Hebrew Lamentations, 'ykh, are same as those in Gen. 3:9, "where are you?" Thus, the exclamation of grief at exile from Jerusalem are linked to expulsion from garden of Eden. (Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations*, 109).

⁶¹ Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations*, 30.

circumstances in which mothers consume their own children, the Attribute of Justice responds with a rebuttal within the Targum: אם הזי למקטל בבית מוקדשא דיהוה כהנא ונבייא (“Is it right to kill priest and prophet in the temple of YHWH?”).⁶² This rhetorical question refers to the murder of Zechariah, which the Targumist takes as an incontrovertible sign of Israel’s sin. These assignments of speech to figures other than Daughter Zion have the effect of minimizing the female speech of the book. With this removal of Daughter Zion, the connection between the situation that Jerusalem’s people face and their sin can become more explicit. Brady writes,

Once again the targumist has reinforced his primary thesis that Jerusalem and her inhabitants had deserved their fate because of their sin. In TgLam 2.20, as in 1.2 and 1.4, the targumist has follow the principle of מדה כנגד מדה by utilizing the biblical text’s descriptions of the people’s suffering as evidence of the nature of their sin. This would further emphasize for the audience the just nature of God’s punishment since such harsh penalties as, for example, their being taken in slavery (TgLam 1.3) would not have been levied against them had they not first committed similar acts.⁶³

According to the Targumist’s perspective, then, God’s punishments are just, and actively chosen by the people, whose access to previous revelation should have let them know what the consequences would be.

However, while Daughter Zion’s speech is diminished in TgLam, the language of the text becomes more dramatic. For example, in 1:15, the allusion to YHWH’s treading on Zion as a winepress becomes bloodier and more sexually explicit:

ועלו עממיה על גזירת מימרא דיהוה וסאיבו בתולתא דבית יהודה די הוה דמהון דבתולתהון מיתשד היך כחמר
מן מעצרתא בעידן דגבר מבעיט ית ענבין חמר עינבוהי שדיין:⁶⁴

And the peoples entered by the decree of the Word of the Lord, and defiled the virgins of the House of Judah, until blood of their virgins poured forth like wine from the wine-press, when a man tramples grapes, and the wine of his grapes pours.

⁶² Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations*, 140.

⁶³ Brady, *Vindicating God*, 66.

⁶⁴ <http://cal.huc.edu>. Accessed Dec. 18, 2020.

This passage also, as Brady argues, harkens back to the imagery of MT Lam with Zion as “a menstruous woman, and even worse, as one who is not concerned with her condition.”⁶⁵ Here, Brady seems to absorb the tradition of stigmatizing women’s biological processes, and yet his point about the embellishment of Lamentations is valid. The tendency towards greater gore continues in 1:16, wherein the Hebrew Daughter Zion does not specify the explicit reasons for her weeping: על טפליא דאתרטשו ועל נשיא מעדיאתא דאתבקעו (“Because of the infants who were thrown down on the ground, and the pregnant women whose abdomens were split open”).⁶⁶

Finally, in 1:17, TgLam expands Zion’s maternal role by portraying her giving birth to her children: פרסת ציון ידהא מן עקתא היכמה דמפרסא אתתא על מתברא פגינת (“Zion has spread out her hands from trouble, as a woman spreads upon the birthing stool”).⁶⁷ Yet, as Brady points out, such descriptions of Daughter Zion’s suffering are always followed by the insistence that “the punishments which God has meted out to Jerusalem and Judah were justified and determined by their own acts of sin according to the principle of מדה כנגד מדה.”⁶⁸ These punishments simply exhibit the sovereignty of God, as they “could occur with the LORD’s permission and the removal of his protection.”⁶⁹ Therefore, while Daughter Zion’s sufferings do receive an expanded role, her presence does not necessarily enhance her sympathetic presentation. Rather, TgLam’s greater emphasis on God’s retributive activity drives home the point that Daughter Zion’s trauma is her fault.

The Peshitta

⁶⁵ Brady, *Vindicating God*, 95.

⁶⁶ <http://cal.huc.edu>. Accessed Dec. 18, 2020.

⁶⁷ <http://cal.huc.edu>. Accessed Dec. 18, 2020.

⁶⁸ Brady, *Vindicating God*, 88.

⁶⁹ Brady, *Vindicating God*, 88.

Unlike the Targum, Peshitta Lamentations does not set Jeremiah as the author and primary speaker of the book, although chapter 5 of the 1887-1891 Mosul text does label chapter 5 of Lamentations as “The Prayer of Jeremiah.” Instead, though the Syriac translations may have been produced with influence from Greek translations, the text remains close to the Hebrew.⁷⁰ Therefore, Zion’s voice remains strong throughout chapters 1 and 2 of the Syriac in a way almost identical to that of the Hebrew text. For this reason, I will not deal with it extensively.

With the exception of the Syriac, then, most ancient translations set Jeremiah as the speaker of Lamentations. Later interpreters could then concentrate interest on Jeremiah rather than Woman Zion, an effect that I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters. In Jewish and Christian traditions, as the Hebrew Bible itself was not the read scriptural text for many centuries, Daughter Zion for the most part fades into the background of interpretations. Meanwhile, Jeremiah emerges as the dominant figure. Thus, the translations of the Hebrew Bible set the stage for a minimizing outlook on Daughter Zion.

Echoes of Daughter Zion in the Gospels

I have identified an element of protest as a crucial part of Hebrew lament and especially Lamentations in particular, made possible through the use of a woman’s voice. This tradition of lament-as-protest, delivered through female voices, did not survive through the formation of the New Testament, which lacks the preservation of complete laments. While the penitential element of lament was preserved, the protest element of lament diminished within early Christian

⁷⁰ Donald M. Walter, et al, trans., *The Syriac Peshitta Bible with English Translation: Lamentations, Prayer of Jeremiah, Epistle of Jeremiah, and Epistles of Baruch* (Gorgias Press, 2013), XV.

literature, due especially to the influence of Stoic philosophy.⁷¹ This elimination of the protest element in lament effected the removal of the protesters, including survivals of Daughter Zion.

The break of the New Testament with the lament tradition, preceded by the silencing of lament in Isaiah and the other biblical literature considered earlier, is so strong that the question lingers of whether the New Testament can be said to contain lament at all. D. Keith Campbell argues that the Gospel passages most commonly identified as laments are not such. Based on Gunkel and Westermann's exhaustive form-critical study of Old Testament laments, Campbell defines lament accordingly:

The lament exhibits an identifiable yet flexible structure. Second, the lament is more than the recitation of despair but must be directed toward God (a prayer). Third, the lament must contain Westermann's three determinant elements: the one who laments, God, and a real or perceived problem. Fourth, the lamenter desires God to change his or her circumstances.⁷²

The requirement that all components of the definition need to be present in order for the passage to be a lament excludes New Testament passages from inclusion as laments.⁷³

In contrast to Campbell's strictly form-critical approach, Rebekah Eklund considers lament as "a persistent cry for salvation to the God who promises to save, in a situation of suffering or sin, in the confident hope that this God hears and responds to cries, and acts *now* and *in the future* to make whole."⁷⁴ For Eklund, Old Testament lament makes its way into the New Testament via quotations of or allusions to lament and texts that "evoke the function and ethos of

⁷¹ Rebekah Eklund, *Jesus Wept: The Significance of Jesus' Laments in the New Testament* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 12.

⁷² D. Keith Campbell, "NT Scholars' Use of OT Lament Terminology and Its Theological and Interdisciplinary Implications," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 21.2 (2011): 217.

⁷³ Campbell, "NT Scholars' Use of OT Lament Terminology," 219.

⁷⁴ Eklund, *Jesus Wept*, 17.

lament.”⁷⁵ This broader definition of lament leaves room for consideration of how echoes of Daughter Zion’s voice from Lamentations can still be heard in the Hebrew Bible.

With Campbell, I observe the important distinctions between Old Testament lament and the echoes of it preserved in the New Testament, but with Eklund, I point to the presence of intertextual links between Hebrew Bible laments and the New Testament. The presence of lament language in the New Testament, especially placed in Jesus’ own mouth, evokes the lament genre. However, more specific to my own topic, the scarcity of female lament raises the question of whether and how the New Testament receives the figure of Daughter Zion. Following the pattern of male absorption of Zion inaugurated in the LXX, Jesus’ lament subsumes that of women’s in the gospel narratives. Nevertheless, the patterning of the gospels’ narrative, especially concerning the Passion, still reflects the influence of female ritual lament reminiscent of Lamentations.

By far the most explicit instance of female lament occurs in Matthew in the narrative of the massacre of the innocents. Here, Matthew directly invokes the tradition of female lament from the Hebrew Bible. However, Matthew cites Rachel rather than Zion as the consummate mourner for children. In light of Zion’s sidelining in the LXX and association with sin, Rachel’s voice instead of hers becomes magnified in the New Testament tradition. So it is Rachel’s mourning that gives voice to cries of the bereaved Bethlehemite mothers:

φωνὴ ἐν Ῥαμὰ ἠκούσθη, κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὄδυρμὸς πολὺς, Ῥαχὴλ κλαίουσα τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς, καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν παρακληθῆναι, ὅτι οὐκ εἰσίν.

A voice was heard in Ramah,
Weeping and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
She refused to be consoled, because they are no more (Mt 2:18).

⁷⁵ Eklund, *Jesus Wept*, 18.

Matthew's citation of Jer 31:15 is surprising because the mothers' dead children do not return as Jer 31:16 would suggest. Does Matthew intend for his reader to follow up his quotation of 31:15 with the happy outcome implied by 31:16?⁷⁶ Or does Matthew intentionally leave his reader hanging in the tension of women's lament, awaiting resolution through the narrative of the gospel? Regardless, Matthew's citation demonstrates his willingness to deploy knowledge of the lament tradition, even while direct use of Lamentations is sparing.

Lamentations 2:15 seems to be quoted within Mt 27:39-40:

οἱ δὲ παραπορευόμενοι ἐβλασφήμουν αὐτόν, κινοῦντες τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν 40 καὶ λέγοντες «Ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις οἰκοδομῶν, σῶσον σεαυτόν· εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ κατὰβηθι ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ.

Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it again in three days, save yourself! If you are the son of God, come down from the cross!"

Here, Jesus bears the brunt of the mockery inflicted on Zion:

...what of the identity of the enemies of the mockers who 'pass along the way?' They are presumably the same as the enemies of Lam 2:16, which continues the theme of the jeering...It is neither possible nor appropriate to identify these hostile onlookers, who feature as part of the presentation of the depths of Zion's anguish.⁷⁷

The enemies of Jesus are equated with the enemies of Daughter Zion. On a certain level, the narrative of Matthew identifies Daughter Zion's suffering with that of Jesus. The choice of this quotation thus evokes the characterization of Daughter Zion within Lamentations. With Jesus

⁷⁶ Eklund argues that in cases of incomplete citation of Old Testament lament, such as Jesus' cry of dereliction in Mark, we should assume that the writers of the text meant for readers to fill in the blanks in this way. Speaking of Jesus' citation of Psalm 22 in the Markan crucifixion narrative, she writes, "It is a reasonable assumption that both Jesus and his Jewish hearers would have known the whole psalm, and the first verse of a psalm could be used to invoke the whole in liturgical settings. One need only say the words, 'The Lord is my shepherd...' to see how one line can open up a wider context" (*Jesus Wept*, 44).

⁷⁷ Paul M. Joyce and Diana Lipton, *Lamentations Through the Centuries*, Wiley Blackwell Commentary Series (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2013), 8.

identified with Zion, the identification of her unequivocal guilt becomes less facile. Instead, Daughter Zion, like Jesus, could be regarded as the recipient of undeserved suffering on behalf of innocents.

Matthew's reworking of Lamentations to frame Jesus' activities also seem apparent in Matt 23:37-39. Jesus' cries over the city address Jerusalem as a woman with many children, much like the personified Zion of Lamentations and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible:

Ἰερουσαλήμ Ἰερουσαλήμ... ποσάκις ἠθέλησα ἐπισυναγαγεῖν τὰ τέκνα σου, ὃν τρόπον ὄρνις ἐπισυνάγει τὰ νοσσία αὐτῆς ὑπὸ τὰς πτέρυγας, καὶ οὐκ ἠθελήσατε.

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem! ... How often have I desired to gather your children together just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you did not want it" (23:37).

However, ultimately it is Jesus himself who fills the maternal role. Thus, Jesus, grieving over Jerusalem, assumes the role of Zion herself in desiring to bring back the scattered children.

Dobbs-Allsopp suggests that the portrayal of Jesus in the New Testament offers a chance for Christian readers to find within Zion a prototype of the New Testament portrayal of Jesus' sufferings:

That the Gospel writers' dependence of the city-lament tradition in these passages is not mere happenstance is further suggested by our poet's determination to show Zion as taking on her children's sins and suffering in ways that prefigure the Jesus of the Gospel accounts...for Christians, then, the hurt, grief, and love refracted in and through personified Jerusalem gains special significance as it reverberates and echoes the similar portrayal of Jesus in the New Testament.⁷⁸

Dobbs-Allsopp's approach differs markedly with the tendency of dominant strains of Christian interpretation of Lamentations, which identify Jesus' suffering with that of the "man" in Lamentations 3:

Nevertheless, to the extent that the theological imagination of Christian biblical interpreters has been shaped by the notion of a suffering individual, who serves in some

⁷⁸ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 53.

way as a model of redemption for others, their attention is understandably drawn to what is perceived as a similar figure in the masculine figure rather than the figure of Zion.⁷⁹

However, a reading of Jesus' journey through the Passion narratives in the gospels invites a closer identification of Jesus with the prototype of Hebrew Bible lamenting women that Zion represents.

Certain scholars have taken the investigation of the connection between the gospels and Lamentations a step further. Rather than merely identifying Jesus' suffering with that of Daughter Zion, the tradition of women's lament of which Daughter Zion is representative may undergird the gospel narratives themselves. Particularly in Mark, where Jesus' sufferings appear particularly acute, lament seems just an instant away. Angela Standhartinger argues,

The Markan crucifixion narrative sets Jesus' suffering at the center. In my opinion, there could in fact be lament traditions behind this structure and its application. The narrative does not turn aside from suffering. On the contrary, it appeals for suffering-with and lamenting-with the righteous one abandoned by God...It is certain, however, that it gives voice and space to each individual lament.⁸⁰

Marianne Sawicki uses the dolorous tone of the Passion narratives to argue for the substantial involvement of grieving women in the making of the Jesus traditions preserved in the gospels. She envisions a symposium of grieving women who interweave the unfolding of Jesus' life with the lament traditions of the Septuagint. This work preceded the formation of the canonical gospel traditions, rather merely representing women's efforts "to find some sense in their bereavement. They comforted one another with assurances that the dear departed had been enfolded in divine care, and they framed expectations of reunion and vindication."⁸¹

⁷⁹ Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, 9.

⁸⁰ Angela Standhartinger, "What Women Were Accustomed to Do for the Dead Beloved by Them' (Gospel of Peter 12.50): Traces of Lament and Mourning Rituals in Early Easter, Passion, and Lord's Supper Traditions," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129, no. 3 (2010): 570.

⁸¹ Marianne Sawicki, *Seeing the Lord: Resurrection and Early Christian Practices* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 165.

Building upon Sawicki's work, Crossan argues that the formation of the story of Jesus' Passion and resurrection emanates directly from the lament tradition, which redirected currents of the male exegetical tradition into a complete narrative. He writes,

What I imagine instead is that in the Jerusalem community the female lament tradition turned the male exegetical tradition into a passion-resurrection story once and for all forever...The gift of the lament tradition is not just that we know the names of Mary Magdalene and the other women, but that their passion-resurrection story moved into the heart of the Christian tradition forever.⁸²

While I am inclined to be cautious of accepting the full extent of Sawicki and Crossan's argument concerning female origins of the Passion narrative, given the difficulty of ascertaining with certainty the nature of the oral traditions they discuss, I agree that the gospel narratives remain open to the possibility of women's creative activity, as witnessed by the labeling of the women's anointing of Jesus' feet as *poesis* in Mark: "Her work is what will be remembered. Out of all possible versions of Jesus, it is *her* memory, *her* poesis, that becomes the gospel. This woman was a spinner of Jesus stories, and in turn she was spun into a recitation of the stories by subsequent tellers, among whom was Mark."⁸³

Moreover, the suggestion of women's lament remains in the extra-canonical writings of the Gospel of Peter. Here, the explanation given for the absence of lament at the cross and burial of Jesus is "fear of the Jews, since they had been inflamed by rage." Lament for Jesus would have been natural and fitting, however, as it is one of "those things which women are accustomed to do for those who have died" (12:50). In this account, the women, led by Mary Magdalene, "disciple of the Lord," return stealthily to the tomb to accomplish the lament from which they were precluded at the crucifixion and burial. However, unlike in the canonical

⁸² John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998), 573

⁸³ Sawicki, *Seeing the Lord*, 151.

gospels, the women do not actually bear witness to the resurrection; they decline to look in the empty tomb and run away afraid. This minimization of their role, writes Claudia Setzer, “is a more extreme example of the same discomfort that surfaced in the canonical Gospels over the crucial role of women as resurrection witnesses.”⁸⁴ On the other hand, Crossan argues the opposite; he contends that the women in the Gospel of Peter are being “introduced and emphasized.”⁸⁵ Regardless of whether the Gospel of Peter and the canonical gospels magnify or marginalize women as participants in the Jesus moment and as lamenters, these early Christian documents indicate a wealth of possibility for the connection between women’s ritual lament and the crafting of the Passion narratives.

Furthermore, within Christian traditions, as I will explore in Ch. 6, the gospel narratives’ presentation of Mary easily invites the proliferation of lament attributed to her. Lk. 2:35 is one such moment. During Simeon’s blessing of the infant Jesus in the temple, he slips in one comment directed to Mary herself, that σοῦ δὲ αὐτῆς τὴν ψυχὴν διελεύσεται ῥομφαία (“a sword will pierce your own soul, too”). Though she is εὐλογημένη (“blessed”) (Lk. 1:42), Mary will also be burdened with the loss of her son. All four Gospel accounts include some mention of women present at the crucifixion to mourn Jesus’ death; John in particular explicitly identifies Mary the mother of Jesus as one of those present. In none of the Gospel accounts, however, is Mary one of the women present to witness the empty tomb firsthand. Thus, while Mary lacks an explicit speaking role in the Passion narratives, she remains poised to inherit the role of Daughter Zion as lamenter-in-chief.

⁸⁴ Claudia Setzer, “Excellent Women: Women as Witness to the Resurrection,” in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116, no. 2 (1997): 270.

⁸⁵ Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity*, 551.

Conclusion

Daughter Zion's presentation within Lamentations' biblical afterlives tends to differ markedly from that within Lamentations itself. Namely, as the lament genre becomes diffused through a focus on restoration, as it does in Deutero-Isaiah, Zion songs, and the New Testament Zion's female voice suffers for lack of a place. Where the poetic lament is retained, as it is in Baruch, 4 Ezra, and 4Q179, Zion's voice perseveres; Zion is celebrated as a less guilty figure than in the Hebrew Lamentations in a manner reminiscent of Deutero-Isaiah. In ancient translations of Lamentations as well, Zion's voice diminishes where a male figure, that of Jeremiah, appears as the main speaker of the book to dampen Zion's lamenting role. Thus, Lamentations' Daughter Zion tends to stand in a marginal position within biblical traditions. Subsequent Jewish and Christian interpretation jeopardize her voice even further, as I will explore within the next two chapters.

Ch. V

Recovering Divine Mercy: Daughter Zion in Jewish Traditions

Introduction

The biblical precedent for the diminishment of Daughter Zion's voice continues into the establishment of Jewish traditions of Lamentations. With the progressive elimination of female voices from the Jewish history of consequences of Lamentations, the primary focus of exegesis becomes the linkage of suffering and sin, with a slight excursus during Medieval persecutions into the connection between suffering and *qiddush hashem* ("righteous martyrdom"). The overriding theme of the guilt of sufferers in Lamentations' history of consequences has rendered use of Lamentations increasingly distasteful to Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment Jewish thinkers in search of spiritual resources to address persecution and suffering. Thus, by the time of the Shoah, Lamentations was not broadly regarded as a useful text to read in response to innocent suffering. Beyond its recitation at *Tisha B'Av*, the role of Lamentations has greatly diminished within modern Jewish life. As Zachary Braiterman puts it, there is both a historical and ontological "distance" that separates modern Jewish readers from the world of the text of Lamentations.¹

As a consequence of Daughter Zion's voice's absorption into male voices, it is represented directly (as in, not absorbed into another character's voice) solely in poetry, particularly medieval *piyyutim* (liturgical poetry) for Tisha B'Av. However, the role of poetry itself came under fire within the medieval period for its biblical embellishment and theological

¹ Zachary Braiterman, "Lamentations in Modern Jewish Thought," in *Great is Thy Faithfulness?: Reading Lamentations as Sacred Scripture*, ed. Robin A. Parry and Heath A. Thomas (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 92.

heterodoxy—consequences of poetry’s “femininity.” Additionally, with the Shoah’s existential threat to Jews and Judaism, the question arises of whether poetry can possibly respond to genocide. Thus, Daughter Zion’s literary afterlives face an uncertain future even in poetry.

In this chapter, I will chronologically survey some of the major consequences of Daughter Zion within Jewish tradition. I will begin with an extended analysis of *Lamentations Rabbah*. Here, I will focus particularly on God’s usurping of Zion’s words, behaviors, and concerns, creatively appropriating and re-molding the book of Lamentations and its interpretation. I will move on to treat the role of Lamentations within Jewish martyrology but especially considering the contested place of *piyyutim* about Zion. Then, I will proceed to the increasing marginalization of Lamentations’ within the Enlightenment period and beyond due to its linkage of suffering and sin and conclude with a consideration of Lamentations’ relatively sparse presence in responses to the Shoah.

Lamentations Rabbah

Lamentations Rabbah (*LamRab*) is a midrashic compilation of the fifth or sixth century C.E., judging from its quotation of no sages or sources postdating the fourth century.² Its first section is composed of thirty-four *petihtaot* which precede the body of Lamentations Rabbah, composed of the *parashiyyot*. While the *petihtaot* are concerned more generally with themes of the book of Lamentations, the *parashiyyot* treat each verse of the book of Lamentations individually, concentrated especially on the first two chapters of Lamentations. Like biblical material already surveyed, Lamentations Rabbah shifts Zion’s lamenting voice to a male. In

² Moshe David Herr, “Lamentations Rabbah,” *Encyclopedia Judaica* Vol. 12, 2nd edition, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik (Detroit: MacMillan Reference USA): 451.

Lamentations Rabbah, God rather than Jeremiah becomes the primary lamenter. However, though God's masculine voice usurps Zion's lament, female voices of mourning are not yet totally subsumed; female experiences of suffering and lament play a primary role in shaping God's mourning.

Linkage of Suffering and Sin

The construction of the relationship of suffering and sin in *LamRab* is a function of its central motif, the covenantal relationship between God and Israel. *LamRab* acts to re-impose cosmic order in a world fragmented by repeated military defeat and cultural imperialism.³ Part of this reordering involves a strong association between suffering and sin. Alan Mintz argues that Lamentations' vagueness in stating the relationship between suffering and sin gives rise to *LamRab*'s clarity: In order to avoid the theologically problematic stance of suffering as a consequence of divine neglect, *LamRab* aims to make clear Israel's guilt.⁴ The text identifies three cardinal sins—idolatry, sexual immorality, and murder—as the primary reasons for Israel's suffering.⁵ The committal of these sins allows for a clear explanation of Israel's suffering.

LamRab makes even more explicit the relationship between suffering and sin by corresponding the manner of sin, manner of punishment, and manner of comfort. The correlation between the three contests Lamentations' claims that the punishment of Zion may be disproportionate to her crimes; the meting out of the punishment perfectly matches the offence that was committed. Furthermore, God's punishment is just because it is finite in duration; comfort will come. Protest against the received punishment would be inappropriate; as Neusner

³ Jacob Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 510.

⁴ Alan Mintz, *Hurban: Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 52

⁵ Mintz, *Hurban*, 55.

writes, “Man has no right to complain about punishment of sins, it is enough that he is alive.”⁶ For example, to the query of whether mothers should be in such a position of desperation that they eat their children, the midrash asks, “Should priest and prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?”⁷ Such an attitude effectively silences Daughter Zion’s protest in Lamentations.

However, though Israel’s sin accounts for its suffering, the nature of its punishment still can be disputed. Israel is punished disproportionately compared to the gentile nations. Responding to Lam. 1:8, *LamRab* comments, “Do the gentile nations not sin? Even though they do sin, it has no sequel in punishment.”⁸ Furthermore, the prominence of God’s lament within *LamRab*, which I will explore in the following sections, offers the possibility that God may actually come to think better of his decision to punish his own people mercilessly.

Human Evoking of Divine Lament

While *LamRab* ultimately positions God as the consummate mourner, it does so through fashioning God’s grief after than of humans’.⁹ While God does not metamorphize into a human, human expressions of grief are the closest approximation to God’s experience of witnessing his children’s suffering. While both men and women’s grieving help to shape God’s response to the exile, women’s grief ultimately emerges as primary and is the mourning which God himself ultimately usurps.

God and Masculine Grief

⁶ Jacob Neusner, *A Theological Commentary to the Midrash*, Vol. V: Lamentations Rabbati. Studies in Ancient Judaism (New York: University Press of America, 2001), 91.

⁷ Jacob Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah: An Analytical Translation*, Brown Judaic Studies 193, ed. Jacob Neusner (Scholars Press: Atlanta, 1989), 242.

⁸ Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 151.

⁹ David Stern, “*Imitatio Hominis*: Anthropomorphism and the Character of God in Rabbinic Literature,” *Prooftexts* 12. 2 (1992): 157.

A mortal king's mourning provides a masculine model of grief for God within the midrash. God, uncertain of the appropriate way to go about mourning, inquires of the angels, "A mortal king in mourning—what is fitting for him to do?" The angels then narrate for God the behaviors appropriate for a king in mourning: hanging sackcloth, darkening lamps, overturning his couch, going barefoot, rending his clothing, and sitting in solitude and silence. God states his intention to adopt each of these behaviors, albeit on a cosmic scale. For example, in response to the angels' statement that a mortal king darkens the lamps as part of his mourning, God decrees an undoing of the cosmic lights of creation: "'I too will do so.' The sun and moon become black, and the stars withdraw their shining' (Joel 4:15)."¹⁰ The culmination of these characteristics is outright weeping. However, God does not add a cosmic dimension to the mortal act of weeping; human grief is enough. Nevertheless, the model of masculinized lament proves insufficient to encompass God's grief. God must seek female paradigms to express his full grief.

God and Women's Lament

The exhortation to lament goes specifically to women: "Teach your daughters to lament."¹¹ Women's influence on God's lament is more immediate than men's, because God summons them in person to demonstrate: "But when Judah and Benjamin went into exile, it is as though the Holy One, blessed be he, said, 'now I do not have the strength to lament for them, 'Summon the dirge-singers, let them come, send for the skilled women, let them come.' Let them quickly start a wailing for us, [that our eyes may run with tears, our pupils flow with water]."¹² Women's lament provides the impetus and model for God's own tears. Women's experiences of suffering, particularly that of child loss, appear as the most severe result of the exile. Thus,

¹⁰ Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 110.

¹¹ Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 28.

¹² Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 16.

God's voice should be understood as echoing voices of lamenting women even as he supplants them.

Daughter Zion's weeping inspires God's response as well: "She weeps and makes the Holy One, blessed by He, weep too: 'And in that day did the Lord, God of Hosts, call to weeping and to lamentation' (Isaiah 22:12)."¹³ However, Daughter Zion's grief is not portrayed extensively, and flesh-and-blood women appear as co-lamenters who inspire and mimic God's response. God *requires* the assistance of these women to fashion his own emotive response to the carnage.¹⁴ Women's voices epitomize the lament which God wishes to carry out for his exiled children.

Accounts of women witnessing their children's murders are emblematic of the midrash's effort to portray the brutality of imperial rule. The *parashah* on Lam 1:16, which likely has its roots in 1-2 Maccabees, exemplifies this trend. In this midrash, a mother, Miriam, daughter of Tanhum, mourns the death of seven sons slaughtered one after another for their refusal to bow down to an idol. The seventh and youngest son, unlike his brothers, is given the possibility of a reprieve even after his defiant quoting of scripture; if he merely picks up the ring that the emperor drops before the idol, giving the appearance of worship, the emperor will spare him. After the son's repeated refusal, he is sentenced to death, but his mother is permitted to embrace him once more. She nurses him from her breasts, and instructs her child,

"My son, go tell Abraham, our father, 'My mother says to you, 'Do not take pride, claiming, I built an altar and offered up my son, Isaac.'
Now see, my other built seven altars and offered up seven sons in one day.
And yours was only a test, but I really had to do it."

¹³ Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 132-133.

¹⁴ Mintz, *Hurban*, 60.

Even the patriarchs' sorrow cannot compete with a mother's grief for her slain children. After her son's execution, Miriam commits suicide, prompting the Holy Spirit's lament.¹⁵ Thus, the mother's experience forms the Divine sorrowful reaction.

Petihtha 24 illustrates the juxtaposition between the influence of male and female mourners on divine response. Within the proem, both men (Abraham and Moses) and a woman, Rachel, come before God to plead for the lives of the exiles. Rachel's lament, unlike the men's, prompts God's repentance. Rachel appears in the poem as a mother, encompassing, as Linafelt argues, the persona of Lamentations' Zion.¹⁶ Citing Jer 31:15-17, which displays Rachel as the mother mourning the exiles' departure, God exclaims, "For Rachel I am going to bring the Israelites back to their land."¹⁷ God's absorption of Rachel's grief does not represent a change in the fundamental nature of God from masculine to feminine; "Rather, it is the model of *human* behavior to which God now turns in submitting to Rachel's example."¹⁸ God characterizes himself anthropomorphically by virtue of necessity; "He too has no other language in which to express human, all too human, predicament."¹⁹ God's imitations of human behavior ultimately allow the midrash to position God as the primary mourner for the human condition so that women's lament is subsumed.

God as Primary Mourner

Assuming the model of human grief, God emerges as the primary mourner of Lamentations. Zion no longer speaks to commemorate and protest her own and her people's

¹⁵ Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 178

¹⁶ Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, 114.

¹⁷ Neusner, *Introduction*, 531.

¹⁸ Stern, "Imitatio Hominis," 165.

¹⁹ Stern, "Imitatio Hominis," 161.

suffering.²⁰ The severity of grief described in Lamentations is too great for any human to bear. Therefore, according to *LamRab*, Jeremiah cannot be the author/speaker of Lamentations: “If you wish to suggest that Jeremiah said it, it is not possible for someone to eat, drink, or sleep [and only to mourn and weep all day long]. But it is only the Holy One, Blessed be He, who said it, for he never sleeps.”²¹

God’s weeping is often self-directed, as Stern writes, “If God began by mourning the Destruction’s victims, He ends up mourning himself, His own failure.”²² God’s self-pity is not necessarily relatable; *Petihta* 24, for example, evinces a definite impatience with God’s sadness. Both endings of *Petihta* 24 portray God’s role in the destruction as an ultimately negative force. The first ending includes mother and father grieving over a murdered son, followed by the mother’s own death. Moses comments, “‘Lord of all the world! You have written in your Torah, ‘Whether it is a cow or a ewe, you shall not kill it and its young both in one day’ (Lev. 22:28). ‘But have they not killed any number of children along with their mothers, and yet you remain silent!’”²³ The exiled human families now are slaughtered together, animal-like, in violation of Torah. Kraemer writes that “bitter indictment represented in these words is unparalleled. God the villain, unrepentant to the end, is present only in the echo of God’s earlier, heartless decree.”²⁴

God’s behavior can also be seen as petty. In the second ending of *Petihta* 24, Rachel convinces God to relent by comparing his own jealousy to hers for her sister Leah, who weds and

²⁰ Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations*, 35.

²¹ Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 182

²² Stern, “*Imitatio Hominis*,” 161.

²³ Mintz, *Hurban*, 78.

²⁴ David Charles Kraemer, *Responses to Suffering in Classical Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 146.

beds Jacob before Rachel has the chance. Just as Rachel overcame her jealousy for Leah by assisting her in the deception of Jacob, so God can overcome his jealousy over Israel. While the second ending of P. 24 shows God as relenting from his unjust punishment, Kraemer agrees that the second ending reflects a subtle condemnation as well:

God, in his own words, has been jealous of literally nothing, and Israel has accordingly suffered on account of literally nothing. And when God finally acknowledges His pettiness and puts aside his anger, the sole motive for this change of heart seems to be the shame at being found out to be so petty, not real concern for the Jews' plight.²⁵

Therefore, despite God's mourning, the midrash also renders him vulnerable to critique.²⁶

For Linafelt, God's position as a primary mourner constitutes a "survival" of Zion's voice. He writes, "God has taken up the posture of personified Zion in Lamentations, that of the mourner...it is of course the loss of children (or a child) that has engendered the response and brought God to the state of emotional breakdown and halakhic liminality."²⁷ However, I argue that God's assumption of Zion's mourning results in a loss. As much as God's grief takes human form, it lacks the full embodied experience portrayed in Lamentations' account of Daughter Zion, who experiences the enemy invasion as an assault on her person. Additionally, while Daughter Zion has no personal power to control the catastrophe, God himself can choose to

²⁵ Stern, "*Imitatio Hominis*," 164.

²⁶ The portrayal of God as the primary mourner for the shattered relationship between himself and Israel reappears allusively in Dvora Baron's short story, '*Agunah*, which Seidman and Kronfeld have translated as "Deserted Wife." In this tale, an elderly female onlooker, whose identity is ultimately intertwined with that of both Zion and the Shulamite of the Song of Songs, listens while an itinerant rabbi tells a parable of a princess (clearly representing Zion, once treated as a choice bride, whom her kingly husband deserts. After the lamenting intervention of the Patriarchs and ultimately Rachel, the king/God relents and restores the princess'/Zion's status. The elderly onlooker, however, remains skeptical, as she asks her unresponsive husband, "What happened to the deserted wife? Did he come back?" [Dvora Baron, *The "First Day" and Other Stories*, trans. Naomi Seidman and Chana Kronfeld (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, 98.)

²⁷ Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, 107.

restore his people. For Zion, there is truly no comforter, but for God, the desolation he feels results from a failure to deploy his own might to comfort his people. Therefore, though Cohen argues that *LamRab* becomes a source of consolation since it is God himself mourns,” I argue that the real extent of comfort in the midrash is limited.²⁸

Daughter Zion in Late Antique and Medieval Poetry

Hebrew Piyyutim

The *piyyutim*, liturgical poetry, re-centralize Zion from her marginal position in prose writings. Given the male control of religious discourse, Zion’s voice here is especially significant:

The question arises (and this question arises whenever a female figure is chosen as a symbol for a concept, or property, she is devoid of), why should the Jewish praying congregation--all men--choose to address God through the agency of a female voice? And if, as is endlessly repeated in medieval texts, ‘*qol ba’isha ‘erva*’ (‘a woman’s voice is pudendum); and if women are barred from public prayer--how can a female voice represent the community?... It is ultimately Knesset Israel’s suffering which rehabilitates her voice for public expression.²⁹

Women’s voices entered Jewish liturgy as the *piyyutim* emerged as supplements to the regular festival liturgies.³⁰ Their rather tentative standing is reflected in the limited chronology of widespread use; while the *piyyutim* were commonly found in synagogue liturgy by 1200, their use greatly diminished by the 19th century due to efforts to shorten the liturgy.³¹

²⁸ Shaye J.D. Cohen, “The Destruction: From Scripture to Midrash,” *Prooftexts* Vol. 2, no. 1 (January 1982): 34.

²⁹ Tova Rosen, *Unveiling Eve: Reading Gender in Medieval Hebrew Literature* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 17.

³⁰ Elsie R. Stern, *From Rebuke to Consolation: Exegesis and Theology in the Liturgical Anthology of the Ninth of Av Season*, Brown Judaic Studies 338 (Providence: Brown University, 2004), 114

³¹ Jakob Josef Petuchowski, *Theology and Poetry: Studies in the Medieval Piyyut* (London: Rutledge and K. Paul, 2004), 18.

The issue of poetry's gender also contributed to *piyyutim*'s marginality. While Jewish eulogy and lament share a poetic form, Laura S. Lieber describes how lament in particular has license, due to its use of female personae, to show profound, unrestrained grief that connects past tragedy to present pain.³² Tova Rosen chronologizes a general movement towards a negative view of poetry in the medieval period that arises from its female gendering. By the 11th century, Jewish philosophical texts gender poetry as feminine through its association with ornamentation.³³ Poetry is sometimes compared to an elegant bride, laden with her bridal garments, the spouse of the poet.³⁴ While ornamentation can mask an unsightly interior, for the most part, poetry's feminine wiles are fairly neutral. This is a perspective manifested in Ibn Ezra's work, as he maintains that the stylistic lies that poetry espouses, a product of the clash between figurative and literal language, may be forgiven.³⁵ However, within a sacred context, Ibn Ezra finds poetry more troubling; he critiques Eleazer HaQallir's earlier *piyyutim* by condemning the fact that "all of his poems are full of exegetical and homiletical allusions, whereas our Sages had said no biblical verse ever departs from its literal meaning."³⁶

Later in the medieval period, however, attacks on poetry based on its female gendering arise in full force. This movement, Rosen writes, owes to the shift in imagery from simile to metaphor; whereas, earlier in the medieval period, poetry was *like* a woman, by the 13th century,

³² Laura S. Lieber, "Stages of Grief: Enacting Lamentation in Late Ancient Hymnography," *AJS Review* 40.1 (April 2016): 113.

³³ As Deborah Andrews writes in her dissertation concerning medieval Jewish commentaries on Lamentations by Ibn Ezra, Kara, and Rashi, this phenomenon corresponds with the increasingly negative attitudes towards *derash* (metaphorical) interpretations among these commentators in favor of *peshat* (literal). These commentators deal little with the personification of Daughter Zion. Deborah Andrews, "Medieval Jewish Exegesis of the Book of Lamentations," (PhD Diss., St. Andrew's University, 2004), 15.

³⁴ Rosen, *Unveiling Eve*, 66.

³⁵ Rosen, *Unveiling Eve*, 71.

³⁶ Petuchowski, *Theology and Poetry*, 6

poetry metaphorically *becomes* a woman, complete with her own name, *bat ha-shir* (“the daughter of poetry”). The critiques of poetry become more polemical. Especially telling is Qalonymos’s critique of poets’ failed masculinity in *Even Boḥan*; poets neglect their masculine duty to study the *halakah* and are effeminate in their fixation with poetry.³⁷

Rosem argues that Maimonides’ negative attitudes towards poetry stem from his “systematic ontological separation of Form and Matter,” with the male Form superior to the female Matter, which is also dependent on Form.³⁸ Maimonides frames his appropriation of Aristotle through reference to biblical materials, hearkening both to the creation of Adam and Eve in the garden and the hunt of Woman Wisdom in Proverbs 7 for a husband to the male:female::form:matter syllogism.³⁹ Within a liturgical context, Maimonides finds the use of female poetry, deceptive to the core, particularly offensive. Poets, he writes, are notorious for positing many aspects of Divine nature which actually mislead their audiences.⁴⁰ Maimonides chides hearers of poetry, “You ought not to listen in any way to these utterances, let alone know the extent of the sin of him who *makes vituperative utterances against what is above.*”⁴¹

Nevertheless, the *piyyutim* persisted during the medieval period and present a unique consequence of Lamentations; they, unlike many other consequences of Lamentations, bear an importance resemblance to the biblical Lamentations in their effort to convey an emotional reality rather than teaching a lesson.⁴² The *piyyutim* make use of the poetry’s unique emotional

³⁷ Rosen, *Unveiling Eve*, 75.

³⁸ Rosen, *Unveiling Eve*, 8.

³⁹ Rosen, *Unveiling Eve*, 80.

⁴⁰ Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed* Vol. I, Ch. 59, trans. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (1963),141.

⁴¹ Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, 142.

⁴² E. Stern, *From Rebuke to Consolation*, 117.

capacities in order to “articulate the emotions of the speaker, supplicate and exhort the listener, and use the features of the poetic composition itself to evoke moods and images.”⁴³

Qallir’s אֵם הַבָּנִים (translated “The Mother of Children,” which Carmi also titles “The Dialogue of Zion and God”) resurrects Zion’s voice and places it in dialogue with God who, in Lamentations, remains silent. Alongside its references to Lamentations, the poem alludes to Song of Songs and Deutero-Isaiah, recasting Lamentations’ Zion as God’s beloved with whom even a fractured marriage covenant can be healed. In the poem, as in Lamentations itself, Zion appears first and foremost as a bereaved mother. Recalling Lamentations 1:1, the narrator opens the poem with an emphasis on Zion’s solitary existence:

אֵם הַבָּנִים כִּינָה מְנַהֶמֶת
בְּלֵב מִתְאוֹנְנֵת וּבִפֶּה מִתְרַעֶמֶת
גּוֹעָה בְּבִכִי וּבְמַר גּוֹאֲמֵת
דְּמָעוֹת מְזֵלֶת וְנִדְהָמֵת:

“The mother of children moans like a dove; she mourns in her heart and complains out loud; she cries bitterly, calls out desperately, she sheds tears, she is silent and stunned” (אֵם הַבָּנִים lines 1-4).⁴⁴

Qallir’s allusion in the first line of the poem is a double one; while Zion is a bereaved mother, as in Lamentations, she is also a “dove,” alluding the female lover in the Song of Songs.⁴⁵ This tender portrait of Zion thus emphasizes her status as a beloved wife.

In the second and third stanza of the poem, Zion renews the protests against God present in Lamentations and its afterlives. In the second stanza, the marriage metaphor comes into play as it does in Deutero-Isaiah’s recollection of Lamentations, casting God as the husband (בעל)

⁴³ E. Stern, *From Rebuke to Consolation*, 118.

⁴⁴ Eleazar ben Qallir, אֵם הַבָּנִים (“The Dialogue of Zion and God”), trans. T. Carmi, *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books, 1981), 223.

⁴⁵ E. Stern, *From Rebuke to Consolation*, 145.

who has “abandoned” (שָׁלַךְ), “turned away” (סוּר), and failed to “remember” (זָכַר) (lines 5-6).⁴⁶

The image of Zion as a menstruating woman emerges as well, as Zion’s rejection is like that “as an unclean woman,” (פְּגוּמָה) (line 9).⁴⁷ In a rather explicit allusion to Lam 5:20, the last stanza of Zion’s speech in the poem pairs שָׂכָה and עִזָּב (line 12).⁴⁸ By invoking Lamentations, Qallir thus firmly positions the figure of Zion within the book’s legacy, while simultaneously recuperating the image of Zion from her poor treatment in Lamentations’ history of consequences.

In Qallir’s אָזָּב בְּמִלְאֵת סִפְקָא (“When in the Fullness of Grief,” which Carmi titles “Jeremiah and the Beautiful Woman”) Jeremiah encounters a woman who, though beautiful in form and face, is soiled and ragged and appears to represent the persona of Zion (she cites Lam 1:1, “how lonely she dwells,” line 28).⁴⁹ While Jeremiah urges the woman to repent through rejoicing, the woman counters Jeremiah’s insistence on her jubilation with the protest that only lament is possible given the removal of her children and the murder of her people. She insists that whatever her sins may be, she cannot repent for them before she experiences the restoration of her children. Therefore, Jeremiah repents on her behalf, for he has not experienced the devastation. Taking up her lament, Jeremiah “roar[s] like a lion” (line 42) for the restoration of the people. Unlike in Deutero-Isaiah and P. 24 of Lamentations Rabbah, the children remain unrestored at the end of the *qinah*. This lack of restoration can reflect the *Tisha B’Av* setting for which Qallir is writing, in which worshippers must “refrain from hope.”⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Qallir, “The Dialogue of Zion and God,” 223.

⁴⁷ E. Stern, *From Rebuke to Consolation*, 138.

⁴⁸ Qallir, “The Dialogue of Zion and God,” 223.

⁴⁹ Qallir, “Jeremiah and the Beautiful Woman,” trans. T. Carmi, *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books, 1981), 225.

⁵⁰ Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentation*, 129.

Thus, Qallir's poetry represents a rare consequence of Lamentations that preserves Zion's voice of protest in Lamentations. The feminine gendering of poetry, though a means for poetry's stigmatization in the medieval period, gave license for the expression of Daughter Zion's voice to a degree unknown elsewhere. Within these poems, the complexity of her character emerges as Daughter Zion's voice once again has the chance to resound.

Late Antique Jewish Palestinian Aramaic Poetry

As with Hebrew *qinot*, a body of poetry within the Aramaic corpus preserves Daughter Zion's voices, anthologized by Laura Suzanne Lieber in *Jewish Aramaic Poetry from Late Antiquity: Translations and Commentaries*. In the JPA poetry in which Daughter Zion's voice is preserved, the implications of her guilt are much less significant, and the poetry serves not as an indictment, but instead, as indignant supplication for God to take notice of her suffering. As Lieber observes, the gendering of the poetic voices creates this effect. As the poetic speakers attempt to capture the trauma of the destruction of the temple, Lieber writes, "[The *qinot*] create this sense of immediacy through the deployment of the feminine voice: many of these poems, drawing on the personification of Zion as a mourning mother and widow from the book of Lamentations and Jeremiah, are written in the voice of a grieving woman."⁵¹ The third, fourth, and sixth stanzas of Poem 19 in the corpus, titled by the copyist as *shalshelta* ("a braided chain") particularly reflect the creative adaptation of Lamentations' portrayal of Daughter Zion:

Oh, how They cast all the infants into the fire
 They wounded me and removed both mother and child
 They banished her among all the lands
 Until the Lord will look down and see from Heaven
 ...

Oh, how I sat, a widow, more desolate than any other
 They yoked my maidens to the enemy's horses

⁵¹ Lieber, "Stages of Grief," 112.

Therefore, on account of these things I weep
Until the Lord will look down and see from Heaven

...

Oh, how They tore the chicks of my nest away from me
They are far off and exiled, and my marriage chamber lies in disarray
They set aflame the House of my offerings
*But you will look down with great compassion and rebuild my
sanctuary!*⁵²

Here, as Lieber notes, the female speaker arises to take an intercessory role before God, thus echoing Daughter Zion's active contention for her children's fate.⁵³ Additionally, the presentation of Daughter Zion as a widow in Lam. 1:1 appears, although the maternal image predominates in both the third and sixth stanza. No mentions of Daughter Zion's guilt are found here; her suffering and her children's suffering do not appear to be directly connected to sin.⁵⁴

Qiddush HaShem and Lamentations

Circumstances involving persecution of Jews for their religious practice necessitated the formation of new theologies of suffering. Starting with the rise of Greek and Roman military dominance within Israel, interreligious coercion became the clear basis for Jewish suffering rather than sin, for it was precisely Jews' faithfulness to their own religious practice that caused this persecution. The theology of *Qiddush HaShem* took into account this reality.⁵⁵ Suffering was the trial endured by God's righteous ones that ultimately made them more holy. Being

⁵² *ShBM* 19, "Zion's Lament," trans. Laura Suzanne Lieber, *Jewish Aramaic Poetry from Late Antiquity: Translations and Commentaries* (Boston: Brill, 2018), 69-70.

⁵³ Lieber, "Stages of Grief," 113.

⁵⁴ One of the most interesting aspects of Lieber's anthology of *JPA* is the comparison of Daughter Zion's lament to the situations of Esther and Vashti in the book of Esther, as well as to Zeresh, the wife of Haman, whose sons are executed following Haman's treachery. In future work, I would like to continue this line of inquiry. (Lieber, *Jewish Aramaic Poetry*, 106 and 109.)

⁵⁵ Eliezer Schweid, *The Jewish Experience of Time: Philosophical Dimensions of the Jewish Holy Days* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 2000), 247.

murdered by an enemy people, far from demonstrating one's sinfulness, was instead martyrdom, the ultimate demonstration of one's immaculate moral condition.

Within this context, Lamentations began to recede into the background of canonical texts used to frame contemporary experiences of suffering. However, in poetry commemorating the victims of Christian persecution within the Middle Ages, the figure of Daughter Zion remains. Within these poems, she appears as a mourning mother, without the accusations of sinfulness she faces within Lamentations, and, even more so, from later interpretations of the book. Her children are the Jewish martyrs, themselves innocent as well, and tortured and killed for their righteousness.

The 1298 elegy for R. Elijah b. Samuel exemplifies this sinless framing of Zion and her children:

Cruel foes with hate inflamed
Aimed at us their fatal blow;
Guileless was the man they seized;
And when savagely they slew him,
Angels came and bade him welcome;
Took his soul in charge, and blessed it,
O'er him Zion's daughter weepeth,
Israel for Elijah mourneth,
With the Holy One communing.⁵⁶

Still present is the figure of Zion as a weeping mother, but in contrast to her presentation elsewhere, her child-loss does not reflect poorly on her moral character. Just as innocent is her slain son, whose "guileless" state serves as the reason for his punishment. A similar portrayal of Daughter Zion and her children appears in the "Elegy of Zion." Here, the poem, directly

⁵⁶ Anonymous, trans. Leopold Zunz, *The Sufferings of the Jews during the Middle Ages* (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1907), 54.

addressed to Zion, details the gory deaths of her martyred children, slain through no fault of their own:

Thy faithful sons, whom Though in love hast owned,
Behold! Are strangled, burnt and racked and stoned;
Are broken on the wheel; like felons hung;
Or, living, into this noisome charnels flung.⁵⁷

These poetic reprisals of the female personification seize upon Daughter Zion's role as mourning mother within the Hebrew biblical text.

Modernism and Lamentations

The advent of the Enlightenment period marks Lamentations' recession in prominence within responses to suffering. Lamentations' minimization within modernist responses to suffering, I argue, is not a necessary function of Lamentations' content, but rather, a product of the exclusion of Zion's protest against God. Unfortunately, in even contemporary analysis of the reasons for Lamentations' removal, a traditionalist perspective with regard to suffering is assumed as inherent to Lamentations. For example, Roskies argues that modernist Jewish thinkers mounted an "antitraditionalist revolt" against Scripture-centered responses to suffering, of which Lamentations is clearly a part. However, as Linafelt notes, Roskies' understanding of Lamentations focuses heavily on Lamentations 3's portrait of the quintessential pious sufferer, without commenting on Zion's strident protests in the earlier chapters.⁵⁸ Thus, Roskies can contend that "[w]hat makes an individual a person of faith is their willingness to accept the covenantal framework of guilt, punishment, and restitution..."⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Anonymous, trans. Zunz, 30.

⁵⁸ Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, 134.

⁵⁹ David G. Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Literature* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 20.

Shifts within Jewish theologies of suffering in the modern period made Lamentations, read in such a way, untenable. First, reactions to the pogroms of the late 19th and early 20th centuries called into question the association of suffering and sin. Second, the persecutions with Jews faced were no longer generally countenanced through the idea of divine intervention, namely, through the arrival of the Messiah. Two major movements arose that addressed these changes. First, Reform Judaism within Europe removed the idea of the exile from its theology and consequently made revisions to its prayer book (e.g. the 1866 prayer book of Hamburg temple, which revised “on account of our sins” to “On account of their sins our fathers were exiled from their land.”).⁶⁰ Second, Zionism retained the idea of the exile, but instead of viewing it in the traditional manner as the consequence for sin, interpreted it instead as revealing the need for a restored Jewish homeland. Though different in their approaches to the idea of exile, the two share, as Petuchowski argues, an emphasis on “man’s role in bringing about his own salvation.”⁶¹ While these trends began earlier in the modern period, the Holocaust posed such a crisis as to bring rejection of these ideals to a crucial level: “Only people so fanatic that they have lost all moral sensitivity claim that the Holocaust should be regarded either as punishment for sins or birthpangs for the Messiah.”⁶²

As a representative of this change in attitude towards Lamentations as a penitent response to disaster, I will discuss the work of Hayim Naham Bialik, particularly his most famous poem, “In the City of Slaughter.” Bialik’s work issues a nationalist response to late 19th century pogroms that exemplifies modern skepticism towards scripture by satirizing the role that lament has played as a Jewish response to catastrophe. However, as with most modern approaches to

⁶⁰ Petuchowski, *Theology and Poetry*, 50.

⁶¹ Petuchowski, *Theology and Poetry*, 51.

⁶² Schweid, *The Jewish Experience of Time*, 244.

Lamentations, Bialik seems to assume the dominant mode of interpretation of Lamentations, with Zion's voice silenced, as the only one. Thus, Bialik reinforces the dominance of the very approach that he opposes.

Bialik, "In the City of Slaughter"

The nineteenth century Russian Jewish poet Hayim Nahman Bialik composed his Hebrew works in response to the rise of pogroms in Eastern Europe. In step with the modernist trend of marginalizing Lamentations due to its perceived connection of sin and suffering, Bialik employs a satirical lens towards the practice of lament:

Regard them now, in these their woes:
Ululating, lachrymose,
Crying from their throws,
"We have sinned! And sinned have we--
Self-flagellative with confession's whips.
Their hearts, however, do not believe their lips.
Is it, then, possible, for shattered limbs to sin?"⁶³

The linkage of catastrophes like the Kishinev massacre to lament as a penitential practice spurs Bialik's resistance to dominant strands of biblical interpretation:

The fact that the Jewish people was still capable of responding to its terrible suffering in the same coin of national mourning as on Tisha B'Av--a feeling of guilt and a plea for forgiveness--is what arouses a furious response in the poet, ousting him, as it were, from God's presence in a self-destroying prophecy.⁶⁴

Even as Bialik rejects the association of suffering and sin, he also opposes the Midrashic notion of the co-suffering God who emerges to weep for his people in *LamRab*. Though God's sorrow becomes a source of consolation in *LamRab*, his tears in "In the City of Slaughter" do not comfort because they reveal Divine impotence:

⁶³ Hayyim Nahman Bialik, "In the City of Slaughter," *Complete Poetic Works, Translated from the Hebrew*, trans. and ed. Israel Efros (New York: Histadruth Ivrit of America, 1948), 139.

⁶⁴ Schweid, *The Jewish Experience of Time*, 264.

Forgive, ye shamed of the earth, yours is a pauper-Lord!
When to my door you come to ask for your reward,
I'll open wide: See, I am fallen from My high estate.
I'll grieve for you, my children. My heart is sad for you.
Your dead were vainly dead; and neither I nor you
Know why you died or wherefore, for whom, nor by what laws;
Your deaths are without reason, your lives are without cause.⁶⁵

A God who cannot protect his people from massacre is, for Bialik, a poor God indeed, and belief in this sham God must be combatted.

Lament, for Bialik, does not encompass the necessary protest against the God of the Bible. This image of lament is a consequence of the exclusion of Zion's voice from the interpretation of Lamentations, thus rendering the book a dirge in which responsibility for sin is placed on those suffering. Lament allows for the powerless diffusion of grief and rage better channeled into political activity:

Should then a cry escape from thee,
I'll stifle it within thy throat.
Let them assoil their tragedy, --
Not thou, --let it remain unmourned
For distant ages times remote,
But thy tear, son of man, remain unshed!
Build though about it, with thy deadly hate
Thy fury and thy rage, unuttered
A wall of copper, the bronze triple plate!
So in thy heart it shall remain confined
A serpent in its nest--O terrible tear! --
Until by thirst and hunger it shall find
A breaking of its bond. Then shall it rear
Its venomous head, its poisoned fangs, and wait
To strike the people of thy love and hate!⁶⁶

The tradition of lament, from the poetic speaker's perspective, "assoils" (pardons or expiates) wrongdoing by allowing for the victim's emotional expression as grief rather than anger, thus

⁶⁵ Bialik, "In the City of Slaughter," 137

⁶⁶Bialik, "In the City of Slaughter,"140.

letting perpetrators off the proverbial hook.⁶⁷ Bialik's negative perspective on lament stigmatizes survivors of catastrophe who do lift their voices in mourning. Instead of blaming on the perpetrators of the abuses, Bialik excoriates the lamenters.

Ironically, despite Bialik's attempt to extricate his poetry from traditional approaches to Lamentations, the imagery of his poetry still makes use of Lamentations' graphic portrayals of suffering. For example, the plaintive portraits of young children, starving and murdered, emerge as specters of the atrocities committed:

And of a babe beside its mother flung,
Its mother speared, the poor chick finding rest
Upon its mother's cold and milkless breast'
Of how a dagger halved an infant's word,
Its *ma* was heard, its *mama* never heard.⁶⁸

Despite the alignment of Bialik's awareness of children's death with that of Lamentations, the poetic speaker's invocation of "Remember the sucklings," alluding to Lamentations 2:11 (יִדְּוֹן), is denounced.

Again recalling Lamentations, women's vulnerability to sexual violence appears prominently. The Jewish "virgins" of Kishinev, like those of Jerusalem, were raped, along with their mothers as well:

Descend then, to the cellars of the town,
There where the virginal daughters of thy folk were fouled,
Where seven heathens flung a woman down,
The daughter in the presence of her mother,
The mother in the presence of her daughter,
Before slaughter, during slaughter, after slaughter!⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Mintz, *Hurban*, 152.

⁶⁸ Bialik, "In the City of Slaughter," 133.

⁶⁹ Bialik, "In the City of Slaughter," 133.

The passivity of the men of the community is the subject of scorn for the speaker. The men's penitential posture as they lament and brings no vindication for the rape victims. For Bialik, lament, rather than being of vehicle of female empowerment, is the cause of further female suffering.

The simultaneous evoking and shaming of the lament tradition are emblematic of modern shifts in reading Lamentations. With Zion's voice marginalized within tradition, Lamentations could easily be characterized as an impotent response to tragedy. Bialik's understanding of lament as a disempowered response to crisis itself holds major consequences for later twentieth century literature. Schweid writes,

It was shame, and not the shock of loss and the grieving over the destruction, that caused the conspicuous avoidance of the Holocaust in the literature of the period. Allowed to speak in this silence were the powerful stereotypes and rhetorical norms of Bialik's text, as the classic statement on the Jews and their suffering in Zionist literature.⁷⁰

Thus, even as it sought to break the association of suffering and sin, Bialik's reception of Lamentations created a new kind of shaming of lamenters.

Post-Shoah Consequences of Lamentations

Due to the victim-blaming precedents of Lamentations' consequences, the book recedes even further in post-Shoah literature. This removal of Lamentations is a consequence of the marginalization of Zion's voice within the interpretative tradition. Without her voice as a contentious element within the polyphonic poetry, Lamentations degenerates into a victim-blaming mentality that is especially harmful light of genocide. Thus, for many modern thinkers, heir to the mainstream consequences of Lamentations,

“...to respond to the Holocaust as Jeremiah did to the destruction in his time, two conditions must be met. First, there must be an apparent--at least partial--cause and effect relation between the people's sins and the punishment that descends on them.

⁷⁰ Schweid, *The Jewish Experience of Time*, 162.

Second, the punishment must be of the same kind as the sin; that is, ‘measure for measure.’ Neither of these conditions is met in the Holocaust.⁷¹

Thus, Lamentations as a whole, not merely the figure of Daughter Zion, slides into obscurity.

Naomi Seidman’s reflection on *Tisha B’Av*, “Burning the Book of Lamentations,” demonstrates the ambivalence that can surface when reading Lamentations after the Holocaust. Seidman considers Lamentations in conversation with her parents’ experiences as Holocaust survivors and her own distinct experience as a second-generation survivor.⁷² For Seidman, the collective voices and bodies of the worshippers summon the image of Zion:

Movie child that I am, I watch the sheet to see the shifting silhouettes of my father and his friends...forming for a second the monstrous shape of a lopsided breasted woman, as if we were seeing our own reflections mounted into a single enormous female figure. Jerusalem sways and shakes her big skirts, crooning in the hoarse voice of the old stockbroker or diamond cutter on the other side of her veils.⁷³

Seidman’s recollection demonstrate that the *Tisha B’Av* liturgy may indeed hold the potential to re-member Daughter Zion. However, the memories resurrected remain difficult to process. In light of the vulnerabilities of European Jews during the Holocaust, Zion’s nakedness becomes particularly disturbing: “Whatever the Babylonians did to turn Jerusalem the city into rubble, it is the Jewish I can’t help feeling, who rips the bride Jerusalem’s jeweled veils from her forehead, stripping the embroidered robes to flash us a glimpse of her genitals.”⁷⁴ At the same time, however, the “nakedness” of which the poet speaks takes on enriched meaning in light of the abuse of Jews during the Holocaust.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Schweid, *The Jewish Experience of Time*, 286.

⁷² Seidman, Naomi, “Burning the Book of Lamentations,” in *Out of the Garden: Women Writers on the Bible*, ed. Christina Büchmann and Celina Spiegel (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1995), 281.

⁷³ Seidman, “Burning the Book,” 281.

⁷⁴ Seidman, “Burning the Book,” 282.

⁷⁵ Seidman, “Burning the Book,” 282.

Seidman recognizes a degree of distance between herself and the text. She inquires, “Is Lamentations my story, as a woman or a Jew? I don’t know.”⁷⁶ In recognition of this distance, Seidman’s perspective towards the poet becomes somewhat sympathetic. As critically as Seidman analyzes the Hebrew poet’s portrayal of Zion, she understands this “othering” as a function of a horrific situation outside of his control.⁷⁷ As I will explore through consideration of liturgy, theology, and poetry, Seidman’s troubled relationship with Lamentations is a common phenomenon in light of the Shoah.

Lamentations and Post-Shoah Liturgy

During and after the Holocaust, many Jews have retained lament as an avenue of protesting the crimes of the Nazi regime, while also expressing discomfort with associating a genocide of the Holocaust’s scale with any previous event, such as those commemorated on *Tisha B’Av*. On the issue of whether Holocaust Memorial Day can be collapsed into *Tisha B’Av*, Schweid writes, “There are those who think so. It is only if one assumes that the meaning of the Holocaust is similar to the meaning of the destruction of the Temple, and subsequent persecutions, and that it can be dealt with in the same traditional manner...Indeed this is the way that past generations coped with persecutions that the Jewish people encountered in exile. Nonetheless, most Jews appear to reject this notion.”⁷⁸ For some, the Holocaust presents a catastrophe of such proportion that equating it with the other disasters is inappropriate, while for others, the use of Lamentations as the foundational text for *Tisha B’Av* renders commemorating the Holocaust on that date unthinkable.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Seidman, “Burning the Book,” 285.

⁷⁷ Seidman, “Burning the Book,” 285.

⁷⁸ Schweid, *The Jewish Experience of Time*, 243.

⁷⁹ Arthur Ocean Waskow, *Seasons of Our Joy: A Handbook of the Jewish Festivals* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), 214.

However, even while Lamentations itself is infrequently cited directly, the structure and imagery of Lamentations has continued to be inspirational in the creation of liturgy for Yom HaShoah. For example, Zion's presence does find a brief, direct echoing in one of the texts written in commemoration of the Holocaust, Abba Kovner's *Megillat Ha-Edut*. In this volume, a monologue spoken by a partisan echoes Lamentations 1:1 in reference to the contemporary isolation of the Jewish people in their suffering: "Scholars will research and retroactive wise men will ask: *how solitary sits the people between the walls, crying out in her blood and she has none to hear her?*"⁸⁰

Though not a liturgy aimed at specifically at commemorating *Yom HaShoah*, *Nightwords* styles itself a contemporary midrash on the subject of the Holocaust. *Nightwords* is unique in that Scriptural references form the bulk of the narrative, thus making the relative absence of Lamentations even more striking. The texts of the sacrifice of Isaac, the Deuteronomic commandments of binding the *tefillim* upon one's hands, and the array of the Israelite camp around the Ark of the Covenant are ironically mapped onto the experiences of the victims and survivors of the Holocaust, with Lamentations figuring little. While *Nightwords* does include poignant poetic lament, the book of Lamentations itself is strikingly absent. The sole direct reference to Lamentations occurs near the end of the midrash, where the last verse of Lamentations (5:21) is cited: "Turn us back to you, O Lord; Renew our days, as of old."⁸¹ However, this reference stands alone, with Zion's voice of protest absent from those calling out for justice within the midrash.

Theological Responses

⁸⁰ Qtd. in Irving Greenberg, *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 352

⁸¹ Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse*, 102.

God is Dead

For Richard Rubenstein, who argues that, in the wake of the Holocaust, belief in an ultimately mighty and powerful God is untenable and thus that God is dead, Lamentations stands guilty of enabling mass murder. Rubenstein views Lamentations as reinforcing a Jewish psyche of shame-driven obedience, which led to minimal resistance to the Nazis.⁸² In *The Religious Imagination*, he writes, “Nowhere in the rabbinic literature is their theme [of sin producing punishment] more consistently reiterated than in the midrash on Lamentations, *Ekah Rabbah*. The rabbis regarded Lamentations as Jeremiah’s dirge on the fall of Jerusalem during that time...”⁸³ Rubenstein argues that the theological options for Jews living in the wake of the Holocaust are limited:

The ceding of ultimate power and authority to God’s inscrutable will left the religious Jew with two alternatives: he could blame himself for his misfortunes; or he could proclaim the death of the omnipotent Lord of history, reluctantly regarding the cosmos as hopelessly absurd and ultimately gratuitous.⁸⁴

For Rubenstein, the unacceptability of ascribing Jews’ sins as the reason for the murder leads him to declare the death of an almighty and benevolent God of history.

The 614th Commandment

In *God’s Presence in History*, Fackenheim addresses both the issues of the relationship of sin and suffering raised in Lamentations and the response that God is dead.

At the present time we are told, at one extreme, that Auschwitz is punishment for Jewish sins, and this is slander of more than a million innocent children in an abortive defense of God. At the opposite extreme, we are told that precisely because this slander is

⁸² In making this point about the absence of Jewish resistance to the Holocaust (which historical accounts themselves belie), Rubenstein seems to veer dangerously into the very victim-blaming that his argument seeks to avoid.

⁸³ Richard L. Rubenstein, *The Religious Imagination: A Study in Psychoanalysis and Jewish Theology* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), 127.

⁸⁴ Rubenstein, *The Religious Imagination*, 135.

inadmissible the God of history is impossible: a God concerned with Auschwitz must have decreed Auschwitz, and such a God is dead.⁸⁵

While for Fackenheim, neither alternative is acceptable, the biblical tradition presents possibilities for a third way that defiantly remains in relationship with God while also protesting the injustice of the treatment His people are experiencing:

Can Jewish protest today remain within the sphere of faith? Jeremiah protests against the prosperity of the wicked; we protest against the slaughter of the innocent. To Job children were restored; that the children of Auschwitz will be restored is a belief which we dare not abuse for the purpose of finding comfort...In faithfulness to the victims we must refuse comfort; and in faithfulness to Judaism we must refuse to disconnect God from the Holocaust.⁸⁶

Given the history of Lamentations' interpretation, Fackenheim does not directly reference Lamentations in his litany of biblical protest. However, Fackenheim seems to allude to Lamentations (and Jeremiah 31:15) in his statement that "we must refuse comfort." Here, Zion's voice re-emerges, however briefly, in Fackenheim's formulation of an alternative theological response to suffering. From this point, Fackenheim postulates the 614th commandment of Judaism, which forbids giving Hitler a posthumous victory by murdering the Jewish faith (through abandonment of belief in God).⁸⁷

The Hidden Face of God

In *Faith after the Holocaust*, Berkovitz, like Fackenheim, attempts to combat the seeming inevitability of "God is dead" theology. He draws upon the concept of *haster panim*, the "hiding of [God's] face," to express the reality of God's apparent absence during the Holocaust. While holding that God's prior revelations are undeniable, Berkovitz maintains that God's temporary

⁸⁵ Emil L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections* (New York: New York University Press, 1970), 30.

⁸⁶ Fackenheim, *God's Presence*, 76.

⁸⁷ Fackenheim, *God's Presence*, 79.

absence allows humans, even cruel humans, to exercise their free will. For him, this argument rules out the contentions both that God is dead and that the suffering of the Holocaust was a consequence of human sin:

It is possible for a human being to lose faith in God. But it is not possible for God to die. He either is and therefore, will ever be; or he is not, and, therefore, never was. But if God who was, is, and will ever be, is it possible that at Auschwitz he rejected Israel, he turned away from Israel as a punishment for its sins. To believe this would be a desecration of the Divine name. No matter what sins of European Jewry might have been, they were human failings. If the Holocaust was a punishment, it was a thousandfold inhuman.⁸⁸

Here, Berkovitz tacitly rejects the dominant strain of Lamentations' interpretation as reinforcing the doctrine of suffering as a consequence of sin, which Rubenstein cites explicitly. Zion's voice silenced, Lamentations does not appear to be a theologically useful resource to construct a theology that does not implicate victims.

Poetry in Light of the Shoah

During the Shoah itself, certain poetic sources arose that closely recall the protesting voice which Daughter Zion brings to Lamentations. Shoshana Kalisch's *Yes We Sang: Songs of Ghettos and Concentration Camps* powerfully anthologizes some of these works, including compositions, especially those sung with female voices, that recall Daughter Zion. In particular, "Di Nakht" (The Night), a Yiddish song by Liuba Levitska in the Vilna ghetto after massacres in January 1942, strongly brings to mind the portrayal of Daughter Zion in Lamentations. In translation, the lyrics of the song are:

There's no one with me in the night,
Darkness alone is with me.
On roads obscured by darkness dense,
Hollow stillness all that I can sense--

I go: long is my way,
The clouded night does not hear.

⁸⁸ Eliezer Berkovitz, *Faith After the Holocaust* (New York: KTAV, 1973), 139.

Where? Where? Ask the rhythm of your steps.
No answer comes to my ear.

There's no one with me in the night;
Darkness alone is with me.
On and on in lonely despair--
But where, silent roads, where?⁸⁹

An audience familiar with Lamentations can quickly identify many echoes in “Di Nakht” with the characterization and speech of Daughter Zion in Lamentations 1-2. Like the speaker in the poem, Daughter Zion “sits alone,” with references to “night” parallel to the “darkness” and “night” of the poem. The “roads” to Zion mourn in Lamentations, and are spookily obscured by gloom in “Di Nakht.” Lamentations bears the refrain of “no comfort,” just as “there’s no one with me” in “Di Nacht.” These numerous parallels suggest a strong allusive relationship between “Di Nacht” and Lamentations.

However, such a close connection with Lamentations in Shoah and post-Shoah poetry is rare. Few poetic works emerged in the decade immediately after Shoah that explicitly address the Shoah itself. In the wake of the Holocaust, even the role of poetry as lament comes into question; there has been an increasing sense of the “futility of poetry as communication.”⁹⁰ Theodor W. Adorno goes so far as to claim the complicity of poetry and other forms of cultural criticism within the reification of mind and culture that is an offshoot of fascism. He writes, “Even the most extreme consciousness of doom threatens to degenerate into idle chatter. Cultural criticism

⁸⁹ Mikhl Gelbart and Aaron Domnits, “Di Nakht,” trans. Shoshana Kalisch with Barbara Meister, *Yes, We Sang! Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1985), 7.

⁹⁰ Mintz, *Hurban*, 154.

finds itself faced with the final stage of the dialectic of culture and barbarism. To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.”⁹¹

Paul Celan, a prominent German-language poet writing in the post-World War II period, makes a daring claim in his poem, “Whichever Stone You Lift”:

Whichever word you speak--
you owe to
Destruction.⁹²

Poetry, as a testimony of traumatic experience, owes existence to catastrophe, and yet relays this traumatic experience in a fragmented manner.⁹³ In this way, Wolfson draws the comparison between Celan’s poetry and that of Lamentations.⁹⁴ The inadequacy of poetry to reflect the devastating nature of destruction remains a pressing problem in post-Holocaust literature, figuring prominently in Malka Heifetz Tussman’s “In Spite.” Though without Bialik’s dangerous veering into shaming victims of catastrophe, Tussman shares the reservation that expressing her lament would lend additional power to her persecutors:

Simple.
In spite of the destroyers,
To spite them I will not cry openly,
I will not write down my sorrow

⁹¹ Theodor W. Adorno, “Cultural Criticism and Society,” in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber, 9th printing (MIT Press, 1997), 34. Adorno’s statement must be contextualized within his broader analysis of cultural criticism. He argues that cultural criticism uses the same tools as the culture it critiques and leads to a reification of mind and culture, commodifying both. Thus, poetry about catastrophe can be seen as making use of the very cultural distortions that led to human suffering in the first place.

⁹² Paul Celan, *Selected Poems and Prose of Paul Celan*, ed. and trans. John Felstiner (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 71.

⁹³ Leah A. Wolfson, “A Path Through the Abyss: Re-Inventing Testimony Through Holocaust Survivor Poetry, Memoir, and Video Oral Histories” (PhD diss., Emory University, 2008), 31.

⁹⁴ Wolfson, *A Path Through the Abyss*, 38.

On paper.⁹⁵

Given the inadequacies of poetry to address the Holocaust, and, furthermore, the complex issue of associating Holocaust and Lamentations, it is perhaps surprising that poetic afterlives of Daughter Zion exist at all within Jewish post-Shoah theology. However, Linafelt goes too far when he claims, “The intense and imaginative exegetical impulse to supplement Lamentations 1 and 2 has all but died out; one looks in vain for recent poetic, literary, or theological works that attend to Zion’s unanswered accusations to God...”⁹⁶

For some writers, poetry, especially poetry including a maternal voice, has provided a unique outlet to ensure the survival of testimony. In *Gendered Testimonies of the Holocaust*, Petra M. Schweitzer explores how, for both male and female writers, the presence of maternal imagery could embody the continuation of life even in the face of utter annihilation. Among the authors she explores, male writers tended to favor poetry as a medium for their testimony, while female accounts were more likely to appear in prose. For Schweitzer, the poetic form allowed the male writers to take on a “female” role of participating in the creative process of life-continuation; the male writers “embed the female presence with the poetic voice.”⁹⁷ The maternal poetic voice allows even men to transcend limiting constructions of gender as they transmit survivor testimony: “Thus, in female as well as male writing, the figure of the mother’s voice describes the poetic voice as well as that which lucidates the will to love or the affirmation

⁹⁵ Malka Heifetz Tussman, “In Spite,” in *Truth and Lamentation: Stories and Poems on the Holocaust*, ed. Milton Teichman and Sharon Leder (Urbana: University of Indiana Press, 1994), 492-493.

⁹⁶ Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations*, 134.

⁹⁷ Petra M. Schweitzer, *Gendered Testimonies of the Holocaust: Writing Life* (Boulder: Lexington Books, 2016), 21.

of life.”⁹⁸ This potential of poetry to preserve uniquely maternal voices of dissent gives it the distinctive potential to echo Daughter Zion’s voice.

Amidst the general paucity of modern survivals of Daughter Zion, a poem by Yehuda Leib Bialer stands out. Bialer includes an exhortation for a female personification of Israel to lament:

Lament, lament, my soul; cry out
and mourn, O Daughter of Israel,
in eulogy, in howls of grief,
for the flames have consumed Israel.⁹⁹

This invocation of Daughter of Israel as the mourning figure closely recalls the role of Daughter Zion within Lamentations. As in Lamentations, particular attention is paid to the fate of children. Recalling the endangered children in Lamentations, the poet mourns “for the newborn babes, for the nursing infants,/ crushed and dismembered against the cruel stones.” The poem begins and ends with this stanza as a refrain, suggesting that, as in Lamentations, the woman refuses to be comforted; there is no way to recall children who have been murdered. Bialer is able to read Lamentations in light of the Holocaust because he has turned his focus to the maternal voice of the book.

While not directly invoking Daughter Zion, Liliana Carrizo’s exploration of Iraqi Jewish *dililōl*, original, sung compositions lamenting a state of exile, recalls Lamentations. As Carrizo notes, the three-line verse structure of the *dililōl* strongly echoes the structuring of Lamentations.¹⁰⁰ Here, as in Lamentations, the poetic voice is often gendered as female. While

⁹⁸ Schweitzer, *Gendered Testimonies*, 21.

⁹⁹ Translation Tzvi Herh Weinreb, *Mesorat Harav Kinot* (Jerusalem: Loren, 2010), 628-32.

¹⁰⁰ Liliana Carrizo, “Exiled Nostalgia: Songs of Grief, Joy, and Tragedy Among Iraqi Jews” (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2018), 56.

female gendering allows these laments to be voiced, it also contributes to the “endangered” status of the songs:

Another layer of shame associated with female musicality can be found in the Jewish prohibition against hearing women’s voices, *qol isha*, where the sound of a woman’s voice is also associated with some level of social impropriety...The continued performance of these private songs maintains an ideological continuity associated with older musical forms that help individuals articulate taboo sentiments—ranging from joyful to shameful and even traumatic experiences—in socially acceptable ways.¹⁰¹

This consequence of Daughter Zion continues to provide an outlet for crucial emotional expression, despite its associations with shame.

Finally, a generation of 20th century woman poets returned to the biblical tradition of personifying the city/land as a woman. They do not merely replicate the biblical imagery, but instead, as Chana Kronfeld writes, “powerfully upend the gender dynamics by placing the female speaker in the male poet/prophet’s place. Often, though not always, they develop the Land-as-Mother metonymic entailment of the metaphorical system.”¹⁰² Thus, Daughter Zion regains subjectivity, but this time, not as the representation of a woman seen through male eyes, but through a queer, homoerotic lens offered by the female poet. Esther Raab’s 1928 poem, “Tel Aviv,” illustrates this movement in modern Hebrew women’s poetry:

Tel Aviv¹⁰³

How shall I weep and there is no tear.
With mincing steps, with rebellious feet
upon the sand of your soil – you.
Neither threshing floor nor olive,
worthless garden beds
you squeeze out here,

¹⁰¹ Carrizo, *Exiled Nostalgia*, 24.

¹⁰² Chana Kronfeld, *Rewriting the Land as a Woman*. The University of California, Berkeley, 2019.

¹⁰³ Esther Raab, “Tel Aviv,” Written in 1928. Included in *Kimshonim* [Thistles], 1930; *Kol ha-shirim* [Collected Poems], 15. Translated by Chana Kronfeld, *Re-Writing the Land as a Woman*.

and cement-blocks
on your skinny bust.
Your evenings still spray down some
star-juice or sea-lubricant;
I'll cling at evening to the edges of your hills,
like an arid weeping weed.

As Kronfeld notes, the allusions to Lamentations are readily accessible. The first word of Lamentations, "Eykha," figures here as the first word of the poem. Raab deploys the exilic language of Lamentations in an unexpected, subversive way that challenges Zionist idealization of Israel. The abandonment of the natural world which the poet laments amounts to the abandonment of a female lover, Daughter Zion. Tel Aviv, "the secular Zion," receives her condemnation for not living up to the natural beauty of Zion's ideal. This feminist reclamation of the personification of Daughter Zion, one that celebrates her open and luscious sexuality, represents a major shift in her history of consequences.

Conclusion

Within Jewish traditions, the recession of Daughter Zion's active speaking role continues, with a few significant exceptions within poetry. While women's lament figures prominently in *LamRab*, this mourning forms the basis for God's own response to disaster, while it eclipses female voices. Meanwhile, *LamRab* forges a strong causal relationship between suffering and sin, which comes to dominate Lamentations' interpretation. Poetic afterlives of Daughter Zion in the late Antique and Medieval periods, though they faced criticism, offer creative approaches to the question of suffering and preserve Daughter Zion's voice. Both Qallir's *piyyutim* and medieval martyrdom poems present Daughter Zion in a much more positive and involved role than most of Lamentations' consequences. With the overall erasure of Daughter Zion's voice, this complexity in dealing with suffering and sin is lost. The modern association with the facile

suffering-to-sin theology meant that Lamentations fell out of favor as resource for response to catastrophe. Responses to the Holocaust, for example, by-and-large avoid the pain that invoking a victim-blaming Lamentations would cause. However, in modern women's poetry, the figure of Daughter Zion has experienced revival through interrogation of the traditional patriarchal dismissal of her.

Ch. VI

Virginizing a Sullied Woman: Christian Consequences of Daughter Zion

Introduction

Many strands of Christian traditions marginalize Daughter Zion's role in Lamentations, focusing instead on the suffering "man" of Lamentations 3, who comes frequently to be identified with Jeremiah or Jesus Christ.¹ The speaking voice of Daughter Zion is absorbed into that of Jeremiah as the LXX-decreed narrator of Lamentations. Daughter Zion herself becomes emblematic of sin, especially sexual promiscuity. Such a besmirched figure has no authority to protest against injustice, divine or otherwise. Thus, Daughter Zion's articulate and strident remarks largely disappear from Christian representations of Lamentations. For traditions working with access to the Hebrew text of Lamentations, this elision of Lamentations may be regarded as more intentional, while for those with the Septuagint as their "Bible," the erasure of Daughter Zion occurs as an unfolding consequence of the Septuagint's position of Jeremiah. Regardless, with the increasing resistance to the view that sin is primarily responsible for human suffering, Lamentations does not figure significantly in Christian responses to trauma.

While Daughter Zion's explicit appearances as a positive figure in Christian reception are few and far between, portrayals of the Virgin Mary as a lamenting mother draw upon the tropes of Daughter Zion's lament. Given the Mesopotamian roots of Lamentations' Woman Zion that I have already explored, this linkage makes sense. Kramer even applies Marian language to

¹ Not all commentators view these figures as separate entities; see for instance, Ulrich Berges, "Kann Zion Männlich Sein? - Klgl 3 'Literarisches Drama' und 'Nachexilische Problemdichtung,'" in *Basel und Bibel': Collected Communications to the XVIIth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Basel 2001*, ed. Matthais Austin and Hermann Michael Niemann (New York: Peter Lang, 2001).

goddess figures of ancient Sumerian lament, using the epithet *mater dolorosa* in conjunction with the goddesses.² However, Kramer does not explicitly analyze the fitting nature of his title in connection to the Virgin Mary.

Mary can take up Daughter Zion's lament while, through her claimed virginity, she insulates tradition from gendered reproach. Unlike Daughter Zion, Mary is not the subject of blame for her son's death. While the city-woman's enemies comment that Zion "did not remember her descendants" (Lam. 1:9), Mary is the quintessential mother figure. While Daughter Zion is sexually tainted through her taking of lovers and punishing rape, Mary is sexually pure; while her unwed pregnancy could have been the cause of rebuke, the account of the annunciation clears her name by establishing the Holy Spirit's sexless paternity. Especially in poetic representations of Mary, which embellish upon biblical accounts to put a sustained lament into Mary's mouth, Mary echoes Lamentations' Daughter Zion.

Early Attitudes Towards Lament Poetry

Greek Writers

Lamentations' marginality in Christian tradition, especially in Western traditions, derives from a widespread suspicion of lament. The root of this phenomenon has its origin in the pre-Christian classical era. Margaret Alexiou and Gail Holst-Warhaft examine the process of women's erasure from lament in classical Athens and other Greek city-states, which represents a major shift from women's centrality in pre-classical lament.³ Non-spontaneous and highly stylized laments led by female singers were the centerpiece of pre-classical funerals. However,

² Kramer, "The Weeping Goddess," 71.

³ Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in the Greek Tradition*. Gail Holst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

with the movement against lament signaled by Solon's fifth century ban of the practice, in lament's place emerged the *epitaphios logos*, the funeral oration, a prose piece delivered by a man. Rather than an unfettered outpouring of emotion typical of poetic laments, the *epitaphios logos* was directed mainly towards praising the "glorious dead" for their involvement in fighting and dying for the city of Athens. This speech was not given by friends or relatives of the deceased, but rather by a representative of the state, confirming the political nature of the *epitaphios*.⁴ Holst-Warhaft argues that this de-centering of women's voices was quite deliberate. She writes, "It is not enough that women, who have traditionally played a prominent role in the rites for the dead, are to be removed from the center to the periphery of the funeral. It is as if they have died themselves, and are no longer to speak but to be spoken of."⁵

Just as the emotion of classical Greek lament eventually found outlet in the more acceptable, male-dominated prose composition, so the form of early Christian lament underwent a transition as well, positioning the Virgin Mary as lamenter-in-chief. Holst-Warhaft writes,

Similarly, the early Christian fathers may have diverted the subversive potential of private mourning, controlled by women, into the central focus of a ritual controlled by male priests in which the Virgin's lament for her dead son becomes a symbolic substitution for worshippers' personal grieving.⁶

While I acknowledge the male regulation of these forms of discourse, I believe Holst-Warhaft dismisses too quickly the female voices at the root of Mary's lament. Even though Mary's chastity undergoes policing by male church leaders, at its root lies the figure of Daughter Zion in Lamentations. Daughter Zion resists male-centered explanations of suffering in such a way that, as I have argued, we can understand her lament as "women's writing." Rather than completely

⁴ Holst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices*, 120.

⁵ Holst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices*, 121.

⁶ Holst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices*, 6.

annihilating women's voices, Christian writers allowed lament to flow from a female less morally tainted than Daughter Zion. While Daughter Zion's status as an "unclean" woman, at fault both for the destruction of Jerusalem and the brutal assault on her person, make her a risky bearer of lament, the Virgin Mary's complete purity makes her cries relatively acceptable.

However, even portrayals of the lamenting Virgin have had to contend with major Christian skepticism towards lament. Public lamentation was often perceived as a rude display with pagan overtones anathema to Christian practice. The funeral procession was one of the foremost spheres in which this Western Christian distaste for lament came to be manifested. Some Christian theologians opposed lament even in funerals on the grounds of its "irrationality" and polytheistic roots.⁷

Additionally, the influence of stoicism upon early Christian thought contributes to the widely-held negative attitudes towards lament. I extend Judith Perkins' argument on the influence of Stoicism on Christian romance to the lament genre, due to the Stoic attitude towards emotions. As Perkins writes, "A central tenet of Stoicism was the control of emotions; Stoics projected as the goal of the virtuous person...a life without passions (defined as violent movements of the soul)."⁸ For Epictetus and Seneca, suicide is an acceptable option when one determines that the misery of life is too much to bear; death is a welcome friend that can help one in the control of the passions: "Death is preferable to complaint or prolonged sorrow, although acceptance of whatever life brings is best."⁹ The complaints implicit in lament could not lend themselves to this philosophy.

⁷ Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament*, 29.

⁸ Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (New York: Rutledge, 1995), 79.

⁹ Perkins, *The Suffering Self*, 94

Basil of Caesarea and John Chrysostom emerged as two of the most outspoken critics of lament. These men strongly gendered their invective against lament, arguing against the practice of ritual lamentation as a pagan office. In *de Gratiarum Actione*, Basil remarked,

Therefore neither men nor women should be permitted too much lamentation and mourning. They should show moderate distress in their affliction, with only a few tears, shed quietly and without moaning, wailing, or tearing of clothes and groveling in the dust, or committing any other indecency commonly practiced by the ungodly (PG 31.229c).¹⁰

John Chrysostom addresses his critique of lament to females in particular:

What are you doing, woman? Tell me, would you shameless strip yourself naked in the midst of the marketplace, you, who are part of Christ, in the presence of men and in the very marketplace? And would you tear your hair, rend your garments, and wail loudly, dancing and preserving the image of Bacchic women, without regard for your offense to God? (PG 59.346)¹¹

Lament, then, becomes not only an affront to Christian tradition, but an insult to God himself, particularly perpetrated by women.

Among the Cappadocian fathers, Gregory of Nyssa's aesthetic of grief particularly foregrounds women's lament. The Nyssen generally advises barring oneself to grief via "spiritual and corporeal virginity," which prevents the "porosity" of femininity from devastating a person.¹² Excessive lamentation can indicate a lack of hope in God to accomplish believers' resurrection. While grief can strike men or women, Gregory emphasizes the female nature of grief when he describes the forbearance of Macrina, Gregory's sister and a holy woman responsible for the founding of an urban ascetic community, against lament on the occasion of her brother's death. Though saddened, she withheld from acting in an "ignoble and womanish

¹⁰ Qtd. in Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament*, 28.

¹¹ Qtd. in Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament*, 29.

¹² Rachel Smith, "Lamentation and Annunciation: The Maternal and Virginal in Eastern Christian Theologies of Grief," in *Theology and Sexuality* 19, no. 3 (2013): 267.

fashion so as to cry out against the evil or tear her clothes or lament over her suffering or stir up a threnody of mournful melodies.”¹³ Generally, then, lament is not encouraged, as overwhelming sadness is to be overcome.

However, in the *Life of Macrina*, in particular, grief emerges briefly as a spiritually condoned force. Macrina suffers from a terminal illness. During the course of her illness, she ministers to her virgin companions and Gregory himself, counseling them to stay away from grief and place their hope in the eternal soul that will join with God following the welcome, fleshly death. However, once Macrina dies, the virgins and Gregory weep copiously. Gregory deems this grief “just and reasonable” given the loss of Macrina as a mediator of divine hope. Albeit short-lived, this positive portrayal of women in grief differs starkly from commonly found patristic attitudes.

In contrast to earlier patristic censure of lament, Gregory the Great’s comments about it, though not overwhelmingly positive, seem rather tame. In *Moralia on Job*, Gregory cites Lamentations seventeen times, though not engaging with the figure of Zion. While lamentation can be a proper expression of repentance, it must also be explored with caution, for it could reveal a lack of reliance on God for strength:

‘Cocytus’ in the Greek tongue is the term for ‘lamentation,’ which is used to be taken for the lamentation of women, or any persons going weakly...let us see that in the utterance of the holy man ‘Cocytus’ means the lamentation of the weak sort. For it is written ‘be of good courage, and let your heart be strengthened.’ [Ps. 31, 24]. For they who refuse to be ‘strengthened’ in God, are going the way to lamentation through weakness of the mind.”¹⁴

Once again, lamentation is a gendered practice, stigmatized through its association with women.

¹³ Gregory of Nyssa, “On the Soul and the Resurrection,” translated by Virginia Woods Callahan, in *St. Gregory of Nyssa: Ascetical Works* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 199), 198.

¹⁴ Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job*, translated by John Henry Parker and J. Rivington, (London and Oxford, 1844), 504.
<http://www.lectionarycentral.com/GregoryMoraliaComplete.pdf>.

Syriac Writers on Emotional Expression

While emotional expression in general is a broader category than lament in particular, a tolerance towards expression of emotion indicates that, in the Syriac tradition, Daughter Zion's unrestrained lament fared better than within the Greek and Latin traditions. Thus, I will briefly survey attitudes towards tears in general. The accepting attitude in the Syriac tradition towards emotional expression seems to originate from a theology of the body as part of salvation history rather than apart from it. Hannah Hunt writes,

The body is not merely a vehicle for the soul; because it is an integral part of the human person, it reflects the saving power of the Incarnation, in which a fully divine, fully human Christ took on human flesh in order to redeem it. Mourning for sins...was a participation in the sufferings of Christ who became incarnate for the sake of sinful humanity.¹⁵

While some Syriac writers, such as Isaac of Nineveh, display a more cautious attitude towards mourning and lament, others, especially Ephrem the Syrian, embrace women's tears, especially in the Gospels.

Isaac of Nineveh writes that, within the spiritual journey, the body, ruled by its passions, lies at the most elementary stage. Next comes fasting and prayer, but the demands of the body still limit these efforts. Finally, "knowledge" lies at the highest level, where exquisite knowledge of God's providence becomes available and the body's demands are no longer an issue. Weeping can occur at any of the levels, and the level in which the tears fall and the tears' nature determines their quality.¹⁶ Thus, while tears may be commendable in certain instances, tears caused by "passions" are baser than those falling from knowledge. The penitential tears

¹⁵ Hannah Hunt, *Joy-Bearing Grief: Tears of Contrition in the Writings of the Early Syrian and Byzantine Fathers* (Boston: Brill, 1999), 105.

¹⁶ Hunt, *Joy-Bearing Grief*, 155.

shed under the passions are bitter, but those shed under knowledge are “sweet and involuntary.”¹⁷ These final tears lead one directly into God’s presence.¹⁸

Isaac’s more cautionary approach to tears contrasts with Ephrem’s embrace of them, especially when shed by women. Ephrem regards the mourning of women in the New Testament, especially the weeping woman of Luke who anoints Jesus’ feet, as “externaliz[ing] a profound internal knowledge, and in so doing provides a uniquely female exegesis of the mystery of Christ and his power to save, enacted through the physicality of human bodies.”¹⁹ Ephrem regards tears as the healing waters of baptism:

Insofar as tears are found in our eyes,
we will blot out with our tears the letter of bondage of our sins...
Who gives us [the possibility] that by visible things
an invisible would may be healed? (lines 12-15)²⁰

Despite tears’ association with femininity, Ephrem believes that weeping is effective and necessary for healing the human condition. Thus, the more general acceptance of emotional expression, including weeping, as a vehicle for physical and spiritual transformation suggests a counter-narrative to the rejection of Daughter Zions’ outcry in Lamentations found in Western Christian traditions.

Daughter Zion in Patristic and Medieval Commentary on Lamentations

Patristic Commentaries

Lamentations was not a core text of patristic or medieval interpreters, who associated Lamentations with Jeremiah and treated Lamentations as an appendix to the Major Prophets.

¹⁷ Hunt, *Joy-Bearing Grief*, 156

¹⁸ Hunt, *Joy-Bearing Grief*, 157.

¹⁹ Hunt, *Joy-Bearing Grief*, 105.

²⁰ Saint Ephrem, “Hymn 46” in *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*, translated by Kathleen E. McVey (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 450.

Little patristic interpretation of Lamentations dwells specifically on the voice of Zion.²¹ Instead, Lam 3, which offers the potential to engage the “man” as a prefiguring of Jesus Christ, and Lam 4:20, read as a forecasting of Christ’s *parousia*, are the greatest points of interest. Insofar as Lamentations 1-2 appears in patristic interpretation, it demonstrates God’s didactic use of pain as a consequence for sin. Zion’s suffering, when it is noted, highlights how the experience of divinely-inflicted suffering leads a person to repentance from grievous sin, through which the hope of forgiveness appears. This remedial role of suffering appears prominently in Clement of Alexandria’s *Christ the Educator* and Ambrose’s *Concerning Repentance*.

Origen wrote the earliest known commentary of Lamentations, known only through Byzantine catenae. Fragment 1 of Origen’s Lamentations commentary opens with a foregrounding of Jeremiah: “Jeremiah, while the people are captive in Babylon, makes his lamentations over the city, the country, and the people because of what has happened” (I).²² While beginning with the historical meaning of the text, Origen extrapolates the allegorical level as well, with Jerusalem representing the “divine soul.” However, she has fallen captive to the “hostile powers” of sin and thus Christ has deserted her, leaving her a “widow” (VIII).²³

²¹ A broader range of patristic literature touching upon Lamentations exists than I discuss in depth here. However, these materials use verses of Lamentations as a means to illustrate other theological points rather than considering Lamentations as an end in itself. Among the authors who cite Lamentations 1-2 in this way are Athanasius of Alexandria, Clement of Alexandria, Didymus of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianus, Eusebius of Caesaria, and Ambrosius Mediolanensis. In future work, I will explore the diversity of patristic perspectives represented here with greater nuance.

²² Origen, “Commentary on Lamentations,” qtd. in Joseph W. Trigg, *Origen*, 74. Trans. Erich Kostlmann, *Commentary on Lamentations*, GCS 6, rev. Pierre Nautin (Berlin, 1983), 235-279.

²³ Origen, “Commentary on Lamentations,” 75.

Jerusalem has “degraded herself” by forgetting the “great things” that constitute her true identity (XXIII).²⁴

Thus, Daughter Zion’s emotionality becomes part and parcel of her sinfulness. For Origen, Jerusalem’s surrender to emotionality has brought about divine abandonment. He writes, “Moreover, having abandoned the reason within her so as to be wholly dominated by the passions, she has lost her helper, the one always arming her against distress” (XXV).²⁵ As Zion in all of her emotionality appears to him incapable of speaking, Origen must struggle to identify the speaker in the latter half of Lamentations 1 (the part typically identified by contemporary commentators as spoken by Zion herself). Origen considers, “It is possible that, ‘See, Lord, my humility’ is spoken figuratively by the reason that subsists in the soul, dishonored and humiliated, having lost, so to speak, its proper dominion” (XXV).²⁶ Zion herself remains mute, her “passions” too great to deliver the dialogue herself.

In his *Moralia in Iob*, Gregory the Great masculinizes the figure of Jerusalem by suggesting that her “cheeks” in 1:2 are the preachers of the church.²⁷ Furthermore, he interprets the great sorrow of Lam 1:12 as Jeremiah’s: “For they who do not pass through the present life like a way, but think on it as their country, are unskilled to take in with the mind’s eye the sorrow of the heart of the elect.”²⁸ Gregory takes a quite negative view of Zion, claiming that in Jeremiah’s reference to her solitude in Lam 1:1, he refers to “a barrenness of goodness.”²⁹

²⁴ Origen, “Commentary on Lamentations, 78.

²⁵ Origen, “Commentary on Lamentations,” 79.

²⁶ Origen, “Commentary on Lamentations,” 79.

²⁷ Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job* 452.

²⁸ Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job*, 502.

²⁹ Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job*, 651

One of Jerome's letters to the elder Paula constitutes another substantial Patristic source on Lamentations. However, instead of directly explicating verses from Lamentations themselves, Jerome merely interprets the significance of each letter of the alphabetic acrostic. The meanings of the letters which Jerome explains have little to do with the content of the book itself. He writes,

After the translation of Lamentations' acrostic, the order of the understanding should be spoken. The first 'the doctrine of the home is the fullness of the tablets there,' that is, the teaching of the church which is the house of God is found in the fullness of divine books. The second sequence is that 'and this [is] life,' for what life could there be without knowledge of the scriptures through which even Christ is known, who is the life of the believers? (6-7)³⁰

Thus, Jerome does not substantially treat the text of Lamentations in its own right.

Zion is largely absent from the interpretive work of most patristic interpreters. The vast majority of early Christian interpretation of Lamentations focuses on the connection of Christ to the book. For Irenaeus, writing in *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, the linkage of Christ to the "man" is "not typological or allegorical but *prophetic* at root."³¹ Irenaeus crafts a concept of the Suffering Servant, who is for him a prophetic description of Jesus, through a melding of quotations from Isaiah with a quotation from Lamentations 3:30: "He shall give his cheek to the smiter: he shall be filled with reproaches."³² Similarly, Rufinus cites Lam. 3:53

³⁰ Jerome, *A Letter from Jerome* (384), *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, ed. Isidorus Hilberg, 3 v. (New York: Johnson, 1970, repr.1910-18), ep.30. Accessed Dec. 16, 2019. <https://epistolae.ctl.columbia.edu/letter/278.html>.

³¹ Heath A. Thomas, "Lamentations in the Patristic Period," *Great is thy Faithfulness? Reading Lamentations as Sacred Scripture*, ed. Robin A. Parry and Heath A. Thomas (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2011). Kindle edition.

³² Irenaeus, *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, paragraph 68. Ed. Robinson, Armitage, D.D. (New York: The McMillan Co., 1920). Accessed February 5, 2018. <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/irenaeus/demonstr.html>

(“They have cut off my life in the pit and laid a stone upon me”) as prophesying Christ’s death and burial.³³

Lam. 4:20 also figures in many patristic interpreters’ Christological constructions, as commentators used it to “witness to spiritual and divine natures of Christ,” anticipate the day of Christ’s coming, and proclaim Christ’s lordship over the earth.³⁴ Rufinus cites Lam. 4:20 in this way, claiming that Christian believers “live under his shadow among the nations” even while Jews continue in their unbelief.³⁵ Thus, while patristic commentators may cite Lamentations 3 and 4 to make Christological argumentations, the portions of the book in which Zion’s voice figures are largely unnoticed.

Medieval Commentaries

Two major commentaries from the Carolingian period constitute most of extant medieval exegesis of Lamentations. Rabanus Maurus, archbishop of Mainz, produced the first full Latin commentary on Lamentations, followed about ten years later by Paschasius Radbertus. Unlike other works by these medieval commentators, which could draw heavily on prior exegetes’ interpretations of the biblical book in question, Rabanus and Radbertus were largely forced to produce interpretations drawing upon commentaries of other biblical books rather than commentaries of Lamentations itself.³⁶ Both Hrabanus and Radbertus extrapolated that a central theme of Lamentations was the Jews’ punishment for Jesus’s death through the destruction of

³³ Rufinus, *A Commentary of Rufinus on the Apostle’s Creed*, translated by Ernest F. Morison (London: Methuen and Co., 1916), paragraph 27, p. 36 Accessed February 5, 2018. <https://archive.org/details/acommentaryonthe00rufiuoft>

³⁴ Rufinus, *A Commentary*, 117.

³⁵ Rufinus, *A commentary*, paragraph 27, p. 28.

³⁶ Albert Bat-Sheva, “Anti-Jewish Exegesis in the Carolingian Period: The Commentaries on Lamentations of Hrabanus Maurus and Paschasius Radbertus,” in *Biblical Studies in the Early Middle Ages: Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Studies in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Claudio Leonardi and Giovanni Orlandi (Florence, IT: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2005): 179.

their temple.³⁷ Zion figures most significantly in their interpretations as the eternal city of soul, and Lamentations as a whole illustrates the fight of the soul against sin.³⁸

While Rabanus seems relatively uninterested in exploring Lamentations for its own sake, Radbertus's writing appears to have written from personal circumstances. Radbertus endured a self-imposed exile due perhaps to intra-community disputes, and for him, Lamentations figures as the prime example of the sorrow of God's absence.³⁹ Radbertus' interpretation is politically motivated; he reads Lamentations as a warning against corrupt religious leadership and empire.⁴⁰ A major commonality of these two interpreters concerns their treatment of the figure of Daughter Zion, or lack thereof. Both Rabanus and Radbertus deal mostly with Lamentations 3, compressing Lamentations 1-2 by comparison. Thus, the portions of the text in which Zion speaks receive less consideration than the "man's" monologue.

Daughter Zion in Western Christian Drama, Visual Art, and Liturgy

Drama

Biblical drama gained popularity in Western Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries with the shift in attention from political issues (especially the Crusades) to individual piety. Lynette R. Muir writes, "As a genre which combined art, literature, and popular piety, biblical drama could not fail to be influenced by this great revival of religious enthusiasm and the movement towards greater stress on the individual, on emotions and personal relationships..."⁴¹ This

³⁷ Bat-Sheva, "Anti-Jewish Exegesis," 179.

³⁸ E. Ann Matter, "The Lamentations Commentaries of Hrabanus Maurus and Paschasius Radbertus," *Traditio* 38 (1982): 149.

³⁹ Matter, "The Lamentations Commentaries," 151.

⁴⁰ Matter, "The Lamentations Commentaries," 156.

⁴¹ Lynette R. Muir, *The Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 4.

increased interest in individual personalities in scripture enhanced attention to the lives of Jesus and the Virgin Mary. However, this fervor was short-lived. Pioneered as it was by laypersons, the tightened control by Catholic Counter-Reformation and new Protestant leadership translated into a general decrease these plays.⁴² However, while these plays lasted, they offered powerful examples of Christian reception of Daughter Zion.⁴³

There are three ways in which these medieval dramas' portrayals of Mary recall Daughter Zion. First, Mary refuses to be comforted by her interlocutors, who attempt to pacify her to no avail. Second, Mary emphasizes her role as a human mother whose biological connection with her son fuels her mourning. Finally, Mary is not content with merely weeping: She mounts a protest against male spiritual authority (variously directed at John, the angel Gabriel, and Jesus himself, for his failure to address his mother's lament).

⁴² Muir, *The Biblical Drama*, 9.

⁴³ The question may emerge of how I distinguish between receptions of Lamentations' Daughter Zion and Rachel. While Daughter Zion is virtually invisible in most Christian reception, Rachel makes relatively more appearances. This difference is ironic, as Rachel's mourning figures in only one verse of the Hebrew Bible, while Daughter Zion's spans multiple chapters of Lamentations. The discrepancy is likely due to the reception of Rachel as a morally pure figure, sexually untainted, while Zion almost universally perceived as a sinful and sexually soiled. However, the absence of Zion's explicit mention does not bar her influence. Rather, though unnamed, Zion contributes to the fleshing-out of Rachel as a prototype of lamenting women in the Hebrew Bible, and she in turn gives way to Mary. Two primary characteristics of the Mary of medieval drama lead me to argue that she is a literary descendant of Daughter Zion as well as Rachel. Christian interpreters have re-read Rachel through the figure of Daughter Zion, resulting in a significant expansion of her role to resemble that of Zion. Though Rachel refuses to be comforted, she does not protest her children's removal to God. Zion, on the other hand, does so quite explicitly at certain points in Lamentations 1-2, as I have discussed. Second, though Jeremiah does portray Rachel as a lamenting woman in Jeremiah (31:15), the text promises the return of Rachel's children in short order, leading to the cessation of Rachel's weeping (31:16). However, Lamentations does not suggest that Zion's children can be returned. Similarly, though Mary in multiple cases of medieval drama seems aware of theological truth of the resurrection, the reality of Jesus' upcoming return does not affect the degree of her mourning. The real tragedy from Mary's perspective, Jesus' suffering and death, has already happened.

Mary remains inconsolable throughout her dramatic role within the crucifixion plays. John, Mary, Magdalene, and even Jesus himself attempt to comfort her, but as is repeated five times in Lamentations 1 in various forms, for her there is no comforter. At times, this attempt to comfort is rather gentle, as in *The Townley Play*, where John tries to console Mary by sharing his own grief as well: “Dere lady, well were me/If I might comfort the; for the sorrow that I see/ Sherys myn harte in sonder...” (23: 453-455).⁴⁴ However, the attempts to comfort her sometimes become harsh, as in the Digby play, in which Joseph and his companions try to oust Mary forcibly from the presence of Jesus’ body with a repeated, “Go we hence, Marye!”⁴⁵ However mild or unkind the attempts to comfort Mary, she remains inconsolable. In Mary’s last appearance in Play 32 of *The N-Town Play*, Mary promises that her weeping will continue perpetually, unless a God whose consolation has so far been absent appears to comfort her:

Now xal wepynge me fode and fede,
Som comferte tyll God sende.
A, my Lord God, I the pray,
Comferte thanne thyn handmay,
My care for to amende (Play 32, ln. 288-290).⁴⁶

The theological solutions offered are no substitute for her live son.

The Virgin Mary, like Zion, represents a theological motherhood that is far more encompassing than a human biological role. However, within the drama, as in Lamentations, the maternal capacities of the Virgin Mary are emphasized. In *The Digby Play*, Mary recalls at length the experience of breastfeeding the infant Jesus:

The modere, with the child desires for to reste;
Remembere, myn awn son, that ye sowket my breste!

⁴⁴ *The Townley Plays*, Vol. 1, ed. Martin Stevens and A.C. Cawley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 300.

⁴⁵ *The Digby Play*, ed. F.J. Furnivall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1882), 190.

⁴⁶ *The N-Towne Plays*, Cotton MS Vespasian D. 8, Vol. 1, ed. Stephen Spector (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1991), 335.

Remember when your fleshe was soft os tender silke,
With the grosse metes then yow I wold not fede,
But gaue yow the licour/ of a maydyns mylke...⁴⁷

Mary, like Daughter Zion and her consequences in Isaiah, has a tangible biological connection to the son she has lost. As she reflects on her role in nursing Jesus, her lament becomes highly relatable and sympathetic.

The relative freedom from Church regulation which medieval dramatists enjoyed manifests itself by Mary's unfettered protests in the dramas. In *The Townley Plays*, Mary's primary interlocutor is John, who repeatedly offers sympathy for Mary's sorrow, but quickly transitions into theological explanations for its necessity. However, Mary has no qualms about confronting male authority, interrupting John's monologues with far longer ones of her own. She even calls into question the integrity of the angel Gabriel's promises at the annunciation and asks for death. In *The Digby Play*, Mary protests Gabriel's incomplete telling at the Annunciation as well, noting that Gabriel conveniently omitted the pain of Jesus' future:

But ye told me not my son shuld dye,
Ne yit the thought & care
Of his bitter passion, which he suffert nowe.⁴⁸

In *The N-Town Plays*, Mary calls upon Jesus himself, protesting Jesus' lack of a response to her lament:

A, my sovereyn Lord, why whylt thou not speke
To me that I thi modyr, in peyn for thi wrong?
A hert, hert, why why lt thou not breke,
That I wore out of this sorwe so stronge! (N-Town Play 12, ln. 140-144)⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *The Digby Plays*, 197.

⁴⁸ *N-Towne Plays*, 188.

⁴⁹ *N-Towne Plays*, 330.

Jesus' response, following the Gospel account in which he presents Mary to John, seems inadequate to respond to the strength and authenticity of Mary's grief. However, Jesus' rebuke of Mary is mild compared to the chiding which she receives from the Magdalene and John, noting merely the theological necessity of his death rather than the incorrectness of Mary's lament. Mary never backs away from the strength of her claims. She does not appear again after Jesus' response to her, thus never negating her protest.

Visual Art

Visual art related to Lamentations focuses exclusively on Jeremiah; Heath A Thomas comments, "It would be interesting to see a reception of Lamentations in the visual arts with an explicit emphasis upon the persona of Daughter Zion but such a work is unknown."⁵⁰ Jeremiah appears to subsume the trope of the lamenting woman of Lamentations. Jeremiah's persona becomes that of the weeping prophet, while the Hebrew Lamentations' image of the weeping woman does not receive the same attention.⁵¹ In these artistic portrayals, Jeremiah appears as a central figure, often weeping or appearing meditative, and sometimes surrounded by members of the Jerusalem community. For example, while not explicitly associated with Lamentations, Michelangelo's Jeremiah looks particularly doleful from his perch in the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. However, Jeremiah in this portrayal is not actually weeping, though his mood cannot be said to be sunny. Jeremiah's sadness is muted compared to the outright weeping of Daughter Zion within Lamentations, as he is presented as philosophically processing his grief rather than

⁵⁰ Heath A. Thomas, "Lamentations in Rembrandt van Rijn," *Great is Thy Faithfulness?: Lamentations as Sacred Scripture*, ed. Robin A. Parry and Heath Thomas (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 154.

⁵¹ I am indebted to the codification of artwork found in Paul M. Joyce and Diana Lipton, *Lamentations Through the Centuries* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). Their reproduction of paintings clearly highlights the trope of Jeremiah as the weeping prophet, with Woman Zion conspicuously absent.

becoming mired in self-indulgent lamentation. This is also the case in Rembrandt van Rijn's *Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem* (1630), which Heath argues convincingly is a representation of Lamentations. Jeremiah does not appear to be weeping in this painting, adopting instead a morose but still meditative posture.⁵²

While Lamentations' Daughter Zion does not make obvious appearances in visual art, she makes her presence felt through depictions of the Virgin Mary, especially from the Medieval period. Marilyn Stokstad writes,

The ordeals of the fourteenth century—famines, wars, and plagues—helped inspire a mystical religiosity that emphasized both ecstatic joy and extreme suffering. The joys and sorrows of Mary became important themes, represented expressionistically in German Gothic art with almost cloying sweetness in nativity descriptions and excruciatingly graphic physical suffering in depictions of the crucifixion and the lamentation.⁵³

The emphasis on personal religious piety in the Late Medieval period manifested itself in visual art as well as drama. The *pietà* or *Vesperbild* (though this is a term coined in modern scholarship) emerged in the late Medieval period to commemorate Mary's mourning over Jesus' dead body. Northern Medieval *pietàs* portrayed Mary's grief as a raw, unfiltered passion, allowing, in cases, even Mary's face to be contorted in anguish. Joanna Zeigler argues that these Northern European portrayals of Mary drew inspiration from both Eastern icons of Mary and dramas: "There is no biblical reference to this event having taken place after the crucifixion, although texts from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such as the poems and laments of the Virgin in the vernacular, had probably come into play as sources."⁵⁴ This connection means that artists were, indirectly, drawing on the figure of Daughter Zion.

⁵² Thomas, "Lamentations in Rembrandt van Rijn," 158.

⁵³ Marilyn Stokstad, *Art History*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2005), 559.

⁵⁴ Joanna E. Ziegler, "Michelangelo and the Medieval *Pietà*: The Sculpture of Devotion or the Art of Sculpture?" *Gesta* 34, no. 1 (1995): 28-36.

The Röttgen Vesperbild represents a prime example of the dramatic portrayal of Mary within Gothic art. The work, carved from wood and 34 1/2" high, makes no attempt to beautify Mary or sentimentalize her encounter with her dead son. Instead, Mary gazes down tragically at Jesus' corpse, her angular face twisted in what almost appears to be a howl of grief. The portrayal of Mary here seems to absorb and visually represent the outspoken lament of the Virgins of medieval drama, who, like the lamenting women of the Hebrew Bible, refuse to sanitize their grief for the comfort of the men around them.

While Renaissance art maintained the content of the *pietà* (Mary's holding Christ's dead body), the emotional tenor changed significantly from Medieval art. Michelangelo's 1500 *pieta*, the most famous example of Renaissance representation of Mary in sculpture, portrays a flawless, serene Virgin, whose features are not marked by the agony depicted in Gothic representations. In fact, Michelangelo, though he builds on the Medieval works, takes a gendered approach in order to criticize the Northern medieval works. De Hollanda quotes Michelangelo as saying, "Flemish painting...will...please the devout better than any painting of Italy. It will appeal to women, especially the very old and the very young, and also to monks and nuns and to certain noblemen who have no sense of true harmony."⁵⁵ In contrast to the softer media used for Northern Late Medieval sculpture, which could be augmented or marred, depending on one's perspective, by impassioned devotional practices, Michelangelo used marble to match the Virgin's impassive serenity. Zeigler writes,

Of course marble embodies the sensibility of the Cinquecento, but by using it the artist avoided in principle the sculptural excesses and emotional anguish that so prominently identified the wood versions. Michelangelo did not incorporate the type or quantity of

⁵⁵ Qtd. in Zeigler, "Michelangelo," 32, cited in de Hollanda's first Roman dialogue in Fransisco de Hollanda, *Vier Gesprache uber die Malerie*, ed. J. de Vasconcellos (Vienna, 1899), fol. 104-104v, 28-29.

anecdotal details, which frequently explain the physical and psychological elaboration of northern examples.⁵⁶

Thus, the Medieval period represents the height of Medieval reception of Zion via sculptures of Mary.

With the advent of the Reformation, Daughter Zion moved even further into the shadows of interpretation, as Mary's role diminished in Protestant circles. As the Reformation targeted many aspects of Catholic faith, the Virgin's legacy fell victim as well.⁵⁷ The post-Reformation attitude towards the mourning Virgin transferred into a larger attitude towards lament in general. As Katherine Goodland observes, "Open expressions of grief were viewed as effeminate, 'heathenish,' and 'popish,' because such mourning suggested communicative links with the dead as well as with Rome and the medieval Catholic past." Furthermore, the practice of lamentation could seem to disavow belief in the resurrection.⁵⁸

Liturgy

The Roman Catholic tradition preserves some uses of Lamentations within its lectionary cycle, although to a limited extent. The twelfth week of ordinary time includes readings from Lamentations 2:2, 11-14, and 18-19, none of which includes a passage using Zion's voice. The thematic focus of these readings, according to Andrew Cameron-Mowat, is the "predicament of the people who have been punished for their sins."⁵⁹ In Zion's absence, the focus of the liturgy naturally seems to drift towards blaming victims for their suffering. However, in the Roman

⁵⁶ Ziegler, "Michelangelo," 33.

⁵⁷ Ziegler, "Michelangelo," 32.

⁵⁸ Katherine Goodland, *Female Mourning and Tragedy in Medieval and Renaissance Drama: From the Raising of Lazarus to "King Lear"* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005), 139.

⁵⁹ Andrew Cameron-Mowat SJ, "Lamentations and Christian Worship," in *Great is Thy Faithfulness: Reading Lamentations as Sacred Scripture*, ed. Robin A. Parry and Heath A. Thomas (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 139.

Catholic tradition, the most substantial use of Lamentations falls in Holy Week. Within the Tenebrae services of Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of Holy Week, Lamentations 1:10-14, which includes Zion's voice, figures prominently, alongside other verses, 2:8-11, 12-15, and 3:1-9 which, in Cameron-Mowat's estimation, especially "highlight the plight of women."⁶⁰ However, here, the suffering of Zion is ascribed to Jesus. Without a careful homiletic treatment that indicates that Jesus' suffering reflects instead of erases her pain, Daughter Zion herself is easily obliterated.

Daughter Zion's voice is even more greatly diminished within the Protestant Revised Common Lectionary. Lam 3:22-33, which includes a rare moment of comfort, may be read on the sixth Sunday after Pentecost (year B). The narrator's introduction to Lamentations, 1:1-6, may be read on the seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost (year C), which may once again be accompanied by 3:19-26. Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24 is one of the options for Holy Saturday readings in years A and C, but nowhere does a passage featuring Zion appear.⁶¹

Robin A. Parry argues for an expanded role of Lamentations in Christian worship in order to acculturate parishioners to mourn with others:

So liturgical engagement with Lamentations can, in principle, play a role in the training of Christian emotions—not simply expressing how we currently feel but training us to see and feel in certain kinds of way. The poetry presents the wretched figure of Lady Zion in her broken state--beaten, raped, and deprived of her beloved children...To inhabit this poetry is to learn to become sensitized to pain, to pay attention to the suffering of others, to eschew the option to walk by on the other side.⁶²

⁶⁰ Cameron-Mowat, "Lamentations," 141.

⁶¹ Revised Common Lectionary, Vanderbilt Divinity Library, <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu>. Accessed 6 November, 2019.

⁶² Robin A. Parry, "Wrestling with Lamentations in Christian Worship," in *Great is Thy Faithfulness: Reading Lamentations as Sacred Scripture*, ed. Robin A. Parry and Heath A. Thomas (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 193.

Full exercise of lament allows one not only to express one's personal woes, but to bear those of the community as well.

In many spheres of Western Christianity, there is a renewed movement to incorporate lament into worship. This new focus on lament is reflected in Evangelical circles, known traditionally for more celebratory worship with less emphasis on mourning, as well as mainline denominations. A recent dissertation by Ann Marie Ahrens of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, *Suffering, Soul Care, and Community: The Place of Corporate Lament in Evangelical Worship*, argues that the presentation of worship of both the Old and New Testaments demands reverence emanating from "a place of honesty," involving worship that is "sensitively crafted to provide soul care for those who weep as well as those who rejoice."⁶³

Daughter Zion in Orthodox Poetry, Visual Art, and Liturgy

Poetry

Orthodox poetry frequently preserves Mary's lament in poetic form with echoes of Daughter Zion's voice. In these poetic laments, Mary's unfettered expressions of grief are allowed to stand. However, from the perspective of other characters within the poems, her lamentation should be resolved through her acceptance of the theological necessity of Christ's death. Mary, like Daughter Zion, refuses to be comforted by the close of the hymn.

⁶³ Ann Marie Ahrens, "Suffering, Soul Care, and Community: The Place of Corporate Lament in Evangelical Worship" (PhD diss. *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (2017), 2.

One of the most striking examples of Mary's assimilation of the lament genre is Romanos the Melodist's *kontakion*, *Threnos Theotokou*.⁶⁴ Mary's status as *theotokos* situates her in a position in which lament is allowed. Dobrov writes,

If the "theo" part of Mary's relation to Christ is institutionalized and politically determined, the specifics of the second morpheme, i.e. *tokos*" ("giver of birth") are more available to the poet for creative manipulation. In our *kontakion*, I submit, Romanos situations the paradoxical and synthetic figure of the Theotokos within an archetypal structure of ritual lament involving a mother, in the company of other women, lamenting her dead son.⁶⁵

While I agree with Dobrov that the image of the Virgin presented in the poem is part of a larger, archetypal pattern of women mourning dead children, it is possible to go one step further to explore the origins of this archetypal image. While, as we have seen, the figure of a lamenting woman has cross-cultural breadth, it seems likely that Romanos himself could be influenced specifically by biblical images of the lamenting woman. In other words, we can ascertain that his familiarity with the lamenting women of the Old Testament, including Daughter Zion, filters into his portrayal of the Virgin.

In the *kontakion*, the perceived conflict between reason and emotion prominent in Christian interpretations of Lamentations becomes explicit. Jesus attempts to chide Mary for her emotional response to his death by claiming her emotion reveals a lack of theological understanding of the crucifixion. Furthermore, he genders his critique of Mary, arguing that her

⁶⁴ Written in the sixth century, the poetry bears witness to the theological struggles of Romanos' time, inevitable due to the close proximity of the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) and the accession of Anastasius I in Syrian Emesa. While these events helped to establish monophysitism as official doctrine, Romanos' poetry pointedly plays out the struggles surrounding these proceedings, especially prominent in the repeated use of Mary's refrain, "my son and my god." [Gregory W. Dobrov, "A Dialogue with Death: Ritual Lament and the *threnos theotokou* of Romanos Melodos," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 34.4 (1994), 391.]

⁶⁵ Dobrov, "A Dialogue," 392.

emotional, uninformed response is typical for women. Her emotion is problematic, because Mary, as her “Blessed” designation indicates, is meant to stand apart from other females:

Her son turned to her and spoke:
Why weep, Mother? Why be swept along with the other women? ... (4:3-4)
Cast your pain aside, my Mother, cast it away,
 It is not fit for you to mourn; you were hailed as ‘Blessed.’
 Do not shroud your hallowed title in sobs.
 Do not imitate those women who do not comprehend, all-wise Virgin (5:1-4).⁶⁶

However, Jesus’ critique of Mary here gives her insufficient credit. Mary properly acknowledges Jesus’ full humanity and divinity through the refrain, “My Son and My God.” Simultaneously, Mary refuses to overlook human tragedy for the sake of theological propriety. She claims that her emotions do not display a lack of knowledge, but rather a more intimate understanding of Jesus as she carried him in her womb and sustained his life as an infant:

The all-holy Mother now cried out such a reply to him,
 Him who inconceivably had been sown in her and born of her.
 Tormenting her soul even more, she said:
“Why say, my son, that I am not to be swept along with the others?
 As they carried children in their bodies,
 So did my womb carry you; I nursed you with my breasts.
How can you not want me to wail for you, my Son,
 As you hurry to undergo an unjust death,
 Even though you have raised the dead to life,
My Son and my God? (6:1-10)⁶⁷

Therefore, in Romanos’ portrayal, Mary’s voice highlights the connection between emotion and embodied experience (specifically, the female embodied experiences of pregnancy and nursing), while Jesus’ masculine voice highlights dispassionate theological reason. Masculinized reason, through its association with Jesus, holds the higher theological ground.

⁶⁶ R.J. Shork, *Sacred Song from The Byzantine Pulpit* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1995), 109.

⁶⁷ Shork, *Sacred Song*, 110.

Yet Romanos' poetry still permits the voice of a lamenting woman. This characteristic makes it distinct from most Christian commentary on Lamentations. Even though her disagreeing interlocutor is Jesus himself, the Virgin gives little sway to Jesus' position regarding the impropriety of lament. Dobrov writes, "At the poem's end, moreover, it becomes clear that Romanos' Virgin asserts her 'natural' right to mourn in an implicit rejection of any artificial theological resolution of the conflict."⁶⁸ For a moment, at least, female lament triumphs.

Visual Art

The Orthodox tradition did not share in the West's enthusiasm for biblical dramas. However, Muir argues the production of icons served an analogous function.⁶⁹ Even outside the Medieval period, Orthodox icons of Mary frequently present her as lamenting over Jesus' death. Smith writes that, in contrast to Gregory of Nyssa's confinement of proper grief to repentance, Mary's grief in these icons is often maternal in nature. An icon of the crucifixion, such as the Lamentation at Ohrid,

figures the Virgin's body not as the dry skin of a tambourine but as unsealed, pouring forth its sorrow. The grief portrayed in the icon is not that of *penthos*--weeping for one's sins--but the grief of a mother weeping over the death of her child...the iconographers are offering a model for the spiritual life that interprets the journey of divine ascent not as a journey of increasing detachment, as does Gregory [of Nyssa], but as the longing of a mother for her child, the lover for the beloved.⁷⁰

These icons frequently depict Mary fainting at the sight of Jesus' body on the cross, rendered unconscious by her lament. Additionally, as at Ohrid, sometimes the Virgin's lamentation scene is juxtaposed with the Annunciation scene, linking Mary's identity as a human mother to her response of lament to Jesus' death.

⁶⁸ Dobrov, "A Dialogue," 392.

⁶⁹ Muir, 2.

⁷⁰ Smith, "Lamentation and Annunciation," 265.

Liturgy

The Orthodox tradition provides the most sustained reception of Zion's prototype of lament through the Holy Saturday Matins (*Orthros*) service. The laments of the *Orthros* service are interspersed within the verses of Psalm 118 and include the laments of the Virgin Mary for Jesus. In the laments, Mary's speeches do not include the overt challenge to the impassive theological reasoning Jesus proposes in Romanos' *kontakion*; nevertheless, they do not allow the theologically correct explanation for Jesus' sacrifice to blunt the piercing of Mary's maternal grief. At fourteen points within the Lamentations, Mary's voice punctuates the liturgy with cries of grief.

The translation of Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware reads, "Tears of lamentation the pure Virgin shed over thee, Jesus, and with a mother's grief she cried: 'How shall I bury thee, my Son!'"⁷¹ Closely recalling the texts of Lamentations and Jeremiah, she exclaims, "'Who will give me water and springs of tears,' cried the Virgin Bride of God, 'that I may weep for my sweet Jesus?'"⁷² Jesus' crucifixion strikes a chord of despair in Mary's heart that is not fettered by theological constraints: "'Woe is me, my Son!' laments the Virgin. 'I see Thee now condemned upon the cross, whom I had hoped to see enthroned as king.'" The Lamentations explicitly equate Rachel with Mary, thus invoking Old Testament tropes of the mourning woman of which Daughter Zion is also part: "Once they wept in every house for Rachel's child; and now the company of Christ's disciples with his Mother lament for the Virgin's son."⁷³

⁷¹ Archimandrite Kallistos Ware and Mother Mary, *The Lenten Triodion*, The Service Books of the Orthodox Church (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 2002), 626.

⁷² Ware and Mother Mary, *Triodion*, 631.

⁷³ Ware and Mother Mary, *Triodion*, 639.

The sustained female lament tradition in the Orthodox Church represents a major and valuable component of Christian heritage. Mary's lament provides a prototype for individual lamenting women within the Orthodox tradition: "Thus the transpersonal weeping of Mary becomes a generative paradigm for the personal weeping of the bereaved; the heartbreaking loss of the divine son encompasses all of human loss; the grief of the Theotokos, the grief of every mother, and, by extension, all of humanity." In this weeping, Daughter Zion's mourning over her children finds an unlikely expression.

Commentary after the Renaissance

Post-Renaissance Christian commentary on Lamentations has focused on Lamentations 3, most particularly, the expression of hope within the chapter. As paradigmatic examples, I turn to the work on Peter Martyr Vermigli and John Calvin on Lamentations. These men's commentaries, gaining momentum from the return to Hebrew texts spurred by Renaissance scholarship, represent a turning point in interpretation. The Septuagint's assignment of Lamentations' authorship to Jeremiah *could* now be reconsidered, leading to an increased focus on Daughter Zion's voice. However, the precedent for her minimization and stigmatization had already been set.

Vermigli's extensive study of Hebrew enabled him to base his reading of Lamentations upon the Bomberg Bible, displaying a careful consideration of problems in the Hebrew text. Additionally, his post-Renaissance setting is displayed through his more explicit treatment of the passages of Lamentations concerning the human body. This explicit attention to human anatomy figures prominently in Vermigli's portrayal of Zion. Unlike Vermigli's medieval predecessors,

he focuses on the physicality of Zion, who appears much more material than soul-like.

Strikingly, Vermingli unflinchingly engages Lamentations' of sexual assault:

HER NAKEDNESS, that is, the pundenda, meaning those parts of the body that a natural sense of shame wishes covered...previously this people seemed to be just, holy, and innocent. By contrast, when the Lord treated them so harshly, it was publicly who they were...It is as if she cannot bear up in the face of the embarrassment and shame that her private parts are so disgracefully seen by others.⁷⁴

Additionally, for Vermingli, the “uncleanliness” of verse 9 signifies the menstrual blood which represents “the foolish crimes of the people,” which are now apparent to all “just as a woman is unable to hide her menstruation when it has already tainted the outer fringes of her clothing.”⁷⁵

Vermingli utilizes this language of assault in order to illustrate Zion's condemnation more clearly. On the other hand, the male speaker in Lamentations 3, whom Vermingli assumes is Jeremiah, is, via his suffering, joining in the fellowship of all righteous believers and even Christ himself:

In the meantime, let us be mindful that the things here described as having happened to the prophet are common to all the servants of God and religious people. All who wish to fend God's word against the world are obliged to undergo such things as these. Christ was the leader in this band...⁷⁶

The “man's” suffering does not indicate his irrevocable moral sully in the same way that Zion's does.

Calvin, also understanding Jeremiah as the author of Lamentations, draws contrasts between Jeremiah and Daughter Zion on the grounds of his proper composure versus her emotionality. This difference in emotional expression amounts to another contrast between

⁷⁴ Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Commentary on the Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah*, translated and edited by Daniel Shute, Vol. LV, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2002): 31.

⁷⁵ Vermingli, *Commentary*, 33

⁷⁶ Vermingli, *Commentary*, 150.

Jeremiah's moral purity and Zion's moral taint. Jeremiah's mourning, Calvin argues, is muted, bearing a dignified restraint that prevents "clamour[ing] against God." Calvin argues that Jeremiah avoids apostasy by keeping his grief within proper bounds, even though he himself deeply empathized with the suffering of his people: "he did not yet indulge his grief nor cherish his amazement; but as we shall see, he restrained himself, lest the excess of his feelings should carry him beyond due bounds."⁷⁷ Grief is not so much a valuable emotion in and of itself, however, as it is a teaching tool so that Jeremiah can properly instruct the Judahites concerning the error of their ways: "Had, then, Jeremiah spoken as it were in contempt, he could have hardly hoped for any fruit from his teaching, for the Jews would have thought him void of all human feelings. This, then, is the reason why he bewails, as one of the people, the calamity of the city."⁷⁸ Calvin juxtaposes Jeremiah's proper, restrained grief with Zion's unfettered mourning.⁷⁹

While Calvin's commentary tends to avoid consideration of Zion as a personification, dealing with Jerusalem as a city and people instead of a woman with a body, the moments in which he does engage with Zion's embodiment prompt his critique. For example, in his commentary on Lam. 1:9, Calvin expounds at length of the uncleanness not just of Daughter Zion herself, but of all women who share the biological condition of menstruation. He writes, "The Prophet seems to allude to menstruous women who hide their uncleanness as much as they can; but such a thing is of no avail, as nature must have its course." The negative portrayal of

⁷⁷ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Lamentations*, Vol. 5, translated by John Owens (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950): 304.

⁷⁸ Calvin, *Commentaries*, 323.

⁷⁹ Calvin, *Commentaries*, 305

women then extends to a stigmatization of Jews: “In short, the Prophet intimates that the Jews had become filthy in no common degree...”⁸⁰

Throughout his commentary, Calvin points out the divine indictment of Daughter Zion and YHWH’s role in causing her suffering to urge restraint in the expression of grief. While Christians may mourn, the knowledge that God ordains pain to discipline the faithful should ultimate censure lament: “There is then no doubt but that the church intimates that God was the author of that sorrow which she deplored. And it is necessary to know this, lest men should be carried away into excesses in their mourning, as it frequently happens.”⁸¹ Lament’s association with shameful feminine emotion should discourage men from participating in it.

Though usually Calvin focuses on Jeremiah’s perspective throughout his commentary, when the poetry expresses intense emotion, Calvin re-frames his interpretation to consider Daughter Zion. In his commentary on 1:15 (“for these things I weep,”), Calvin makes sense of the extended description of weeping by eschewing Jeremiah for the embodied city. He writes, “[Jeremiah] throughout sustains the person of a woman; for Jerusalem herself speaks, and not Jeremiah.”⁸² This convenient reintroduction of Daughter Zion’s speaking voice saves Jeremiah from losing face for expressing emotion.

Calvin recruits other men and women in Lamentations besides Jeremiah and Daughter Zion to provide supporting evidence for his gendering of emotion. In his commentary on Lam 2:10, in which elders and virgins together mourn the faith of Jerusalem, Calvin draws a sharp distinction between the mourning men and women. While Calvin manages to portray the elders’ grief as dignified, involving only lying down and clothing themselves in sackcloth, the mourning

⁸⁰ Calvin, *Commentaries*, 320.

⁸¹ Calvin, *Commentaries*, 326.

⁸² Calvin, *Commentaries*, 332.

“virgins” are hysterical by comparison: “We indeed know that young women are over-careful as to their form and beauty, and indulge themselves in pleasures, and that when they roll themselves with their face and hair on the ground; it is a token of extreme mourning.”⁸³

Lamentations Today

Traditional Christian interpretation of Lamentations has foregrounded Lamentations 3 as Jeremiah’s monologue. This is the perspective that Delbert R. Hillers takes: “The tradition that Jeremiah was the author of Lamentations had a ready-made answer for the major questions posed by the chapter: Jeremiah is the man, and he speaks of his own sufferings. The other voices that are heard in the poem are readily explained as responding to his words.”⁸⁴ However, even when the “man” is not identified with Jeremiah, modern interpreters have still found creative ways to maintain his dominance in Lamentations. One possibility has been identification of the “man’s” “I” as a collective that encompasses Daughter Zion. While Zion may still be “identified” with the speaker, her distinctively female voice is erased within the hegemonic masculinity of the “man.”⁸⁵ Other commentators have identified the “man” as another individual, such as King Jehoiachin, or contended that while Jeremiah was not the actual author, he is the figure whom the author refers to with the “I.”⁸⁶

Commentators such as Provan and Hillers try to balance the collective and individual identity of Lam. 3’s “man” by making him a paradigmatic example of a faithful sufferer. Provan summarizes this view: “God has already rescued the sufferer speaking here from his former plight, and an account of his experience is included so that people may have hope in their

⁸³ Calvin, *Commentaries*, 362.

⁸⁴ Delbert R. Hillers, *Lamentations* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), 62

⁸⁵ Hillers, *Lamentations*, 62.

⁸⁶ Hillers, *Lamentations*, 63.

troubles...the point at which God takes notice is the point at which lament may cease.”⁸⁷ The infusion of hope in Lamentations 3, then, renders Daughter Zion’s lament obsolete. The “man” of Lamentations 3 can also represent a person of quintessential piety, whose faith in God endures through all trials.⁸⁸ Thus, he, unlike Daughter Zion, can serve as a paradigm for believers: “...the devout man’s struggle with renewed faith and trust in God can also be seen as having an exemplary function. Individual experience in Lamentations 3 is at the service of the faith community.”⁸⁹ Hillers’ 1992 commentary, which interprets the male speaker as an “Everyman,” irreducible to any single individual but reflective of the experience of anyone who goes through suffering, seems to voice the consensus among most Christian commentators on Lamentations:

the poet points the way to the nation, as he shows the man who has been through trouble moving into, then out of, near despair to patient faith and penitence, thus becoming a model for the nation. This is the high point of the book, central to it in more than an external or formal way.⁹⁰

Thus, while Jeremiah is no longer consistently understood as the speaker of Lamentations 3, the “man,” rather than Daughter Zion, is still regarded as the most important figure within the book. This assumption does not take into account the reality that the man could be responding to Daughter Zion instead. According to Hillers’ line of reasoning, this would make Daughter Zion the most important speaker within Lamentations, to whom the others react.

The Christian highlighting of Lamentations 3 conveniently serves Christian theological ends. The expressed hope within Lamentations 3 lends itself to a Christian theological perspective. Tremper Longman defends the traditional focus on Lamentations 3 because it

⁸⁷ Provan, *Lamentations*, 82.

⁸⁸ Johan Renkema, *Lamentations* (Leuven, BE: Peeters, 1998), 340.

⁸⁹ Renkema, *Lamentations*, 346.

⁹⁰ Hillers, *Lamentations*, 64.

“does contain the only expression of hope within the book.”⁹¹ The Divine Warrior pictured in Lamentations, whose coming defense of his people is promised in Lamentations 3, finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ: “Jesus Christ is the Divine Warrior who fights on behalf of his people against the most powerful enemy of all, Satan.”⁹² Rather than representing an absolute standard for Lamentations interpretation, the understanding of Lam. 3 as the high point of the book is the product of the unwriting of Zion’s voice throughout the history of consequences of Lamentations.

The continued minimization of Zion even in the present era of scholarship has consequences of its own. Contemporary non-feminist interpretations of Daughter Zion tend to view the city-woman in a primarily negative light. In speaking about the imagery of sexual abuse of Zion in 1:12, Longmann writes that “it is clear that this [the “affliction”] is a well-deserved punishment.”⁹³ Longmann does not read Lamentations as a rape text; the “affliction” he sees is not necessarily of a sexual nature. However, Longmann’s perspective reveals a certain privilege. For survivors who have experienced sexual violence and read Lamentations as an account of rape, the rhetoric of shame espoused here can be harmful.

The association of Daughter Zion and the Virgin Mary continues in Catholic theology, presenting an alternative to the largely negative perspective on her emerging from Christian interpretation. Joseph Ratzinger (who would become Pope Benedict XVI) writes of the relationship between God and Daughter Zion as the prefiguring of the Virgin Mother:

Of course this line of development remains just as incomplete and open as all the other lines in the Old Testament. It acquires its definitive meaning for the first time in the New Testament: in the woman who is herself described as the true holy remnant, as the

⁹¹ Tremper Longmann, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 340.

⁹² Longmann, *Lamentations*, 338.

⁹³ Longmann, *Lamentations*, 352.

authentic daughter Zion, and who is thereby the mother of the savior, yes, the mother of God.⁹⁴

Ratzinger retains the connection between Daughter Zion and Mary established through the association of Daughter Zion's lament with the pain of Christ's passion. However, he strips the relationship of its lament roots and leaves, instead, the idea that sullied Daughter Zion must find her completion in the perfect Virgin. While this consequence of Daughter Zion preserves her memory, it robs her of her voice.

Contemporary feminists have done much to reclaim both the memory and voice of Daughter Zion. Among the most influential contemporary books on Lamentations is Carleen Mandolfo's *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets*, which argues for a reading of Lamentations in which Zion's voice resists that of YHWH. While most of these feminist commentators stem from Christian traditions, their work often presents a major challenge to traditional Christian interpretation. For instance, in "Hiding Behind the Naked Woman in Lamentations," Guest calls for "an excision of such texts [as Lamentations] from Scripture."⁹⁵ In Gina Hens-Piazza's more recent commentary, she foregrounds the situation of Daughter Zion and considers it in light of other, flesh-and-blood survivors of sexual violence.⁹⁶

Three major, relatively recent commentaries consider the ethical implications of using Lamentations as a model to respond to contemporary violence, but in very different ways. The first of these is Daniel Berrigan's *Lamentations: From New York to Kabul and Beyond*. Berrigan,

⁹⁴ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Die Tochter Zion: Meditations on the Church's Marian Belief*, trans. John M. McDermont, SJ (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), Kindle ed, loc. 159.

⁹⁵ Deryn Guest, "Hiding behind the Naked Women in Lamentations: A Recriminative Response," *Biblical Interpretation* 7.4 (1999): 444.

⁹⁶ Gina Hens-Piazza, *Lamentations*. Wisdom Commentary Series Vol. 30, ed. Carol J. Dempsey, OP (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017).

almost literally writing in the shadows of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City, considers Lamentations as a model for the lament that should follow violence committed in retaliation to a culture's sins. Implicit within his reading is an understanding of Daughter Zion's clear and utter guilt. Just as Judah was destroyed for its idolatry and injustice, so the United States has been targeted for this violence because of its unjust participation on the global stage.⁹⁷ This perspective, though probably a helpful (if jarring) awakening for American readers, is problematic because it does not adequately address the full spectrum of suffering present in either Lamentations or the United States in 2001. The people who suffered in both scenarios were not necessarily coterminous with those who committed the "sins" arousing the anger of enemies.

Kathleen O'Connor's *Lamentations and the Tears of the World* takes a different approach, exploring how the conditions in Lamentations can provide an entry point into empathetic response to suffering in the contemporary world. O'Connor recovers Daughter Zion as

a potent literary persona and a rare example of a female biblical figure who speaks, resists, and takes a theological position. At first she appears to be a recalcitrant sinner and pathetic figure, but soon she articulates her experience of her life and her God. Hers is the first and most passionate voice of resistance in the book.⁹⁸

O'Connor's analysis is powerful because, while shifting the lens of analysis to center upon Daughter Zion, she does not need to absolve Daughter Zion of "sins" in order to cast the violence against her as wrong. Retaining Daughter Zion as a crucial and authoritative speaking persona in

⁹⁷ Daniel Berrigan, *Lamentations: From New York to Kabul and Beyond* (Chicago: Sheed & Ward, 2002), 1.

⁹⁸ Kathleen M. O'Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 22), 14.

the book, she can thus utilize Lamentations as a resource for modeling outcry to God as a form of solidarity.

Most recently, Leslie C. Allen's *A Liturgy of Grief: A Pastoral Commentary on Lamentations*, stemming from the author's experience as a hospital chaplain, seeks to read Lamentations as a resource for people in crisis. While making important points on the cathartic nature of tears in situations of anguish, Allen explicitly denies protest on part of Daughter Zion, which he identifies only as "vehement language."⁹⁹ From his perspective, Daughter Zion's clear guilt removes the need for her to protest her suffering. Allen compares the book of Lamentations to Alcoholics Anonymous, in which scenario Daughter Zion is analogous to an alcoholic who must take responsibility for her behavior in order to get sober. Then the narrator is a mentor on the recovery journey, who provides accountability and sympathetic support for the alcoholic Daughter Zion on her way.¹⁰⁰ While there are certainly circumstances, such as the ones that Allen describes, in which improper conduct does lead to immense suffering, Allen does not seem to consider the repercussions of reducing suffering categorically into a sin-suffering model, particularly on survivors of power-based personal violence.

Conclusion

Daughter Zion's explicit appearances within Christian consequences of Lamentations are few and far between. When Daughter Zion does appear, she often takes a verbal beating to match the physical assault she experiences within Lamentations itself, particularly on account of alleged sexual sin. Outside of feminist commentary on Lamentations, Daughter Zion usually figures as a sexually sullied woman deserving of her punishment in most explicit references to

⁹⁹ Leslie C. Allen, *A Liturgy of Grief: A Pastoral Commentary on Lamentations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 17.

¹⁰⁰ Allen, *A Liturgy of Grief*, 19.

her. In the absence of her authoritative voice, Lamentations quickly degenerates into a victim-blaming text, unusable to those who are actually suffering.

However, in the Christian crafting of the figure of the Virgin Mary outside of canonical gospel traditions, the characteristics of Daughter Zion that make her a positive and interesting character in Lamentations remain. Parallel to Daughter Zion's portrayal in Lamentations, Mary refuses to be comforted, is a real human woman with a biological connection to Jesus, and protests unjust male authority. These connections between Mary and Daughter Zion are especially poignant within the poetic representations of Mary. There, the intense emotional response transmuted from Daughter Zion can be tolerated, if still marginalized. Meanwhile, Daughter Zion herself often goes unacknowledged as the inspiration of these portrayals of Mary.

Conclusion: Hearing the Survivors

Contributions to the Field

While my project on Daughter Zion arose first from my interest in feminist criticism and the roles of women in the Hebrew Bible—a typical feminist critical approach—I have come to see what powerful tools both feminism and reception history, or better, the “history of consequences” can become when used in combination. This dual approach has received little attention previously. Given feminist criticism’s long-held commitment to “re-membering” the violated bodies and silenced voices of women within the Hebrew Bible, reception history proves a useful tool for witnessing how the “consequences” of biblical books have effectively written women’s voices out of the text. This process of female erasure is certainly the case in the history of consequences of Daughter Zion, as, from the earliest “receptions” of Lamentations within the bible itself, her voice has been subsumed by male voices. She becomes, primarily, a symbol of sexual sin that receives well-deserved punishment.

Furthermore, my project offers an extension of feminist literary theory to the Hebrew Bible. While the feminist literary theorists I considered (e.g. Cixous, Kristeva, Gilbert and Gubar, Showalter, and Moi) theorize what it means to talk about “women’s writing,” the feminist critics of the bible with whom I identify—(e.g. Phyllis Trible, Gina Hens-Piazza, and Carleen Mandolfo) have not theorized whether and how this dimension of literary criticism can apply to the bible. This question, I believe, is a crucial one for biblical books like Lamentations, in which a female speaker figures prominently. Unlike in more modern works, in which a female author can be at least identified, identifying a single author (or even a specific context for composition) is not possible. Presumably, Lamentations was authored by men who write in place of and

represent women. Even so, in as far as any biblical literature can be said to be “women’s writing,” I think Lamentations is a good candidate for the designation. The socially-assigned role of lamenters in the Hebrew Bible, as elsewhere in the ancient world, typically fell to women, and the voices of these women still echo within the book. The particular concerns of Daughter Zion in Lamentations—sexual violence and loss of children—are, sadly, ones that are especially associated with the lived experience of being female.

The poetic lament genre seems to have played a particular role in sustaining this “women’s writing,” both in the bible and in its consequences. The gendering of poetry as feminine throughout the Western intellectual tradition has meant that poetry had license to preserve more emotional content, which is gendered as female as well. Daughter Zion’s lament falls into this category. Thus, ironically, to the extent that Daughter Zion has actually survived as a speaking subject, we can thank the patriarchal association of poetry and emotion. In most other consequences of Lamentations, males’ voices have replaced that of Daughter Zion’s, and in the silence left in the absence of her protest, sin and suffering are unquestioningly linked.

Summary

Daughter Zion and Mesopotamian Goddesses

Daughter Zion’s protest in Lamentations can only be understood fully by tracing her lineage from Mesopotamian goddesses of city-laments. In my study of Sumerian city-laments, I argued that the “weeping goddess” motif needs to be extended to reflect how the female deities protest as well. Their grief mobilizes their anger to petition before their male equivalents for the lives of those unjustly suffering. They speak convincingly and authoritatively about the needs of

their people, and how the male deities are abnegating their own prestige through abandoning their people.

Though far removed in space and time from the writing of biblical literature, the Mesopotamian city-laments can still be understood as informing the presentation of Daughter Zion in Lamentations. The pattern of weeping-to-protest—present especially as the goddess figures observe the fate of vulnerable women, children, and elderly people—emerges in Lamentations as well. The biblical writers of Lamentations creatively appropriate this motif in order to craft Daughter Zion as a figure who resists the experience to which God is subjecting her and her children. The authority which the goddess figures hold in Mesopotamian lament is present in the understanding of the city and temple of Jerusalem as synonymous Daughter Zion's own body. Given the sacrality of Daughter Zion's body, her graphic description of rape is all the more shocking. Jarring too are the images of Daughter Zion's exiled and slain children with which the poetry leaves us. YHWH himself is to blame; he is the setter of the feast day at which both Daughter Zion and her children will be consumed.

Within the Hebrew Lamentations' portrayal, Daughter Zion can freely admit that she and her people are not flawless and still maintain that YHWH's treatment is an outrage. Daughter Zion may have sinned, and yet those sins do not define her worth; she speaks for herself and is not interested in the false virgin/whore dichotomy. Her authority reflects that of the Mesopotamian goddesses; she is a bereaved mother, and yet also a queen; she is sexual assault survivor, and she remains confident in the power of her own testimony.

Inner-Biblical Allusions to Daughter Zion

Other texts of the Hebrew Bible that allude or exist in intertextual tension with Lamentations, especially Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah, make efforts to reverse the doom

pronounced in Lamentations. Daughter Zion, for whom there is no comfort in Lamentations, receives comfort. Yet the comfort she receives is out of step with her actual requests in Lamentations, which are simply for God to “look and see” her suffering. Deutero-Isaiah attempts to transfer her maternal role wholesale to YHWH, an effort that is met with Daughter Zion’s own resistance. Meanwhile, Daughter Zion becomes the beloved bride of YHWH, a transformation which involves foregrounding the marriage metaphor to a far greater degree than it appears in Lamentations. Seemingly recognizing the difficulty that the mismatch of portrayals presents, Trito-Isaiah tries to rectify the situation by re-framing Daughter Zion as the consummate mother. However, the reversals which take place, which allow her to cry out with joy, are not possible within the framework presented in Lamentations, in which her children are already dead. Thus, through Isaiah, Daughter Zion’s voice gradually becomes erased.

Other biblical consequences of Daughter Zion outside of Lamentations continue the trend of reversal begun in Isaiah. The songs of Zion, Zechariah, and 4 Baruch follow this pattern. However, within the apocalyptic works of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra, Daughter Zion’s lament sees a revival with the presence of bereaving mothers within the prophetic visions. In Judith, Daughter Zion’s archetypal lament helps the heroine of the book give voice to her supplicatory prayers. These instances of renewed prominence, however, are divergences from the dominant tradition of Daughter Zion’s erasure. The process of Daughter Zion’s disappearance greatly accelerates with the translations of Lamentations, as the Septuagint positions Jeremiah, rather than the city-woman, as the primary speaker.

Daughter Zion in Jewish and Christian Interpretation

Building on the muffling of Daughter Zion’s voice in biblical afterlives of Lamentations, Christian and Jewish traditions came to develop theological perspectives that further muted the

city-woman. In Jewish tradition, the key place of Lamentations as the scroll reading for *Tisha B'Av* concretized the association of suffering and sin. Meanwhile, midrash worked primarily to rehabilitate the image of God emerging from Lamentations, portraying God as the consummate mourner, who, though deriving his lamentation from the example of women, ultimately replaces them as the lamenting speakers. While, in the midrash, God grieves for the extent of the suffering, the people's pain is still a result of their sinfulness. Posing an alternative view of the significance of victimization, medieval interpretation also took Lamentations to be emblematic of *righteous* suffering that constituted a person's divine favor. However, *piyyutim* on Daughter Zion have preserved Daughter Zion's voice uniquely, retaining the poetic form of Lamentations. Nevertheless, by the Enlightenment period, a significant degree of skepticism arose regarding the connection of suffering and sin, which led to the sidelining of Lamentations in the face of tragedy and genocide.

Christian receptions of Lamentations (especially those emanating from Western, Protestant traditions), meanwhile, emphasized the moral impurity of Daughter Zion, especially regarding alleged sexual sin. In her sullied state, she has been the moral opposite to the Virgin Mary. However, Mary could inherit the tropes of the mourning mother played by Daughter Zion in Lamentations. Meanwhile, Christian lectionary typically relegates the reading of Lamentations to Holy Week alone, re-mapping the sufferings of the Judeans onto Jesus while implicitly (or sometimes explicitly) associating Jesus with the "man" of Lamentations 3. In the absence of Daughter Zion's voice, the association of sin and suffering comes to dominate the consequences of Lamentations.

Lamentations and the Life of the Church

I undertook to study Daughter Zion in Lam. 1-2 because I wanted to know what happened to her. I wanted to understand the treatment that she suffered in the text, what she had to teach us about pain and injustice, and how she fit within the legacy of Mesopotamian goddesses who cried out similarly for their people. By now, my question, which I hope this dissertation has addressed at least in part, has shifted: What has happened to *us*? What have faith communities, especially the worldwide Church, with which I identify, lost through the muting of Daughter Zion's voice? How has her erasure shaped who we are, and how might her testimony change us, should we choose to hear it once more?¹

I planned to show Daughter Zion's innocence, that she was protesting God's rendering her into a scapegoat for the people's sins. I hoped to show—and believed it was the case, from my translation of Lamentations 1-2—that to the charges of having “lovers” and “sinning greatly” which various voices in Lamentations leveled at her, Daughter Zion proudly mounted a “not guilty” defense. While such a defense would indeed be protest against God, I no longer believe this to be the case. In fact, the protest Daughter Zion raises is far more challenging to the Deuteronomistic paradigm. Her argument is that she may freely admit her guilt *and still not deserve the violent assault on her person, nor the loss of her children*. Sin is not an adequate explanation for suffering. In the absence of Daughter Zion's voice, so ably eliminated through its

¹ As a model of how church communities can helpfully reappropriate a biblical story containing sexual violence against women, I look to Pamela Cooper-White's reading of 2 Samuel 13 in “Prologue: The Rape of Tamar” [Cooper-White, *The Cry of Tamar: Violence Against Women and the Church's Response* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 24-38]. Cooper-White's reading especially effectively demonstrates how, though containing an appalling piece of violence, the story of Tamar can be helpful for church communities struggling to respond to sexual violence.

millennia of reception, this nuanced perspective on the relationship between suffering and sin is lost.²

The Church loses sight of this insight at its own peril. There is a disturbing tendency in North American culture to assign blame to all but the most “ideal” victim. When a young black man is shot dead with marijuana in his possession, or a woman is raped while drunk, our cultural tendency is first to point out the victims’ lapses in responsibility, regardless of the fact that the just punishment for marijuana possession is not execution and the just punishment for intoxication is not rape. A message that Daughter Zion, her voice recovered, can bring to the conversation is that whatever “sins” the victim brings to the context in which they were harmed *are not significant* as far as what happened to them is concerned. The urge to create the illusion of a perfect victim—one whose behavior has always and everywhere been above reproach—is understandable, given the stigma that victims of these crimes face, and yet it undermines the more fundamental reality that *people often do not get what they deserve*.

A more nuanced theological portrait of victims and survivors is needed, one that recognizes that those who suffer are as morally complex as anyone else, and yet their suffering is not their fault and cannot be attributed to their behavior. As Keshgegian writes, “I do not presume innocence or purity among those who are victimized. There is much that attests to their inability to escape from the traumas that trap them. They practice destructive behaviors, directed

² Here, in as far as practitioners of Christianity may be interested in retaining the concept of sin, the Womanist perspective which Delores Williams outlines may be helpful. Williams writes that the Womanist construction of sin “takes the human body and its sexual resources very seriously; the abuse and depletion of these resources amount to defilement which constitutes sin” [Delores S. Williams, “A Womanist Perspective on Sin,” in *A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Evil and Suffering*, ed. Emilie M. Townes (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 146.]

towards self and others' their lives reflect this brokenness."³ Daughter Zion, the scapegoat of Judah's sins, is no more or less culpable than anyone else, nor does she deserve the abuse and bereavement heaped upon her.

My goal now, having completed this project, is to create new consequences of Lamentations' Daughter Zion within the Church. If Lamentations can once more be approached as a literature of survival and protest, rather than a liturgy of victim-blaming, Daughter Zion's voice can directly dispel the myth that sins are the primary explanation for suffering.⁴ The facade of perfection is unnecessary to expect basic humane treatment. Nguyen poses one possibility for renewed usage of Lamentations in the survivor community:

The presentation of Zion's misery either by the lamenter or by Zion in Lamentations 1 and 2 definitely satisfies the community's intense desire to make known its suffering. This in turn helps the surviving audience release part of their emotional anguish since the community's immeasurable suffering has found expression.⁵

While hearing Daughter Zion's expression of grief and anger can have the cathartic role that Nguyen suggests, I also suggest a more constructive role for the re-incorporation of Daughter Zion's voice into Church life. Daughter Zion offers more than simply an incomprehensible cry of anguish; she channels her justified emotion into searing testimony and entreaty. She exemplifies a role for survivors of both naming their pain and inviting—*demanding*—that God and passers-by acknowledge it. Her refusal to be comforted—at least until God looks and sees

³ Flora A. Keshgegian, *Redeeming Memories: A Theology of Healing and Transformation* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2000), 159.

⁴ Keshgegian helpfully narrates how, in the realm of theology, sin took on an increasingly governing role as the cause of suffering. She writes, "Meanwhile, the category of sin grew more encompassing. It began to consume all other forms of alienation, pain, or lack—even finitude. Sin was the cause of evil in the world. Human suffering was a result of sin. Rebellion against suffering could then be read as further sinful behavior. In that sense, suffering was deserved. Such thinking did not differentiate sufficiently among the types of suffering humans might endure" (*Redeeming Memories*, 168).

⁵ Nguyen, *Voices in the Dark*, 71.

her—reflects a dissatisfaction with pat answers that do not begin to address the unjust suffering she has experienced.

I especially envision a role for Daughter Zion’s voice as the Church continues to explore how to do ministry with survivors of sexual abuse and assault.⁶ In *Let the Bones Dance*, Marcia Mount Shoop articulates the need, especially poignant among survivors of sexual abuse, to have a theological narrative for their experiences that recognizes the disconnect between sin and suffering.⁷ She writes,

Human bodies are not only steeped in the distortions and deformities of sin...Human bodies are also ravaged by the wounds of tragedy. Suffering is, indeed, entangled with the wages of sin, but suffering is also a fact of human life that is sometimes addressed best outside the framework of sin, guilt, and forgiveness. Sin carries with it moral judgment for suffering; tragedy focuses less on judgment and more on acknowledgment, grief, and compassion.⁸

Yet the Church frequently lacks language outside the well-established links of sin and suffering that Shoop acknowledges as inadequate and often even harmful. Even if these harmful words are not spoken, silence can be the enemy of healing as well. Shoop writes, “The layer of silence that quiets talk of the body in Protestant theology can suffocate the voices that cry out from the

⁶ I believe that Daughter Zion’s experiences could equally well inform the Church’s understanding of motherhood. In *Let the Bones Dance*, Marcia W. Mount Shoop describes rape, pregnancy and motherhood side-by-side as three commonly shared “women’s experiences” that illustrate embodied theological themes of, respectively, tragedy, relationality, and ambiguity (Shoop, *Let the Bones Dance: Embodiment and the Body of Christ* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010). However, I will leave the exploration of this area for another project.

⁷ As Pamela Cooper-White points out, breaking sense of certain connection between sin and suffering may require a shift in our understandings of God as well. Cooper-White writes, “In such a view [that does not necessarily regard suffering as the consequence of sin], God is *not* all-powerful to prevent human suffering which would obviate humanity’s free will but, rather, stands in solidarity with a suffering humanity” (Cooper-White, *The Cry of Tamar*, 62). Such a fleshing-out of theology is beyond the scope of my current project, and yet, along with reconstructing the voices of victims like Daughter Zion’s, will be a crucial aspect of response to sexual violence.

⁸ Shoop, *Let the Bones Dance*, 37.

experiences of rape. When voices do break through the silence, often they are quickly muffled, if not overpowered, by the churches' negativity towards bodies."⁹

Shoop's analysis here could be an apt summary of Daughter Zion's history of consequences. Daughter Zion speaks boldly about her rape, and yet the traditions which received her testimony lacked the linguistic or emotional capacity to hear her report. She then was silenced and stigmatized—a phenomenon which, sadly, is all too familiar for those who experience sexual violence in our culture. Her silencing involves a disconnecting of her body from her voice—a fragmentation that, sadly, is part of the lived experience of rape for many survivors. Shoop describes the “survival shift” that often takes place after rape, “a shift from the capacity to narrate and analyze a direct physical experience to a survival mode in which the experience is held in the tissues of the body with an increased tenacity.”¹⁰ Since the rape may be more than the survivor is able to process at once, the body itself holds onto the story of the trauma in fragmented form, gradually manifesting in the narrative. Framed differently, Hillary Jerome Scarsella calls the post-rape fragmentation the “traumatic alchemy of reality into incoherence,” noting how the lack of a continuous narrative often leads survivors to doubt their own experiences.¹¹

While Shoop identifies rape as the least reported crime, for those survivors who do report the crime, the reaction of minimization and shaming they experience is akin to “the second rape.”¹² This too, as I have shown, is what happens to Daughter Zion. Both in the biblical text

⁹ Shoop, *Let the Bones Dance*, 39.

¹⁰ Shoop, *Let the Bones Dance*, 55.

¹¹ Hillary Jerome Scarsella, “Sexual Violence and the Problem of Belief” (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 2019), 7.

¹² Lee Madigan and Nancy C. Gamble, *The Second Rape: Society's Continued Betrayal of the Victim* (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 73.

and in its later consequences, Daughter Zion is banished from memory and verbally abused. Truthfully, it is less the reports from *any* other speaker in Lamentations about her “lovers” and *more* her testimony about her rape that make Daughter Zion a sexually shameful woman.

For Shoop, the path forward for healing from rape involves a communally-supported process of “re-membering,” of re-integrating body, mind and voice in a way appropriate for Christianity’s incarnational faith.¹³ Part of this process of re-membering will be substituting the understanding of a causal connection between sin and suffering with the language of tragedy, “unrecoverable loss,” that mars the human experience.¹⁴ Shoop’s understanding of tragedy here recognizes “defiance—resistance to tragic suffering” as a crucial component.¹⁵ According to this understanding of tragedy and the interpretation of Lamentations that I have put forward, Daughter Zion’s suffering both models and becomes a resource for Christian communities constructing a new mode of response to sexual violence. Daughter Zion’s selfhood disintegrates through coercive placement into the inappropriate paradigm of sin to suffering. When her body and voice are reintegrated, and her embodied experience of suffering is featured alongside her secondary, but disconnected, confession, Daughter Zion can thus resource church ministry. She is a witness who gives bold testimony, authoritatively proclaiming her embodied realities while not needing to hide her human condition of brokenness. She demands answers from God for what she has experienced, and resists her placement into simplistic narratives.

Future Directions for Research

¹³ Shoop, *Let the Bones Dance*, 37.

¹⁴ Shoop, *Let the Bones Dance*, 62.

¹⁵ Shoop, *Let the Bones Dance*, 64.

I would like to extend my consideration of trauma theory to examine concepts of memory within Lamentations, as well as in other biblical texts involving sexual violence. The concept of memory is a crucial category within trauma theory, as how we process memory has a great deal to do with how our body handles trauma. In Lamentations, the recollection in 1:11-12 takes place through the lenses of memory: “Zion remembers.” Yet traumatic memories are often fractured and fragmented, and hearers of survivors’ testimony often improperly doubt their stories for this reason. In future research, I would like to focus specifically on how biblical narratives present the traumatic memories of survivors of violence; how these stories are recorded, repeated, or removed both within texts themselves and in inner-biblical allusions.

In this project, the methodology that I have developed—using feminist criticism in combination with reception history—has revealed to me how much of biblical literature has, essentially, become unusable to survivors of violence, especially women. The heavy-handed insistence on suffering as a byproduct of sin has rendered biblical texts the *last* place that anyone who has suffered may go for solace and inspiration. The incongruence between experience and text is reflected in the attitude of many feminist interpreters of the bible, who “take the experience and voices of the oppressed and marginalized...as the starting point for biblical interpretation and theological reflection.” Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza writes, “A critical interpretation for liberation does not begin with the text; it does not place the bible at the center of its attention. Rather, it begins with a reflection on one’s experience and socio-political religious location.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001). Kindle edition, Ch. 2 “Roadblocks in Wisdom’s Ways.”

For Christian-identified feminist biblical scholars, including myself, the replacement of scripture with experience as the most fundamental leg of the hermeneutical stool can present a theological difficulty. I want to resolve this issue by showing how scripture itself gives rise to an experientially-grounded hermeneutic. I believe the presentation of Lady Wisdom in Prov 8, which Fiorenza herself invokes, may provide a helpful starting point. Biblical Wisdom manifests herself through the maxims of lived experience, shedding light on how one should prudently navigate the world. This praxis orientation of Wisdom invites biblically-girded study that takes seriously the experiences of those who have been marginalized. We are empowered to read Lamentations and other books of the Bible with an eye to reclaiming these texts on behalf of women who have experienced violence and trauma. Readings such as those that blame victims for their experiences can be rejected as veering away from the paths of Wisdom.

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