

Foreign Women – Women in Foreign Lands

Edited by
ANGELIKA BERLEJUNG
and MARIANNE GROHMANN

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Foreign Women – Women in Foreign Lands

Studies on Foreignness and Gender in the Hebrew Bible and
the Ancient Near East in the First Millennium BCE

Edited by

Angelika Berlejung and Marianne Grohmann

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

Foreignness and *gender* are two categories that each generate differences, inequalities and access to social, economic and cultural resources, and are mobilised in different contexts and discourses with different intentions. Both *foreignness* and *gender* can be understood as constructions determined by culture and time. Both categories and attributions also influence each other.

Foreignness/strangeness respectively is an attribution made from a certain point of view and from a certain centre of orientation. This attribution can be either ascribed from the outside to an individual or a community, or individuals or collectives ascribe it to themselves, so that a distinction can be made between the external and the internal perspective.

Similar to *strangeness/foreignness*, *gender* is a historically and socially changeable descriptive category that is often constructed in binary form with reference to the biological difference between the male and female body. *Gender* acts as a bundle of offers of identification, expectations, stereotypes and norms on individuals, shaping their self-image and decisions. As a socially effective category, *gender* also regulates access to resources and is mobilised as a category of interpretation (from an internal as well as external perspective) in order to create differences and inequalities and to classify and mark social structures accordingly. Numerous studies already deal with *foreignness* and ascriptions of *foreignness* in the Old Testament and antiquity, as well as with *gender* constructions in this area. What we had to realise, however, was that so far there are hardly any studies devoted to the combination of these two categories. This is all the more astonishing as there is a lot of evidence in the Old Testament that the categories of *strangeness/foreignness* and *gender* are combined and that the “strange/foreign woman” almost becomes a stereotype.

Gender-specific constructions of *foreignness/strangeness* in the Old Testament, Egypt and Mesopotamia were the theme of three workshops held in Leipzig (2016), Jerusalem (2017) and Vienna (2018). We have brought together international scholars from different disciplines and methodological approaches to explore the topic from their particular perspectives.

In our interdisciplinary meetings we wanted to examine, how (where, why, and when) *gender* and *foreignness* are mentioned, and act as dynamic, interrelating categories in producing particular subjectivities, social status, discourses and identities in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near Eastern sources of the first millennium BCE. The investigation of the combination of the categories *foreignness* and *gender* might show different ways in which this specific attribution of status and identity is mutually reproduced – with what kind of effects, aims and under which conditions. *Strangeness/foreignness*

and *gender*, once combined, can take on very different forms. Various processes of “the othering” of women are of importance here, which may differ from the “othering” of men. We were guided by the questions of when, why, and how the category of *strangeness/foreignness* is mobilised, when, why, and how this category is gendered, and vice versa – when, why and how femininity or masculinity are labelled as foreign.

The investigation of specific questions and individual female figures was given priority in this volume over the development of overarching systematic drafts, since we assume that gender-specific studies of foreignness in the Old Testament, Egypt and the Ancient Orient must be developed from the individual phenomena without rushing to systematise and generalise. The basic question was when, where, how and for what purpose the categories of foreignness and gender were connected and activated in literary tradition. Only isolated cases could be selected from the rich material. In this respect, this volume sees itself as a preliminary and basic work for further study of gender-specific concepts of *foreignness/strangeness* in the ancient Mediterranean cultures of the first millennium BCE, which we believe to be a desideratum. The structure of this volume follows the canon of the Hebrew Bible and is rounded off a survey of the ancient oriental environment.

The editorial challenge was met by the competent helping hands of Thomas Hackl, Sonja Wiedemann, Lisa Kunze and Felix Hagemeyer in Leipzig and Barbara Groß as well as Christian Sichera in Vienna. They have not only rendered outstanding services to the editing of the complicated manuscript, but have also successfully made an effort in creating the extensive registers. The team of Mohr Siebeck publishing house in Tübingen supported us professionally and uncomplicated as usual. Our sincere thanks go to all the helpers in Leipzig, Vienna and Tübingen.

Angelika Berlejung and Marianne Grohmann
Leipzig and Vienna, June 2019

Table of Contents

Preface.....	V
Abbreviations	X
LARS ALLOLIO-NÄCKE	
How to Become an Alien (Woman)?.....	1
SARA JAPHET	
Marriage with Foreign Women: Yes or No?	13
ANGELIKA BERLEJUNG	
Solomon's Soulmate: The Queen of Sheba as a Foreign Woman	29
NILI WAZANA	
Rahab, the Unlikely Foreign Woman of Jericho (Joshua 2).....	39
MARIANNE GROHMANN	
The Philistine Woman from Timnah in Judges 14:1–15:8	63
DANIEL BODI	
When YHWH's Wife, Jerusalem, Became a Strange Woman	77
STEFAN FISCHER	
Foreign Women in the Book of Proverbs	109

JAN DIETRICH

The Image of the Foreign Woman in Prov 1–9..... 125

HANS-PETER MATHYS

Phoenicians and Money Bags: Observations on Prov 7..... 137

HANS-PETER MATHYS

The Valiant Housewife of Prov 31:10–31: A Phoenician Businesswoman 157

JUTTA HAUSMANN

Pharaoh's Daughter and Ruth: Cornerstones in the History of Israel..... 175

AGNETHE SIQUANS

A Moabite Woman as the 'Right Son': Ruth as Naomi's and Boaz's Daughter..... 187

KRISTIN JOACHIMSEN

Esther in Shushan 203

FRANZISKA NAETHER

Ancient Expats? Wise Women and Witches in Egyptian Literary Sources 223

ANGELIKA BERLEJUNG

Forever Foreign? Marriage Rules in Urban Babylonia and their Impact
on the Exiles and Returnees 237*Indexes*

Index of Sources 263

1. Old Testament 263

2. New Testament..... 276

3. Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha..... 277

4. Rabbinic Literature.....	277
5. Egypt.....	277
6. Ancient Near East.....	279
7. Classical Sources.....	280
Index of Ancient Names	282
1. Persons, Mythological Figures and Deities	282
2. Geographical Names	286
Index of Subjects	288

Abbreviations

All abbreviations used in the articles follow “The SBL Handbook of Style” (1999); concerning Ancient Near Eastern studies, see the list of abbreviations of the “Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie” (2015); for abbreviations in Egyptology, see “Lexikon der Ägyptologie” (1975–1992).

How to Become an Alien (Woman)?

Lars Allolio-Näcke, Erlangen

Abstract: This contribution deals with the question of identity making of alien (foreign, other) women. The key concepts of Michel Foucault and Edward Said are used to analyse how such constructions work and which strategies are used to alienate (women). To extend this discussion, the feminist concept of intersectionality is introduced to show today, multiple discrimination/oppression has made this process more complex for women.

1. Introduction

(Women's) Identity and the question of how to construct the self and the other have been virulent questions since the nineteen-eighties. But the trailblazers of this discussion wrote their ground-breaking works a few years before and cleared the way for this development: namely Michel Foucault and Edward Said. With the work of Michel Foucault we approach the construction of the self and the other from a more formal level, while with the work of Edward Said we focus on content. The fact that both approaches are not independent and have to be seen as a sequence has recently been noted by Michael Frank.¹ In the work of Said, Frank recognizes a fulfilment of the Foucaultian model with concrete content – one that was proposed by Foucault himself: The Orient. How this general model and its reification can fit to the construction of foreign women will be discussed further below. The final subsection draws on a more complex model of identity making from feminist discourse and relates this model to alien women as well.

2. How Subjectivity Appears²

Foucault's Œuvre deals with three problematic areas: knowledge, power and subjectivity/identity. He appears to disregard the latter, but at a closer look this is not, in fact, the case: "Thus, it is not [knowledge and] power but the subject which is the general theme

¹ FRANK, *Kulturelle Einflussangst*, 31f.

² The line of argument in the Foucaultian part follows an earlier publication NÄCKE/PARK, *Subjectivity*.

of my research.”³ But an analysis of knowledge and power is unavoidable, because none of these areas can be understood without also addressing the relationships between them.⁴ Thus, he uses the method of genealogy to reconstruct the reality as a discursive formation, constructed by power and knowledge, which give birth to the subject and let it emerge.

The first genealogical axis is *knowledge*. Foucault explores the hypostatization of the subject by analysing the construction of knowledge by the life sciences since the 17th century. In *Les mots et les choses* and *L'archéologie du savoir*, he explains how people “enter into a process of realization of an object area, and simultaneously construct themselves as subjects with a concrete and determining status”⁵ – this is what we, today, call today identity. In this analysis Foucault discovers the subject to be the construction of a *particular* rationality and a *particular* reasoning that contributes to an estrangement of the subject from itself, construes it as an object (identity) and thereby makes it an epistemological subject, ultimately standardizing it (stereotypes).

In doing so, Foucault reveals the historical nature of *this* particular knowledge and truth, and exposes this scientific practice as “a particular way of regulating and constructing discourses that define a specific object area and at the same time determine the position of the ideal subject that can and should recognize these objects.”⁶ The subject, therefore, “is not an a-historical fact with a stable essential core from which we can deduce rules for the present or future life.”⁷

Starting from these analyses of knowledge formation, Foucault approaches the analysis of power, since “the use, production, accumulation of knowledge are not separable from the mechanisms of power, with which they have complex relationships that must be analysed.”⁸

The second genealogical axis is *power*. As mentioned above, the sciences help to give birth to a specific reality inasmuch as they ‘discover.’ By ‘discovering’ they establish social norms, which are consolidated and stabilized through the mechanisms of power that is the case, e.g., with the imperative of identity. Thus, Foucault is concerned with the idea of repressive power. “What characterizes the power we are analysing is that it brings into play relations between individuals (or between) groups.”⁹ For Foucault, power is a “relationship of partners” – it is a quality of interactive relationships.

In *Surveiller et punir* and in *La volonté de savoir*, Foucault uses the term ‘power’ as a metaphor for the effect of action. “The exercise of power is not simply a relationship between partners, individual or collective; it is a way in which certain actions modify others. Which is to say, of course, that something called Power, with or without a capital letter, which is assumed to exist universally in a concentrated or diffused form, does not exist. Power exists only when it is put into action”¹⁰ In other words, power is a genuine

³ FOUCAULT, Subject, 778.

⁴ Most quotes taken from German publications are my own translations; FOUCAULT, Moral, 134.

⁵ FOUCAULT, Erfahrungstier, 52.

⁶ FOUCAULT, Erfahrungstier, 71.

⁷ HAFIZ, Subjektivierende Unterwerfung, 56.

⁸ FOUCAULT, Erfahrungstier, 111.

⁹ FOUCAULT, Subject, 786.

¹⁰ FOUCAULT, Subject, 788.

characteristic of executed action: Power is reproduced and exercised in any interaction. None of the partners in these relationships possess something that could be regarded as an essential power.

Such concept of power implies changeability in relationships, as the exercising of power as actions always provokes an action from the other party. “To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of other.”¹¹ This means that the ‘other part,’ on which the power is being exercised and which is thereby constituted, has the potential to reply in a way so as to avoid all things that suppress him or her.

Therefore, individuals in power relationships become “subjects in the double meaning of the word, on the one hand subjects of their own actions, and on the other hand subjects in the eyes of the instances of power. [...] Foucault understood this double-sided process of constitution as ‘subjectivizing subjugation,’ as subject creation and subjugation in power relationships at the same time.”¹² That means, that “the subject, born within power processes, indicates the historicity and changeability of that subject-form and its identity.”¹³

The third genealogical axis is *subjectivity/identity*. This part of Foucault’s work is concerned with the ‘escape routes’ that enable individuals to escape from repression and normalization. “This autonomy is not grounded in the individual, rather it is the individuals’ choice which subject-form it wants to adopt in its historical settings. This means the way in which the form of the subject takes shape.”¹⁴ In order to elucidate this point, Foucault takes a historical detour to Greek antiquity and Hellenism: In *L’usage de plaisirs* and *Le souci de soi*, he uses historical realities as contrast to highlight the forms of subjectivity/identity that are constructed and used in our present reality.

Using this method, he discovers the concept of subjectivization or the “aesthetic of existence.” This is expressed in the individuals’ relationship to her- or himself, which can be analysed from four perspectives.¹⁵ The first perspective concerns ethical *substance*, which describes “the aspect or part of myself or my behaviour that is subject to moral leadership”. The second perspective concerns “the way in which people are urged or prodded into their moral duties” and constitutes the mode of *self-subjugation*. The third perspective is ethical *work*, a “self-forming activity or asceticism” which relates to the tools that individuals use “in order to behave ethically.” The fourth perspective, ethical *teleology*, refers to the aim underlying the mechanisms of subjectivization. Ultimately, this last perspective is capable of influencing and changing the other three perspectives.

Foucault uses these four perspectives as analytical instruments to recognize the historically created forms of subjectivity/identity and relate them to the other genealogical axes, i.e., knowledge and power. This allows him to understand and expose their contemporary form through the interaction between the perspectives as a historically created fact. From this point of view, the self is no longer a stable core of being; it changes

¹¹ FOUCAULT, Subject, 790.

¹² HAFIZ, Subjektivierende Unterwerfung, 57.

¹³ HAFIZ, Subjektivierende Unterwerfung.

¹⁴ HAFIZ, Subjektivierende Unterwerfung, 58.

¹⁵ FOUCAULT, Genealogie, 275–277.

by dealing with the historical circumstances. Accordingly, the subject “is not a substance. It is a form that is neither in a special case nor always identical with itself”.¹⁶

3. Subjective Action Potentials

Michel Foucault’s historical analysis of knowledge, power and subjectivity/identity can be used to describe the present reality and facilitate a different understanding of subjectivity/identity. The three axes are unified in *dispositives*. “We belong to social apparatuses [dispositifs] and act within them.”¹⁷ In dispositives the axes appear to us, respectively, as lines of visibility and lines of expression (knowledge), lines of force (power), and as subjectification lines (subjectivity/identity). Through the first two, the dispositive gains the ability to enable you to see and to let you see as well as to enable you to speak and to let you speak.¹⁸ This determines which knowledge and statements are possible at a specific time. The lines of power guarantee stability in such a constructed reality: They “acting as go-betweens between seeing and saying and vice versa.”¹⁹ Finally, there are the lines of subjectification.

“This dimension of the Self is by no means a pre-existing determination which one finds ready-made. Here again, a line of subjectification is a process, a production of subjectivity in a social apparatus [*dispositif*]: it has to be made, in as much as the apparatus allows it to come into being or makes it possible. It is a line of escape. It escapes preceding lines and escapes *from* itself. The Self is neither knowledge nor power. It is a process of individuation which bears on groups and on people, and is subtracted from the power relations which are established as constituting forms of knowledge [*savoirs*]: a sort of surplus-value.”²⁰

Based on this constellation, Michel Foucault is not concerned with a fundamental rejection of subjectivity/identity, because “in the course of history, human beings have never stopped [...] the construction of an unending and varied series of differing subjectivities. [...] Human beings are constantly entering into processes that constitute them as objects, which at the same time push, form and change them – and which re-creates them as subjects.”²¹ The main point is, therefore, to recognize the relationships between the three axes and to recognize oneself as a subject within this constellation. A subject “that knows that he or she cannot overcome his or her subjugation, that therefore constitutes her- or himself by reflection [...] to gain moments of freedom and become a doubled subject – free and subjugated at the same time.”²²

Although dispositives have the potential to let people create their subjectivity/identity in a creative way, some of them do not allow this. Foucault mentions four of these: The Orient, dream, sexuality, and insanity. These dispositives had to be silenced and

¹⁶ FOUCAULT, Freiheit, 18.

¹⁷ DELEUZE, Dispositif, 164.

¹⁸ DELEUZE, Dispositif, 160.

¹⁹ DELEUZE, Dispositif, 160.

²⁰ DELEUZE, Dispositif, 161.

²¹ FOUCAULT, Erfahrungstier, 85.

²² RÜB, Subjekt, 199.

excluded during the development of European thinking since the 17th century. With the rise of the enlightenment and the development of scientific knowledge, there was no place for them anymore. They were needed as counterparts to establish the European *Vernunft* as well its identity. How this took place and which strategies were used to silence, exclude, and construct them anew are the main points of Edward Said's work.

4. Orientalism²³

Edward Said's most influential book, *Orientalism* (1978/1995), is informed by his personal experiences as member of a Christian minority in the Muslim-dominated Middle East and as a refugee in the Western World after the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. The former experience enabled him to develop a sensibility for difference constructions in general, e.g., ethnic groups and religious belief. The latter experience turned his attention to the fact that any construction of difference is interwoven with claims of power. During the period of colonialism, the claims of power and the social hierarchy of oppressor and oppressed were obvious, and colonizers could be held accountable for their actions. The postcolonial situation was less transparent. Said argues that the oppression of colonial subjects continued through the mechanism of Western constructions of them as the opposite of Europe. In this sense Said interpreted the distinction between Occident and Orient as an ongoing colonial construction and symbol of political power that guaranteed distance between the imperial centre and the (post)colonial periphery. It is ongoing, because the construction of the Orient went hand in hand with the constitution of Europe itself, which means the Orient is part of Europe's identity. This is what Foucault means when he argues that power is productive on both sides involved.

For Said, any representation of the Orient is necessarily spatial; he calls this an imaginative geography that reflects the power relations of the inventor (colonial centre) and the subjects of its imaginings (colonialized periphery). This means that, individuals as well as societies stabilize their identities "by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close [...] and what is far away."²⁴ The notion of imaginative geography denotes not only the actual spatial distance; it also entails the cognitive geography in which some cultures are closer than others to our self-image, e.g., a terroristic attack in Paris shocks Europeans more than a terroristic attack in Ankara, as was evident in postings on Facebook in 2015/16. While numerous profiles adopted the colours of the Tricolour after the attack in Paris in November 2015, only a few appeared in Turkish red after the attacks in June and October 2016.

But there are two other dimensions beside space that influence the representation of the 'other.' It was the anthropologist Johannes Fabian who introduced in his book *Time and the Other* (1983), a second dimension of demarcation between 'us' and the 'other' – time. Under the heading "denial of coevalness", he observes the tendency in anthropology to place other cultures in past times. Since the 18th and 19th century's

²³ The line of argument in the Saidian part follows an earlier publication ALLOLIO-NÄCKE, Said.

²⁴ SAID, *Orientalism*, 55.

evolutionism, cultures are measured by the development of the European-American-Culture and are relegated to past eras, e.g., the era of the primitive or the era of animism. This strategy has been a powerful instrument of colonialism, deeply ingrained in the thinking of anthropologists that it remains present in their minds.²⁵ In particular, the equation of ontogenesis and societal evolution is one of these patterns, dominating the discussion of cultural comparison until the middle of the 20th century. Here, the other is seen as less developed, like the child is less developed than an adult. In this view, other cultures only need some more progress; then they can be like Europeans themselves. This way of thinking is also the origin of global foreign aid policies that have destroyed more than helped the developing world.

Finally, Strenger and Lüchauer (1998) have added a third strategy of distancing other cultures: denial of equivalency (*Gleichwertigkeit*). They observed this strategy in the context of post-reunification Germany. Of course, this strategy is informed by the same natural scientific knowledge of the 18th and 19th century, but relates to a dimension that is very distinct from space and time; this strategy is a question of evaluating the 'others' compared to 'us.' Needless to say, the outcome is the same: the 'other' is measured according to our values and must fail. This elevates the values of 'us' and deprecates the values of the 'other.' The specific situation in Germany showed that during the distanced perception the people of both West and East Germany thought they had more equal values than after the wall came down. In a situation where West and East Germany had to compete for resources, the official discourse devalued the East-German values and so distanced them from being also being 'German.'²⁶

Although this strategy was first described in 1998, it can also be observed for colonial times. Before the encounters of East and West there was a virulent debate on the noble savage who was constructed as living in harmony with nature, living in a society without crimes, living in idyllic innocence and with ethical integrity as well as in promiscuity. In sum, the noble savage was the ideal image of Man that was described, e.g., by Rousseau. After the encounters of East and West the noble savage was turned more and more into the ignoble savage. The savage became underdeveloped, became ethically dubious and their promiscuity – especially that of the female savage – became a threat to the colonizers as well as the accompanying priests. After a while the differences between the savage and the civilized were expressed in terms of naturalized typification and essentialized differences that enable Europeans to speak of the nature or character of a 'race'. Thus, the savage was no longer an individual – he or she became a blueprint of his or her race (stereotype).

The workings of such a stereotype can be illustrated by a short discussion about the headscarf. In contemporary European societies, the headscarf is widely seen as a symbol of oppression in patriarchal societies. However, one must differentiate clearly between the wearing of a chador, burqa or hijab – all of which are often subsumed under the label of 'headscarf'. In some Muslim regions, it is sufficient to wear a transparent headscarf that covers the hair from above. Now, one might say: 'Then let us just see the burqa as oppressive!' But things are not that simple either once we acknowledge that sack clothing

²⁵ FABIAN, *Time*, 35.

²⁶ ALLOLIO-NÜCKE, *Ostdeutsche Frauen*, 166–167.

was the normal dress until the high Middle Ages – and the poor European population wore it until the 16th and 17th century.²⁷ And what about nuns and deaconesses? Are they oppressed today, because they wear a relict stemming from the Middle East-Mediterranean culture? The situation is far more complex than the stereotypes in our minds: The headscarf *can be* an instrument of oppression, but is it not in general.

Said developed the thesis of Orientalism by analysing texts and paintings or photos from the 18th and 19th century. In doing so, he realized that the people portrayed had – almost – nothing to do with the real people of the Orient. In *Orientalism*, he unfolds a discourse analysis inspired by Michel Foucault. He analysed literature, paintings, and scientific reports by ‘Orientalists’, including academics such as philologists, anthropologists, and archaeologists, as well as non-academics such as writers and missionaries. He extended this approach by analysing the situation in the twentieth century, postulating that the colonial stereotypes – which constituted the Orient-Occident-dichotomy – were reinforced by the media, especially television and film. He argued that these intensified the imaginative demonology of the mysterious Orient – and that Orientalism therefor was still going on.

“The construction of identity [...] involves establishing opposites and ›others‹ whose actually is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from ‘us.’ Each age and society re-create its ‘Others.’ Far from a static thing then, identity of self or of ‘other’ is a much worked-over historical, social, intellectual, and political process that takes place as a contest involving individuals and institutions in all societies.”²⁸

What does Said mean by Orientalism? Orientalism is the outcome of a historic process of defining Europe via the construction of the Orient as ‘other.’ This means that the *presence* of the Occident is a result of *representing* the Orient as the opposite via discourse and practice. In this sense Orientalism can mean three different things:

1. An academic tradition of investigating peoples, languages, and cultures of the East, from Middle East to India, called Oriental Studies. Oriental Studies includes scholars from anthropology, sociology, history, philology, and other fields. Orientalists produce the Orient through academic discourse.
2. A more general meaning of Orientalism is a style of thought based on ontological and epistemological distinctions made between Orient and Occident. This way of thinking is part of the cultural heritage of Europe and is widely reproduced, especially by poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators. Despite the diversity of countries and peoples considered ‘oriental’, such discourse tends to produce a homogeneous, stable image of an Orient without history. This image is fiction and a projection of Western fantasies, but it produces a reality of ongoing colonialism.
3. The historical and real suppression of Eastern cultures and societies practiced in imperial and colonial intercourse. This reality is the imposition, through both physical force and discourse, of Western-style rule and Western cultural forms in non-western cultures, both past and present.

²⁷ REINHARD, *Lebensformen*, 118.

²⁸ SAID, *Orientalism*, 332; but compare the edition of 2003 with a new preface.

All three forms of Orientalism culminate in silencing the Orient in Western thought by constructing it as a passive object defined by the West.

However, the reality of colonial encounters tended to blur the clear-cut dichotomy of Orient and Occident, as Said argues in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). As cultures met, both in discourse and in physical locations, the result was hybridization rather than the creation of simple opposition. For Said, all cultures are hybrid constructions that interweave diverse elements. This hybridity only deepened as decolonization gave members of diverse cultures greater ability to define themselves. These ideas were further developed by Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak – who, together with Edward Said, are called the “holy trinity” of postcolonial criticism.

Bhabha emphasizes the aspect of cultural hybridity introduced by Said. Bhabha suggests a “third space” of hybridity rather than the strict distinction between Occident and Orient.²⁹ This “space between” gives members of interacting cultures the possibility of translating their own cultural contents into the language and practice of the other. Bhabha argues that transit through the “third space” inevitably alters the meanings of cultural contents. Culture is built through a process of translation, inscription, and articulation that inevitably leads to hybridity and makes ‘pure’ cultures impossible. Because the “third space” allows the colonized to take part in the colonizer’s ability to define self and other, entering it gives people the ability to avoid the politics of polarity and exclusion.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak contributes additional insights and brings Said’s insights to the new discipline of subaltern studies.³⁰ Drawing on Said’s thesis of silencing the Orient and inspired by Michel Foucault’s *The Order of Things*, she develops the idea of “epistemic violence.” Because the voices of subaltern individuals have been silenced in the violent process of knowledge construction, they have been effaced from the history of colonialism. It is the job of contemporary scholars of postcolonialism to restore these voices and recognize the historical contributions of subaltern individuals. In addition, Spivak argues that, in order to gain increased political power, oppressed groups need to develop “strategic essentialism.” They must be able to represent themselves and act as a single large group while at the same time understanding that such collective identities are inevitably composed of numerous different smaller groups with competing and conflicting interests.

5. Intersectionality

In the logic of Foucault as well as Said the alien woman is just thinkable as ‘alien woman.’ Both authors do not make any difference between alien man and woman. The main emphasis is on the aspect of ‘otherness.’ But in 1991 in black feminism the idea arose that this could be a problem, because the ‘alien woman’ is in fact constructed and oppressed twice: as ‘alien’ woman as well as alien ‘woman.’ So, the alien woman is not just created and subjugated, she is that twice.

²⁹ BHABHA, Location.

³⁰ SPIVAK, Other Worlds.

It was Kimberlé Crenshaw that introduced the notion of *intersectionality* (a derivate from intersection) into the black feminism discourse in 1991.³¹ But already two years ago she exemplifies what she means with the terminus.³² In this article she discusses three court cases in which women had filed a lawsuit because of discrimination. In the first case from 1976 five black women argued that they are discriminated, because General Motors pays salaries dependently on how long a woman is in the company. But before 1964 the company had no black woman in salary. The court denied the lawsuit arguing that they are not discriminated because the company employs women for a long time – but in fact these women have been white.

In second case black women argued with some statistics that black women are less in higher positions than white women and blacks in general are less in higher positions compared to the white. The court denied this lawsuit arguing the complainants do represent neither all women nor all Afro-Americans in the company. At least in the last case the court accepted that there is discrimination against blacks in the company, but denied because the complainants do just represent black women and not the black men too. In regard to these cases Crenshaw writes:

“I am suggesting that Black women can experience discrimination in ways that are both similar and different from those experienced by white women and Black men. Black women sometimes experience discrimination in ways very similar to white women’s experiences; sometimes they share very similar experiences with Black men. Yet often they experience double-discrimination – the combined effects of practices on the basis of race, and on the basis of sex. And sometimes, they experience discrimination as Black women – not the sum of race and sex discrimination, but as Black women.”³³

On the one hand she criticizes the single-axis framework of the anti-discrimination-law of the 1980’s and on the other side she criticizes that feminism in this time is white feminism, because the experiences of white women (exclusion from work and enclosed in their home) do not fit with the experiences of black women that had of course to work and shared their home with men or women that experience also discrimination. That means she highlights that there can be multiple discrimination, especially between the ‘classical’ criteria of class, race, and gender that can be described as “systems of interlocking oppressions” or “matrix of domination.”³⁴

Her aim was also to show that there can be an “intersectional invisibility” of women when problems of race and gender discrimination are just foci of gender domination problems *or* as expression of racist oppression.³⁵ In both cases the women would be invisible and therefore – with Foucault’s words – silenced.

³¹ CRENSHAW, Mapping.

³² CRENSHAW, Demarginalizing.

³³ CRENSHAW, Mapping, 149.

³⁴ COLLINS, Black Feminist Thought.

³⁵ CRENSHAW, Intersection.

6. Conclusion

What contributes from Foucault's and Said's ideas to our understanding of the construction of the 'alien woman?' We now know that her identity is constructed within a dispositive that is interwoven with claims of power. Because she is an 'alien' woman, she is constructed from outside of her culture or is excluded from her culture as alien, and the discourse constructs her as a blueprint of her culture or subgroup (stereotype). In a concrete cultural setting, e.g., the Levant, we will also find some strategies to silence her subjectivity, such as the denial of coevalness, denial of equivalency; and she is placed in an imaginative geography constructed by the defining authority that distances her from this person. In a dispositive that gives her no voice, she cannot define herself differently, she will not find a "space between" to escape or to have a voice to take part in constructing herself, and she is not able to find other alien women to take part in the strategic essentialism to strike back against her or their definer. This is almost the case in literature, e.g., when the role of the alien woman is discussed in the context of the Old Testament – with the possible exception of the Book of Ruth.

But most contemporary dispositives are more or less open, hybrid, and give the subject space to react to the power (of construction and exclusion). Thus, in a first step, the 'alien woman' has to realize in which power-knowledge-constellation she lives; and she has to realize that she is a double subject: created and subjugated at the same time. Because of the insight, she will become able to react to the power that tends to silence her. She can use the "third space" to translate her situation into the language and practice of the oppressor and thereby change his or her stereotypes.

At least, the female subject today has more struggles than the subjects addressed by Foucault and Said. She has to reflect that she is not just constructed as one thing. She has to take into account that she is constructed as [...], as [...], and as [...] at the same time and there are multiple pitfalls that could silence her. But to know that the 'alien woman' is constructed as 'alien' woman as well as alien 'woman' reduces the risk of becoming intersectionally invisible and it also opens up possibilities to undermine specific attributions, to essentialize some characteristics in a strategic way (e.g., to join alliances with other marginalized groups because of the shared femininity), and to borrow a voice from other individuals who share the characteristics of being alien or woman and are able to give voice because of their social status. This knowledge opens up a playground of alliances that allow her to play with her otherness in order to change the knowledge-power-relations that strive to oppress and silence her.

Unfortunately, there is no proper theory on how to combine each oppressing situation – described by the concept of intersectionality – with others, because each situation has its own power-knowledge-relations that partly compete and conflict with each other. Alien women are waiting for a solution [...].

Index of Sources

1. Old Testament

<i>Genesis</i>		27	43, 196, 198
1	176	27:1	197
10:7	29	27:1.24–27.	
10:7.28	29	37.43	198
12–50	197, 199	27:8.13	197f
12	43, 143	27:18	197f
12:1	193	27:18.20.21	198
16:21	109	27:20.21.24–27	197
19	46	27:32	198
19:1.15	46	27:33	198
19:2	141	27:37	197
19:3	46	27:43	197
19:4	46	27:46	198, 256
19:5	46	27:46–28:9	255
19:10–12.16	46	28:8	109
19:16	46	28:9	109
19:17	46	29:26–28	83
19:30–38	181	30:14–16	198
19:31–38	182	30:15.16	197
20	143	30:27	97
21:10	197	31:18	144
21:14	197	34:8	197, 199
22	88	34:29	14
22:6	88	36:6	144
22:7.8	197	37:27f	144
24	196f, 255	37:33.35	197f
24:3–4	197	38	19, 50, 199
24:6.8	197	38:2–5	19
24:23.47	198	38:11.26	197f
24:28	115	38:18	50
25:1.4	109	38:26	198
25:3	29	38:28–30	50
25:4	19	39:1	144
25:6	109	39:7.10	132
25:12	109	41:25	19
26–28	256	41:45	109
26	143	42	145
26:26–27	68	42:9	42
26:34f	109, 255f	42:34	144

42:35	145f	27:16	83
42:38	197f	28:39	83
43:29	197, 199	29:33	127
45:4f	144	30:23	143
45:28	197f	30:32	143
46:20	19	34	23, 255
48:19	197f	34:14–16	255
49:9	197f	34:15–16	14, 40, 58, 255
49:13	144f	35:7.23	83
		35:14	83
		35:35	83
		36:19	83
		36:37	83
		38:18	83
		38:18.23	83
		38:37	83
		39:29	83
		39:34	83
		<i>Leviticus</i>	
		2:4–13	83
		18:18	83, 102
		18:21	88
		19:17–18	68, 70
		19:34	194
		20:2–5	88
		20:10	96, 117
		21	256f
		21:7	256f
		21:7f	256
		21:7.13–15	255f
		21:13–15	256f
		21:14	255, 257
		21:14b	256
		21:15	257
		25:44	144
		26:30	99
		<i>Numbers</i>	
		3:1–4	178
		4:6.8.10.11.14.25	83
		9:10	144
		9:10.13	144
		10:29	110
		10:33	53
		12:1	110, 183
		12:10	110
		13:1–16	41
		13:2.17.21.25.32	54
		13:23	57
		24:7	211
<i>Exodus</i>			
1–2	183		
1:15–22	49		
2	175–178, 182f		
2:1–10	175, 182		
2:249, 176			
2:349			
2:5178			
2:6176f			
2:7177, 181			
2:8182			
2:9177			
2:16–22	183		
2:21	110		
2:23	178		
3:841			
4:14	178		
4:24–26	183		
6	178		
6:20	177		
11:39–40	67		
12:43–51	151		
12:48	22		
15:15–16	45		
15:20–21	176		
17:15	67		
18:1	45, 56, 110		
18:2.5–6	183		
18:11	56		
19:10	53		
21:13	66		
22:15	69		
22:20	194		
22:25f	141		
22:30	67		
23	255		
23:9	194		
25:5	83		
26:14	83		
26:26	83		
26:36	83		

25	57, 193, 255	1–9	41
25:1–2	110, 193	1	53f
25:1–5	54	1:1	53
25:1–9	40, 53	1:11	53
26:29	19	2	39, 41–43, 46, 49, 53, 55, 115, 183
26:57	178	2:1	42f, 49, 53f, 57
26:59	176f	2:1–3	41
31:18	15	2:1–3.9.11.	
31:32	88	14.18.24	41
32:9	14	2:2	49, 54
32:40	19	2:3	46, 50
33	53	2:4–5	43
<i>Deuteronomy</i>		2:4	49
1:22	54	2:5	47
2:30–3:8	45	2:6	44, 47
3:15	19, 20	2:8	46
4:39	45	2:9	45
6:6–8	116	2:9–13	56
6:6–9	139	2:9–12	178
6:7	133	2:9–11	55f
7	23, 255	2:9a	45
7:1–5	255	2:9a.11b	45
7:1–6	257	2:10b	45
7:2	56	2:11b	45
7:3–4	58	2:11	56
7:3b–4	255	2:12	46
7:3	14, 255	2:12.17.20	56
7:6a	255	2:14	46
12:31	88	2:15	47f
17:16	98	2:15b	40
17:17a	110	2:16	46, 54
18:10	88	2:16.22	53
20:16–17	56	2:17	54
21:10–14	14	2:18.20	40
22:13–21	120	2:18.21	42, 50
22:22	117	2:20	54
23	182	2:23	47, 53
24:1–4	73	2:24	39
24:12f	141	2:24a	45
27–28	121	3–4	47, 53
28:42–43	70	3	53f
28:53.55.57	70	3:1	53, 57
28:57	49	3:1b	53
28:68	144	3:2	53
31:16	40	3:5	53
32:10	86	6	40, 53–55
33:18f	144	6:6	53
<i>Joshua</i>		6:17.25	45
1–12	45, 53f	6:17b	46
		6:17b.22.23.25	39, 53, 55

6:22	43, 49, 56	4:11	110
6:22–23	46	4:17	49
6:23	46	4:19	48
6:25	42f, 48, 52, 55	4:21	49
7	42, 53f	5:27	48
7:1	42	8:26	168
7:12	42	8:31	51
7:13	42	8:33	40
7:24–26	42	9:50–54	48
9	43, 54f	9:54	48
9:7.14	54	11:1	44, 51, 128
9:9–10	56	11:2	51
9:9–10.24	55f	11:35	196
9:15.18–19	43	13–16	63, 75
9:15.18–20	56	13:1	75
9:15.18.19.21	54	14	34, 68, 70, 75
9:16	42	14–16	64
9:17	53	14:1	70
9:23	42	14:1–2	65
9:23.27	21, 57	14:1–4	64
9:24	56	14:1–15:8	63f, 73
9:26	45	14:1.5.7.19	67
10	54	14:2.3	65
10:40	56	14:3	65, 70, 75
10:40–42	54	14:3.7	70
11:19	54	14:4	65f
11:20	56	14:5	73
13:13	42	14:5–9	66, 74
15:10	73	14:6	70, 73
16:20	42	14:7	65, 67f
17:4	54	14:8	67
22	57	14:8–9	67, 73
22:17	57	14:9	70
22:20	42, 57	14:10	67f
22:25	57	14:10–14	67
22:30.32	54	14:11	68
23:7.12	255	14:12	70
23:12–13	255	14:14	71, 73
		14:15	69–71
<i>Judges</i>		14:15–18	68
1:16	110	14:16	69–71
1:22–26	46	14:16–17	70
1:24	46	14:16.17	70
1:26	46	14:17	69–71
1:29.32	42	14:18	70f, 75
1:30	42	14:19	71
1:33	42	14:19–20	71
2:17	40	15:1	72f, 75
3:5–6	255	15:1–8	72, 75
3:5–7	255	15:2	73
4–5	40	15:2.6	72

15:5	73	2:3.4.17	179
15:6	69, 72, 75	2:4	190
15:11	75	2:5	192, 195
15:18	65	2:6	189f, 192, 195
15:20	66	2:7	190
16	73	2:8	193, 195
16:1	49, 64, 128	2:8–9	192, 196
16:1–3	49	2:8.22	189
16:2	49	2:10	16, 127, 189, 192, 194, 200
16:3	49	2:10.13	192
16:4	64	2:11	16, 190, 192f
16:5	69	2:11–12	192f
16:6.10.13	69	2:11.18.19.23	191
16:15	70, 73	2:12	189, 193
16:16	69f	2:13	192
16:23–24	66	2:19	192, 195
19	46	2:20	195
19:15.17.20	46	2:21	191, 194
19:22	46	2:22	191
<i>Ruth</i>		3	191
1	192	3:1.6.16.17	191
1:1.2.19.22	190	3:1.16.18	194
1:4	189, 191	3:3.8.14.16.18	192
1:4.14.16	189	3:8	196, 198
1:4.16.22	191	3:8.14	191f
1:4.22	16	3:9	87, 189, 191–195, 198
1:6	189f	3:10	193
1:6–19	16	3:10–11	193
1:6.7.8	191	3:10.11	195
1:7	190	3:11	16, 119, 190
1:8	189f	3:14	200
1:9	189f	3:16	194, 198
1:10	189f	3:17	194
1:11.12.13	194	4:3	189
1:12.6.22	189	4:4	190
1:14	191, 193	4:5	195
1:15	190	4:5.10	16, 189
1:16	187f, 190	4:10	188, 195
1:16–17	17, 58, 189, 200	4:10.11.13	192
1:17	179	4:11	16, 179, 190, 199
1:19	199	4:11–12	187, 194, 199
1:22	179, 189–191	4:12	50, 180, 190
2	191	4:13	189, 191
2:1	195	4:13.16	199
2:2	196	4:13–22	121
2:2.6	16	4:14	199
2:2.7.8.21.22	191	4:15	191, 196, 199
2:2.21	189	4:17	16, 180
2:2.21.22	191	4:18–22	200
2:2.22	194		

<i>1 Samuel</i>		4:15	32
9:1–2	211	5:9–14	31, 35f
12:23	65	5:9.10.11.	
14:6	65	14.21.26	160
15	211	5:9.26	159
16:23	93	5:10	34, 36
17:26.36	65	5:10f	159
17:58	198	5:10ff	159
18:20.26	65	5:12	35
18:20.28	93	5:14	33, 36
18:25.27	65	5:14b	36
19:7	65	5:21	159
19:11–17	47	5:26	159
19:12	47	5:29–30	21
19:13	47	7:8	18, 110
19:14	47	7:14	160
22:3–4	182	8:23	45
25:23–25	44	9:12	65
31:4	65	9:16.24	18
		9:20–21	21
<i>2 Samuel</i>		9:26–28	160, 164
1:20	65	9:26–10:29	161
3:3	20	9:26.28	160
3:14	65	10	29f, 34f
6:16–23	94	10:1	31, 33f
10:6	51	10:1–10.13	29–31, 33–36
10:8	51	10:1–13	52
11–12	82	10:1.4.10.13	29
11:21	48	10:4.6.7.8.23.24	160
14	128	10:5	35
16:5–8	211	10:8	35
17:4	65	10:10	160
17:17–21	47	10:11	160
17:18	47	10:11a	160
17:19	47	10:11f	160
17:21f	128	10:13	35, 160
17:25	20	10:15	144
17:27	47	10:28	98
20:14–22	48	10:28f	144
20:19	48	10:29	144
21:2	55	11	18
24:6f	164	11:1	18
		11:1–3	31, 131
<i>1 Kings</i>		11:1–8	255
2:6.9	160	11:1–11	110
3:1	18, 31, 110	11:1–13	255
3:12.28	160	11:1f	128
3:16	128	11:2	17
3:16–27	52	11:5–8	18
3:16–28	44	11:7f	150
4:11	32	11:26	51

11:41	160	<i>2 Chronicles</i>	
12:24β	51	1:10.11.12	160
14:21	110	1:16	144
14:31	18, 31	1:17	144
16:31	110	2:6	168
16:31–33	255	2:6.11.12.13	160
20:34	148	2:13	168
22:49	164	2:16	22
		2:16–17	21
<i>2 Kings</i>		3:3	110
5:7	66	3:14	168
5:15	45, 56	8:8	21
5:23	145	8:11	18
8:7–15	51	9	29f
8:18.26	110	9:1–9.12	29, 36
9:22	52	9:1.3.9.12	29
11:1–3	47	9:5.6.7.22.23	160
16:3	88	9:14	144
17	21	10	18
17:17	88	12:13	18
21:6	88	13:6–7	18
23:10	88	15:9	22
23:13	150	20:36	164
24	21	24:20	208
		28:3	88
<i>1 Chronicles</i>		30	22
1–9	18	30:1.10	22
1:9	29	30:5	22
1:9.22.32	29	30:9	22
1:33	19	30:11	22
2:1	19	30:25	22, 57
2:3	19	33:6	88
2:7	42	34:7	22
2:12	179		
2:17	20	<i>Ezra</i>	
2:34–41	20	2:69	146
2:46	19	7:7–8	13
2:48	19	7:26	129
3:2	20	8:27	146
4:17–18	181	9–10	13, 15, 20, 125, 127, 255, 257f
4:18	19	9:1	147, 189
5:29	176	9:1–2	13
7:14	19	9:1–2:12	258
16:19	22	9:2	15, 110, 255, 257
22:2	21f	9:6–15	14
22:15	160	9:7	14
28:21	160	9:12	255, 258
29:7	146	9:14	14
29:15	22	9:15	14
		10	15

10:2.10	189	1:13.15	213
10:3	14	1:14	211
10:4	14	1:15	207
10:8	129	1:16	208
10:10–44	110	1:17.19	208
		1:18	212
<i>Nehemiah</i>		1:19	207f, 213
1–7	257	1:19–22	208
3	148	1:20	215
3:1	148	1:21	213
3:3	148	1:22	208–210, 213, 215, 219
3:26	148	2:1	207
3:28	148	2:1–4	212
3:31	148	2:1–4.17	206
5:8	144	2:2	219
5:14	165	2:2–3	208
7:69–71	146	2:2.3.8.9.12	206
9:2	15	2:2.3.17.19	206
9:35	42	2:3	214
10:29	16	2:3.8.9.11.12.	
10:31	14	13.14.15.17	206
10:32	144	2:3.8.15	214
13	125	2:4	208, 212
13:3	15, 17	2:5	209, 211
13:15f	144	2:5–6	209
13:16	118, 148, 157	2:6	216
13:23–27.28	14	2:7	206, 208, 215
13:23–29	257	2:8	206, 213
13:23–30a	255	2:9	208, 214
13:24	15, 189	2:9.15.17	219
13:25–27	189	2:10.20	206, 210, 218f
13:26	18, 110	2:12	143
13:26–27	127	2:13–15	212
13:28–29.30a	255	2:14	214f
		2:15	206, 208, 214f, 219
		2:16–22	212
<i>Esther</i>		2:17	206–208
1:1	205	2:18	218
1:1–8	212	2:21	214f
1:3.5.9	218	2:21–23	209
1:4	215	2:22	207
1:6	168	3:1–2	211
1:8	213	3:1.10	211
1:9	207f	3:2–3	213
1:9.11.16.17	207	3:2–5	208, 211
1:9.17.20	206	3:3	208, 210
1:10	213	3:4	209
1:10–12	207	3:5	215
1:10–22	212	3:6	210
1:11	208	3:8	210, 215
1:12	212, 215	3:8.14.15	213
1:12–15	208		

3:9–10	210	5:14	208f, 213
3:9–14	207, 213	6	209
3:9–15	210	6:2	214
3:10	210f	6:3–9	212
3:11	210, 212f	6:3–11	215
3:11–14	215	6:3.6–7.9.11	215
3:12	210f, 213, 215	6:4	213
3:12–14	210	6:6–9	209
3:12–15	210	6:6–11	210, 219
3:13	206	6:10	209, 212
3:15	213, 218	6:10–12	209
4	209	6:13	209
4:1–2	209	6:14	218
4:1–4	207	7:1–9	208, 216
4:2	209f	7:1.2.3.5.6.7	207
4:3	217	7:2	207, 213, 218
4:3.7.13.14	206	7:2.7.8	218
4:3.8.11.16	213	7:3	206, 208, 210
4:3.16	215, 218	7:3–4	213
4:4	209	7:3–6	207, 212
4:4.16	206	7:6	210f, 213
4:5	214	7:6–7	212
4:5–8	206	7:7	212, 215
4:5–10	214	7:8	209
4:7–8	214	7:8–10	213
4:8.13–14	207	7:9	207, 214
4:9–5:2	208	7:9–10	212, 215
4:11	206f, 214	7:10	210, 212
4:11.16	213	8:1	207, 211
4:12–13	214	8:1–2	209f
4:12–16	218	8:1.7	207
4:12–17	214	8:2	207, 210, 219
4:13–14	206	8:3	208
4:13–16	207	8:3–5	207
4:14	207, 209	8:3–6	210, 219
4:16	206, 208	8:3–8	207
4:16–17	206	8:3.5	207, 211
5:1	207	8:5	208
5:1–2	213	8:5.8	208
5:1–8	216	8:7	207, 209, 212f
5:2	208	8:7–8	207
5:2.3.12	207	8:7.9–14	216
5:3	207	8:8	210, 213
5:3.6	207, 213	8:8–14	210, 213
5:4–8	208	8:9	210, 213, 215
5:4.5.6.8.12.14	218	8:9–10	207
5:6	207	8:9–14	218
5:8	208	8:10	210f
5:9	208, 211, 215	8:10–11	210
5:12	212	8:11	206, 212
5:13	209	8:13	212, 215

5:20	112f	9	35, 37, 139
5:21	121	9:1–12	111
5:22	116	9:2	139
6	138f	9:3	115, 139
6:1	116	9:13–18	111, 139
6:20–22	116	9:13	116f
6:20–26	132	9:14	117, 139
6:20–35	126f, 132, 139	9:16–17	117
6:21	133	9:18	117
6:22	133	10:1	110
6:24	112, 116	10–22:16	34
6:25	114	12:4	111, 118
6:26	111–113	12:21	66
6:26–7:1	117	22:14	33f, 37, 112, 13
6:32	120	22:17–24:22	34
6:34	116	23:27	48, 112f, 128
7	50, 115, 128, 137, 139– 141, 143, 145, 147–151	25–29	34
7:1–21	126	25:1	110
7:1.2	116	27:2	127
7:2.3	116	29:3	128
7:3	133, 144	30	160
7:5	82, 112–114, 126, 139	30–31	34, 117
7:6	139f	30:19	164
7:6–13	116	31	109, 141, 160
7:6–23	113	31:3	111, 119
7:8	140f	31:10	111, 119
7:9	115	31:10–31	111, 117, 120, 146, 157f, 162–166, 169–172
7:10	48, 112f, 127	31:11	118
7:10–12	113	31:12	118
7:10–13	140	31:13	165
7:10–23	120	31:14	143f, 164f
7:11b–12	41	31:14.18	164
7:12	140f	31:18	164
7:13–20	114	31:19–20	165
7:14	149	31:20	172
7:14–20	114	31:21.22 LXX	118, 170
7:14.20	115	31:22	119, 141, 165, 167
7:16	119, 141	31:23	169f
7:16f	141	31:24	118, 163, 165
7:17	119, 143	31:26	162
7:19	127, 144	31:27	162
7:19a	143	31:30	118, 121, 162, 172
7:19f	138, 146, 161		
7:20	115, 140, 143, 145, 149	<i>Ecclesiastes / Qoheleth</i>	
7:21	112	9:14–15	48
7:21–23	39, 114	9:16	48
7:26	114	12:4.5	141
7:27	117		
8	50		
8:15f.20f	34		

<i>Song of Songs / Song of Solomon / Canticles</i>		3:24	88
1:13	143	4:1–4	101
3:1–5	115	5:7	112
3:2	141	5:8	98
3:6	143f	6:17	85
3:10	168	6:20	29
4:3	40	7:18	95
4:6.14	143	9:24–25	65
4:9	114	10:9	91, 168
4:14	115, 143	11:13	83
5:1.5.13	143	13:27	101
5:2–8	115	18:14	170
5:6.7	117	31:1	86
7:6	168	31:19	101
8:6	116	31:20–40	101
		32:35	88
		37:21	148
<i>Isaiah</i>		44:17.19.25	95
3:22	145	46:13–24	71
3:24	162	46:19–24	71
11:11	144	46:19.24	71
14:1	16, 22	46:20	71
23:2	144	46:21	71
23:8	144, 163	48:38	141
23:11	163		
23:15–18	128	<i>Lamentations</i>	
29:21	85	2:15	162
43:3	29	5:14	170
43:24	144		
45:1	240	<i>Ezekiel</i>	
45:14	29	1:7	65
46:6	145	3:17	85
49:14	102	4	79
49:15	102	4:5	80
49:18	102	4:6	80
49:18.22	102	4:12	79
56	256	4:12.15	99
56:2–7	57	4:15	79
56:3–7	16	8:14	95, 151
56:3ff	151	16	77–83, 85f, 89, 95–97, 101f, 193
56:7	57	16:1–14	81, 85
56:10	85	16:2	85
57:8	91	16:3	81, 86
60:6	29, 36	16:3.45	77, 82
65:10	54	16:6	86, 88
		16:7	86, 89
<i>Jeremiah</i>		16:7.22.39	97
2:2	101	16:8	86–89, 101, 193
2:20–25	101	16:9	87
3:2.6.8b–10	101	16:10	91
3:7b.12–18	101		
3:8a	101		

16:11.12.17.39	89	26–28	158
16:13	89	27	144, 165, 167f
16:13.14.15.25	162	27:3.4.11	162
16:15	87, 96	27:7	167
16:15–34	101	27:8.9	160
16:15.21.25	87	27:9	157, 170
16:16.17.18.20	89	27:16	167
16:17	91	27:22	29
16:20	79	28:3.4.5.7.12.17	160
16:20–21	88	28:7.12.17	162
16:21	87f	28:10	65
16:22.23	97	28:15	158
16:24	92, 141	31:3.7.8.9	162
16:25	88f, 97	33:17	85
16:26	88, 97	38:13	29
16:27.43.58	97	43:13	92
16:28	88	44	256f
16:28.29	96	44:9	151
16:29	88, 163	44:22	255–257
16:30	77, 85, 90	46:23f	148
16:31–34	98		
16:32	96, 101	<i>Daniel</i>	
16:32–33	127	4:10	85
16:34	97	4:14	85
16:35–41	101	4:27	100
16:36	97, 99	6:9.13.16	208
16:36.37	97	9:11	208
16:37	88		
16:37–39	96	<i>Hosea</i>	
16:37–40	101	1–3	42
16:38	96f	1:2	42
16:39	89	2	42
16:41	89	2:2	101
16:45	78, 81, 86	2:4–5	101
16:46	82	2:4–6	101
16:53–63	102	2:7	56, 101
16:59–63	81	2:8.9.11–13	101
16:62–63	101	2:13.15	140
17:4	84, 163	2:14	42
22:2	84	2:16–17.21–22	101
23	77, 80–83, 85, 96, 102	2:16–25	101
23:2–8.11–21	101	2:17	42, 54
23:4	83	4:13–15	112
23:9–10.22–26.		5:7	140
28–35.45–48	101	9:8	85
23:19–21	97	9:10	86
23:20	98	11:8–9	101
23:29	96	11:9	85
23:36	97	12:8	118
23:37	97		
24:6.9	84		

<i>Joel</i>		<i>Haggai</i>	
4:6–8	144	1:1145	
4:8	29	1:6145	
<i>Amos</i>		<i>Zechariah</i>	
5:10	85	2:15	16
6:4	141	8:4–6	141
		8:20–23	16
<i>Nahum</i>		9:2	159f
2:8	95	11:12b	145
3:16	144	14:21	157f, 161, 163
<i>Zephaniah</i>		<i>Malachi</i>	
1:10f	149	2	127
1:11	118, 163	2:10–16	125
		2:11–12	255
		2:14	101

2. New Testament

<i>Matthew</i>		<i>Acts</i>	
1:5	44, 181	16:14.40	167
2:13–15	181		
27:28	167	<i>Hebrews</i>	
		11:31	56
<i>Mark</i>		<i>Revelation</i>	
15:17.20	167	17:4	167
<i>John</i>		18:12.16	167
19:2	167		

3. Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

<i>1 Esdras</i>		<i>Sirach</i>	
9:36	14	7:15	147
		9:3	114
<i>Jubilees</i>		42:9–11	120
30	24		
47	177		

4. Rabbinic Literature

<i>Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael</i> on Exod 18:11	56	25b	78
<i>Mishnah</i>		Sanhedrin	
Megillah		44b	78
4:6	78	104b	78
4:10	78	Yevamot	
Qiddushin		22a	24
3:1	24	48a	24
		Zevachim 116b	41
<i>Sifre to Numbers</i>		<i>Targum (on Ezek 16)</i>	
78	44, 56	6–9	78
		10	78
<i>Sifre Zuta</i>		49–54	78
75	44	<i>Tosefta</i>	
Behaalotcha 10:29		Megillah	
	40	4:34	78
<i>Talmud Bavli</i>			
Megillah			
14:2	44		

5. Egypt

<i>Ani B</i>		1. 3, 46–4, 3	231
16,13–16	132f	1. 4, 4–8	232
		1. 4, 26	232
<i>Astarte and the Sea</i>		<i>El-Amarna Correspondence</i>	
	228	EA 120	142
<i>Egyptians and Amazons</i>		EA 147:62	84
1. 2, 29	231	EA 155 iii 7	84
1. 2, 31–38	231		

- The Fight for the Prebend of Amun*
229
- Hermopolis Letter*
III,10 142
- Instruction of Khasheshonqi*
24 98
- Kemit*
§ 10 228
- Ostraca*
O. Ashmolean Museum inv. 1945.40
no. 1. 25–28 226
no. 1. 33–37 227
no. 1. 47–48 227
O. Cairo CG 25674
232
O. DeM
1688, inv. no. 2308, sequ. no. 10199
232
1690, inv. no. 2691, sequ. no. 1677 recto
232
O. Gardiner 14, recto
232
O. Letellier 232
- Papyri*
P. Amherst m–q (B)
148–149 227
l. 190–199 227
l. 200–204 227
P. Anastasi 4 = P. BM EA inv. 10249, ro. 1.
12, 5–13, 8 227
l. 12, 7 227
P. Berlin
P 3022 (*Sinube*)
226f
P 10499, l. 67–74 (*Sinube*)
226
P. Insinger
l. 8, 5–7 224
l. 28, 5–7 228
P. Petese 2,
C1, 17–26 229
P. Westcar
l. 6, 22–7, 9 225
l. 8, 3–4 225
- Prophecy of Neferti*
L. 61–65 226
- TADAE 2*
B2.6.7–9 142
B3.8.7f 142
- TADAE 4*
D2.10:10 91
D7.56.10 91
- Story of the Bentresh Stela*
230
- Story of King Djoser and Imhotep*
231
- Story of Pa-di-pep*
l. 10–15 233
- Story of Wenamun*
l. 2, 68–70 227
l. 2, 75–83 230
- Tale of Two Brothers*
3,4ff 132
l. 11, 4–11, 7 228
- Teaching for Merikare*
§ 67–68 226
- Teaching of Ani*
l. 16, 13–14 229
l. 16, 13–17 229
l. 16, 15–16 229
- Teaching of a man for his son*
§ 8, 1–8, 4 226
- Teaching of Menena*
227
- Teaching of Onksheshonqi*
l. 3, x+3–5 226
l. 18, 9 224
l. 8, 22 224
l. 25, 21 229

6. Ancient Near East

ANET

174 (<i>Code of Hammurabi</i> § 185)	86
183 (<i>MAL</i> § 42)	87
307 (<i>Royal Inscr. of Nebuch. II</i>)	100

Archives Royales de Mari

X 84:7–9 and 30	91
26/1 no 251:16–18	87

BBR

24+	251
-----	-----

BBS

36 iii 26–29	251
--------------	-----

BM

23631, 122.127	92
29616, 1–9	93
33065 (<i>Cyr 312</i>)	248
74597	245
74623	246
74923 (<i>Cyr 307</i>)	240, 247f
75434	239
79672	246

Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri

47.218.89 (no 2:12–13)	90
12:23–24	90

Egibi Archive

Dar. 310	239
----------	-----

Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta

231

Epic of Gilgamesh

(OB) I,iv,16	96
II	96
VI 1–79	93, 97

Erra Epic

IV 56	94
-------	----

Esaharddon's Treaty with Baal

III Rev, 7	170
------------	-----

Exaltation of Ištar

19:38–39	94
----------	----

In-nin šà-gur₄-ra

191	94
193	94
225	94

KAI

26.A, 12f	160
43, 12	149
69	150
120, 2	150
214, 34	101
215, 11	160

KTU

1.123:6	149
4.127.7	142
4.270.11	142
4.385.9f	142
9.432:34'	142

Love Lyrics

B iii 6 and 12	100
B iii 12–14	100

MSL

12 42:279–80	99
--------------	----

Myth of Lugale

163 n. 37	94
-----------	----

Nbk

101	247
361	239

Ner

7,3	242
-----	-----

Ninegalla-Hymn

30:61	98
-------	----

<i>RIMA</i>			<i>SLTN</i>	
3:69, ll. 148.151	51		36 ii 12	87
3:118, ll. 25–27	51			
<i>SAA 2</i>			<i>Sumerian proverb 2.81 (etcsl)</i>	
2 V:9–10	92			98
<i>SBH</i>			<i>YOS</i>	
106:51	93		7, 56	248–250
			7, 92	248–250
			10, 41:30	51

7. Classical Sources

<i>Apollodoros, Dem.</i>		VI:288–295	159, 165
59:16	130	XXIII:741–751	159
59:52	130		
<i>Aristophanes (Poetae comici graeci III 2)</i>		<i>Odyssey</i>	
Nr. 957	164	8:159–164	159
		XV:415f	164
		XV:417–422	166
<i>Augustine</i>		<i>Iustinus</i>	
exp. prop. rm. I,		XVIII; 7.9	168
PL XXXV.2096	163		
<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>		<i>Josephus Flavius</i>	
X 20,18; 21,3	167	<i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i>	
<i>Diodorus</i>		II.9,5	177
Library of History III		V.2	41
V:20.1	163	7.9.7	47
V:35.1–5	163	13.9	23
V:38.3	163	13.11	24
V:74.1	171	13.15	24
		XV.417	151
<i>Eusebius, Praep. Evang.</i>		<i>De Bello Judaico</i>	
I:10.14	171	V.194	151
I:10.36	171		
I:10.44	170	<i>Orosius</i>	
<i>Herodotus</i>		IV.6.8	168
<i>Historiae</i>		<i>Plato</i>	
I.94	152	<i>Republic</i>	
I.199	98	5.459–61	86
V:58	171		
<i>Homer</i>		<i>Pliny</i>	
<i>Iliad</i>		<i>Natural History</i>	
VI:36–38	166	V:XIII.67	171
		VII:LVI.191	163

VII:LVI.199 163
IX,LX.127 167

Plutarch, Lycurgus
16 86

Pollux
I,45. VIII 167

Strabo
Geography VI
16.2.23 167

Index of Ancient Names

1. Persons, Mythological Figures and Deities

- Abigail 20, 44
Abi-Huram 168
Abimelech 47f, 51, 68
Abinadab 32
Abraham 78, 88, 109, 143, 179f, 192f, 197
Absalom 20
Achan, son of Carmi 42, 54, 57
Adad 251
Adad-šame, family 248
Adad-šarru-ušur, son of Ilteri-ahab 246
Adam 176
Aeschylus 216
Afis 86
Agag 209, 211
Agur 160
Ahab 52, 110, 148
Ahasuerus 205, 207–213, 215, 218, 220f
Ahat-abišu 248
Ahaz 88
Ahaziah 47
Ahimaaz 32, 47
Ahi-Yama, son of Arih 244f
Ahuzzath 68
Aia-ahâ, son of Šani-Yama 239
Alexander 165
Alexander the Great / Alexander 95, 145, 162, 169, 216
Alexander Yannai / Alexander 23f
Alkidamas 152
Amasa 20
Amenemhat I 227
Amos 141
Amun 227, 229
Ananiah bar Azariah / Anani 90
Antony, Saint 225
Apollodoros 130
Aqrâ, son of Arad-eššu 244
Arad-Gula, son of Šamri-Yama 245
Ararru, family of Arih 244–246
Arih, family of 239, 244f
Aristobulus 23
Aristophanes 164, 216
Arrian 216
Artabarra 238
Artahšar 238
Artaxerxes 13
Artaxerxes I 13, 90
Artaxerxes II 13, 130
Asaph 150
Aseneth /Asenath 14, 109
Asher 19
– tribe of 22
Asherah 169
Ashurnasirpal II 167
Aspasia / Aspasia of Phocaea 129f
Aššur-nirari V, 92
Astarte 140, 150f, 228
Atamrum 91
Athaliah 47, 110
Athene 165
Attai 20
Augustine 163
Augustus 90
Azitawadda 160
Baal 83, 88
Baal, king of Tyre 170
Balaam 211
Barikki-Yama, son of NN 238
Basemat 32
Basia, son of Arih 239, 244
Bata 228
Bathsheba 32, 44, 183
Bath-Shua 14, 19
‘BDKS’/‘BDK’ 149
Bel-aplu-iddin, family 248
Ben-Hadad 148
Benjamin 19, 197–199
– tribe of 18, 22

- Bentresh 230
 Bethel / Baytil-šur 238
 Bighan 209, 214f
 Bithiah / Bithia 19, 181
 Boaz / Boas 16f, 44, 179, 182, 187–196,
 198–200
 Caleb 19, 41
 Caligula 90
 Chemosh 150
 Chilion 179
 Claudius 230
 Cleopatra 230
 Ctesias 216
 Cyrus, the Great 220, 240
 Cyrus, the Younger 130
 Da-di-ia, son of Mi-na-áš-šé-e 239
 Dagon 171
 Dan 19
 Daniel 220
 Darius 220
 Darius II 238
 David 16–18, 20f, 31, 44, 47, 50f, 55, 82f,
 93f, 110, 121, 128, 146, 158–160, 164,
 175, 178–183, 188, 198, 211
 Delilah 50, 64, 69f, 73
 Dibbî 244
¹DINGIR.MEŠ-ia-a-di-ni son of
 Ia-a-ma-[x-x] 238
 Diodorus 171
 Dionysus 130
 Diotima 128
 Djedhor 233
 Djedi 225
 Domitian 225
 Dumuzi / Dumuzi-Tammuz / Tammuz 93, 95,
 151
 Ea-bulissu 238
 Egibi, family 239, 242, 246
 Ekur-šuma-ušabši 251
 Elimelech 191f
 Enki 93f
 Enkidu 40, 96
 Enmeduranki 251f
 Ephah 19
 Ephraim 150
 – tribe of 22
 Er 19
 Esarhaddon 170
 Esau 43f, 109, 197f
 Esther / Hadassah, daughter of Abihail 95,
 203, 216, 218–221
 Etel-pi, son of Šilla, descendent of Nupu 242
 Ethbaal 110
 Eumaios 166
 Eusebius 170
 Ezekiel 78–86, 88, 92, 95, 98, 100–102, 159,
 162, 166, 172
 Ezra 13, 14, 110, 118, 147, 220, 258
 Gad 19
 Geb 97, 231
 Gideon 51
 Gilead 19, 51
 Gilgameš 93, 97
 Gimillu, son of Innin-zer-iddin 248f
 Gorgias 152
 Gubaru 248
 Guzanu, son of Kiribtu 244–246
 Ha-an-na-ni-’, son of Mi-na-ah-he-em 238
 Ha-an-na-ta-^dE-si-’ 242
 Hagar 109, 197
 Halâ 247
 Haman, son of Hammedatha 95, 205, 207–
 221
 Hamor 197, 199
 Ha-na-šú / Hanašu 242
 Harbonah 213
 Hathach 206, 213–215
 Hazael 51
 Heber 49
 Hecabe 165
 Hector 165
 Hegai 208, 213–215, 219
 Helen 165
 Heracles / Melqart 167
 Hermes 138, 146f, 152
 Herodotus 152, 171
 Hezekiah 22, 57
 Hilarion 86
 Himdiya 91
 Hiptâ 242
 Hiram 158–160, 164, 168
 Holofernes 220
 Homer 164–166
 Hor-son-of-the-Nubian-woman 230
 Hosea 42, 54, 56, 83
 Huldah 44
 Imhotep 231
 Isaac 43, 68, 109, 197f, 200
 Ishmael 197
 Isis 97, 169, 231f
 Israel 13, 18–24, 33, 39, 41f, 44–46, 49, 52–
 58, 63–65, 67f, 70, 78, 80, 83, 86, 95, 99,

- 101, 109, 116f, 121, 125, 127, 129, 131,
151, 175, 178f, 181, 183, 187–191, 199f,
211, 256
- house of 16, 182, 190, 199f, 256
 - people of 13f, 18, 20–22, 78, 180, 183,
209, 255–257
- Issachar 19, 144
Ištar / Ishtar / Inanna 77, 81, 84, 87, 89f, 92–
100, 169
Jacob 19, 43f, 83, 180, 197f
Jarha 20
Jehoiachin 209
Jehoram 110
Jehoshaphat 164
Jephtah 44
Jeremiah / Jeremia 83, 88, 101, 148, 168
Jeroboam, son of Nebat 51
Jesse 16
Jesus 44, 80, 148, 178, 181
Jether / Ithra 20
Jethro 45, 56
Jezebel 52, 110
Joab 20, 48, 164
Joahaz 148
Joash 47, 148
Job 29, 140
John Hyrcanus / Hyrcanus 23
Jonathan 47
Josiah 22, 88, 150
Joseph 14, 19, 109, 131f, 143, 150, 197–199,
220
Josephus Flavius / Josephus 23f, 41, 47
Joshua, son of Nun 39–42, 44f, 53f, 56f
Judah / Judas / Yehud 14, 16, 19, 50, 58, 63,
75, 78, 83, 101, 164, 180f, 197f, 253
- tribe of 18–20, 22, 50
- Judith 49, 220
Jupiter 137
Kadmos 171
Kalbaya 247
Kaššaya, daughter of Amuše 242, 244–246
Keturah 109
Khonsu 230
Khufu 225
Kish 209, 211
Kronos 171
Kulû, son of Kalbaya 247f
Laban 180
Leah 16, 44, 83, 180, 187, 190, 197–200
Lemuel 117f, 160
Levi 19, 178
- tribe of 18, 22, 176
 - house of 176
- Lot 46, 50
Lydia 167
Maacah, Caleb's concubine 19
Maacah, David's wife 20, 110
Ma'at 169
Ma-at-ta-ni-i'-ia-a-ma 238
Machir 19
Mahalath 109
Mahlon 179, 191f, 195
Mahol, sons of 159
Manasseh 19
- tribe of 22
- Manasseh, king 88
Marduk 95, 98f, 240
Marduk, son of Bel-epuš 239
Marduk-mukin-apli, son of Šeru-hanan 239
Marduk-remanni 239, 245f
Mati'ilu of Arpad 92
Memuchan 208, 212f
Menena 227
Merab 83
Mercury / Merkur / Mercurius 137, 146f, 152
Mered 19, 181
Merira 225
Michal 47, 83, 93f
Min 97
Miriam 110, 176
Mithridates II 95
MPTḤYH 142
Molech 150
Mordecai / Mordechai, son of Jair 95, 168,
203, 205–221
Moses / Moshe 14, 41, 45, 49, 54, 56f, 86,
110, 175–178, 180–183
Murašu, clan 242
Na'amah / Naamah 18, 31
Naaman 45, 56
Nabê-hinni 244
Nabonidus 100
Nabu-ahu-ušur 243
Nabu-apla-iddina 251
Nabu-bani-ahi, son of Kinâ 244
Nabu-iddin/Bania/Pahharu 245
Nabu-nadin-šumi 251
Nanaya-kanat 244
Naomi 16, 57, 179–182, 187–192, 194–196,
198–200
Naphtali 19
Naqqitu / Naq-qí-tu4, daughter of Murašu

- 241f
 Narmer 225
 Neaira 130
 Nebat 51
 Nebuchadnezzar II / Nebuchadnezzar 100, 209, 239
 Nechepso 225
 Nehemiah 14f, 18, 110, 118f, 165, 220
 Neith 226
 Nergal-uballit, son of Kudurru 242
 Nerglissar's reš šarri 242
 Ninhursag 252
 Niqudu, son of Mušalammu 245
 Ni-ri-ia-a-ma, son of 'EN.NUMUN.DÙ 239
 Nut 97, 231
 Obed 16, 178f, 180, 199f
 Odysseus 146, 152
 Ohola / 'Oh^olâ 77, 82
 Oholiba / 'Oh^olibâ 77, 83
 Onan 19
 Orpah 189–191, 194
 Osiris 97, 231
 Pa-da-a-a', son of Yahu-qam 246
 Palamedes 152
 Paltî 90
 Panammu 101, 160
 Parysatis 238
 Pay-iry / Mery-Sekhmet 227
 Penelope 172
 Peor / Baal-Peor 53, 57
 Perez 16, 19, 50, 182, 190
 Pericles 128–130
 Petekhonsu 231
 Petese 225
 Petosiris 225
 Petubastis 229
 Phano 130
 Phicol 68
 Phidias 137
 Philo of Byblos 170
 Plato 128, 130
 Pliny 163, 167, 171
 Potiphar 131f
 Priapus 97
 Priscilla 225
 Puah 49
 Pythagoras 225
 Rachel 16, 44, 83, 180, 187, 190, 197–200
 Rahab / Raḥab 39–58, 96, 115, 128, 178
 Ramesses II 230
 Rebekah 44, 109, 197f, 200
 Rehoboam / Rehabeam 18, 31, 110
 Reuben 19, 197f
 Rib-Hadda 142
 Ruth 16f, 44, 50, 57, 119, 121, 143, 175, 178–183, 187–196, 198–200
 Sagburru 231
 Šahit-ginê, family of 245
 Salmon 44
 Šaltu 94
 Šamaš 251
 Šamaš-aplu-ušur, son of Rapê 245
 Samson 49f, 63–73, 75
 Šanaya 248
 Šangu-Sippar, family 248
 Sarah 44, 78, 197
 Sargon I 86
 Šarpanītu 98
 Saul 47, 93, 198, 209, 211
 Serpot 231f
 Setna 225, 230f
 Shaashgaz 214
 Shalmaneser III 51
 Shamhatu 40
 Sheba, son of Bichri 48
 Shecaniah, son of Jehiel 14
 Shechem 197, 199
 Shelah 19, 197f
 Shenoute 225
 Sheshan 20
 Sheshan, daughter of Pharaoh 177
 Shimshei 211
 Shiphrah 49
 Shulamit 168
 Siduri 128
 Simeon 19
 Sinuhe 226f
 Si-Osiris 230f
 Sisera 48f
 Socrates 129
 Solomon / Salomo / Salomon 17f, 21, 29–37, 45, 52, 110, 117, 120, 128, 131, 150, 158–160, 164, 168
 Strabo 167
 Susannah 220
 Tabat-Iššar 247f
 Tafat 32
 Tallaya-Uruk 243
 Talmi / Tholmi 20, 110
 Tamar 19, 44, 50, 128, 180, 182, 187, 190, 197–199
 Tamut 90

- Tanutniut of Amun 227, 229
 Tauthos, son of Misor / Tauthus 171
 Teresh 209, 214f
 Thales 225
 Theogenes / Basileus 130
 Thessalus of Tralles 225
 Tobit 220
 Tūši-damqat 86
 Tyro 167f
 Ur-ginuna 231
 Uriah / Uria 82, 183
 Vashti 203, 205–208, 212–215, 219–221
 Wenamun 227–230
 Xenofon 216
 Xerxes I 220
 Yael 40, 48f
 Yam 228
 Yapa^c-Hadda 142
 Yaše-Yama 247
 Yehosheva 47
- Yhwh / YHWH / Yahweh / יהוה / JHWH 31–
 36, 45, 55, 57, 64–66, 68, 71, 77, 78, 81,
 82f, 85–90, 92, 97, 101f, 110, 112, 118,
 121, 129, 149, 159, 162, 171f, 178, 189,
 193, 198, 216, 255f
 Yocheved 177
 YRḤ WKS' 149
 YTNB'L 149
 Zababa-ereš, son of Nabu-balassu-iqbi 248
 Zabdiya 248
 Zebulun 19, 144f
 – tribe of 22, 145
 Zephaniah 149
 Zerah 19, 50, 182
 Zeresh 208f, 211, 214, 220f
 Zeruah / Zeruiah 51
 Zeruiah, mother of Joab 20
 Zimri-Lim 87, 91
 Zion 77, 102
 Zipporah / Zippora 14, 110, 183

2. Geographical Names

- Abel Beth Maacah / Abel 48
 Achor, valley of 42, 54
 Adora 23
 Agade 86
 Ai 53–55
 Amalek 211
 Ammon 50, 157
 Anatolia 82, 150
 Arabia / Arabia felix 29f, 34
 Aratta 231
 Arba'il 84
 Ashkelon 71
 Asia 167, 230
 Asia Minor 225
 Aššur / Assur 84
 Assyria 21, 85, 157, 162, 231, 247
 Athens 128–130, 153
 Avva 21
 Baal-Peor 53
 Babylon 21f, 95, 98, 100, 209, 220, 239f,
 242, 245, 247–249, 251f
 Babylonia 84f, 95, 100, 237–243, 245–248,
 250–254, 256
 Bactra 216
 Bahurim 47
 Bakhtan 230
- Beersheba 22
 Bethel 46
 Bethlehem 179, 187–192, 194, 199
 Bet Shemesh 73
 Borsippa 240
 Byblos 142, 157, 160, 170, 227
 Canaan 39, 55, 73, 78, 163
 Carthage 163
 Cush 205
 Cutha 21
 Cyprus 230
 Damascus 148
 Dan 22
 Deir el-Medina 232f
 Dor 32, 158, 165f
 Ebir-nari, district 248f
 Ecbatana 220
 Edom 157, 168
 Egypt / Ägypten 34, 49, 56, 71, 78, 82, 91,
 97, 102, 133, 142, 157, 160, 162, 164,
 168, 176, 178, 181f, 194, 223, 225–228,
 230, 233
 Ekron 65, 73
 El Amarna / Amarna 84, 142
 Elephantine 90, 142, 237, 254
 Esna 225

- Etam 72
 Galilee 166, 223
 Gaza 49f, 64
 Gerar 68
 Geshur / Gessir 20, 110
 Gibeah 46
 Gibeon 54
 Gilead 19, 51
 Girsu 95
 Greece 128, 130, 145, 167, 171
 Ḥallab 95
 Hamath 21
 Hebron 50
 Heliopolis 233
 Hermopolis 142
 Hodu / India 7, 143, 205, 231
 Ḥursagkalama 100
 Idumaea 24
 Israel 13f, 20–25, 48, 65f, 75, 87, 96, 128,
 140, 144f, 147, 149, 151, 157f, 162, 164,
 70, 172, 179, 189, 216
 – Northern / Northern Kingdom 21f, 51, 88,
 149f
 Jericho 39–41, 43f, 46f, 49, 52f, 55, 96
 Jerusalem 13, 18, 22, 30–34, 36f, 52, 77–79,
 81–90, 92, 95–97, 101f, 118, 143, 148–
 151, 160, 162, 167, 169, 193, 209, 216,
 237, 253–255, 257f
 Judah / Juda / Yehud 16f, 22, 47, 58, 64f, 73,
 75, 88, 118, 133, 137, 147, 150f, 164, 209,
 216, 237, 254f
 – Southern Kingdom 110
 – Carchemish 71, 167
 Kiš 95, 100
 Lapethos 149
 Larsa 250
 Lebanon 157, 162, 165, 167, 170f, 228
 Levant 10, 137, 149, 227f
 Libya 163, 226
 Luz 46
 Maresha 158
 Mari 84, 87, 95, 149
 Marisa 23
 Marseille 150
 Mesopotamia V, 84, 87, 93, 96, 98, 128, 164
 Midian 56, 168
 Miletus 129
 Moab 16, 50, 150, 157, 181f, 188–191, 194
 Naphtali 32
 Nineveh 95
 Nippur 238f, 242, 251f
 – region 238f
 Ophir 160
 Opis 239
 Palestine / Palästina 161, 170, 216
 Persepolis 220
 Persian Empire / Persia 146, 203–205, 207,
 212, 216f, 219–221, 238
 Phoenicia / Phönizien 24, 137, 142, 147,
 149f, 160, 163–168, 171f
 Retenu, Upper 227
 Rome 90, 145, 153, 226
 Samaria 21f, 77, 82f, 85, 97, 137, 146–148
 Sepharvaim 21
 Sheba / Saba 29–37, 47, 52, 159f
 Shechem 158
 Shiqmona 165
 Shittim 40, 53f, 57
 Sidon 110, 145, 150f, 158, 160, 164f
 Sinai 53, 179
 Sippar 239f, 242, 244–248, 251f
 Sodom 46, 82
 Sorek, valley of 64, 73
 Spain 164
 Susa / Shushan 168, 203–206, 209f, 213,
 216–221
 Syria 24, 82, 150
 Tarshish 164
 Tartessos 164
 Tekoa 128
 Tell Fekherye 85
 Tel Rehov 74
 Thebes 225, 230
 Thebez 47f
 Timnah / Tel Batash 63–67, 69, 73f
 Tob 51
 Transjordan 19, 57
 Troy 165
 Tyre / Tyros 144, 158, 160, 163f, 167f, 170,
 172, 227
 Ugarit 142, 149f
 Ur 95, 160, 240
 Uruk / Uruk-Erech 95, 231f, 248–250
 Uz 29
 Zinjirli 101
 Zion 36

Index of Subjects

- acculturation 74, 240
Adam-Jesus 78, 176
adulteress 77, 79, 88, 96, 101, 113, 125, 127f, 131f
adultery 72, 79f, 82, 96f, 101, 112f, 116f, 119f, 127, 134, 141, 244
– laws 72
aesthetics 32
alphabet 142, 157, 169, 171
– scribes 239
archaeology 63, 73f
attractiveness 32f, 36, 113, 120, 132
ban 42
beautiful captive 14
beauty 32, 87, 114, 130, 132, 139, 158, 162f, 172, 205, 207–209, 214, 228, 232
balsam 29f
black feminism 8f
body V, 32, 36f, 66, 78, 80, 139, 143, 252
boundary marker 74, 204
brothel boss 77, 79, 90–92, 102
businessman 163, 172, 238
censorship 78f
centre of orientation V, 75
circumcision 24, 65
coins 145f, 152
colonialism 5–8
conspiracy 228
conversion 15–17, 23–25, 45, 58
convert 17, 22, 24, 45
covenant 14, 43, 57, 81, 87f, 92, 101f, 112, 127, 138, 147, 180, 216
criminal 87, 229
crimson cord 40, 49
darics 146
death penalty 244
demon 133, 228, 230, 233
diaspora 144, 161, 216, 220, 246, 254
discourse 2, 8
discrimination 1, 9
diviner 251f
divorces 64, 72f, 110, 244f, 256f
dowry 91, 241, 244f
drachmas 146
eligibility 129
endogamous marital rules 253f
endogamy 125, 220, 237, 240, 243, 250, 252f, 256–258
engagement 68–70, 183
entrepreneurial families 239, 243, 246
equivalency 6, 10
ethnic diversity 183
ethnic labels 63f
ethnos 241
exorcism 224
feasts 67–70, 73–75, 95, 115, 181, 218
foodway 73–75
Fortschreibungen 254f
genealogy 2, 19, 42, 176, 179–182, 189, 198, 200, 209, 216, 242, 255, 257f
gerim 21–23, 57
hadru-units 237, 239
harem 33, 214
harranu business 241
high priests 168, 256–258
hybridity/hybrid 8, 74, 203, 205, 216f, 219, 221
idolatry 15, 40, 56, 81, 86, 90, 92, 97, 100, 109, 112, 189, 193
imaginative geography 5, 10
impurity 80, 257
incense 29, 83, 150
inclusion 57f
integration 42, 178–180, 186, 188f, 191, 199f, 238f, 246
intermarriage 13–18, 23f, 74, 109f, 237f, 240, 243f, 246f, 255, 258
intersectionality 1, 8–10, 217
invisibility 9
iron dagger 243–246, 253
legacy 243
legal status 69, 187f, 195, 200
Leitwort 70, 73
lineage 51, 243, 250–254, 257

- macarism 35
 magic 226, 230f
 marriage contract 101, 142, 243–248
 masculinity VI, 30f, 33, 36
 matriarchy 231
 mercenaries 71, 238, 240
 migrants 182, 237f, 240, 252
 mimicry 203, 205, 216–218
 mixed marriage 13, 16–19, 23f, 57, 78, 125–
 128, 130f, 133f, 237, 243, 247f, 254–256
 monogamy 129
 namelessness 176, 181
 navigation 164
 noble savage 6
 oblates 240f, 248–250
 oppression 1, 5–7, 9, 66
 oracles 45, 163, 224, 232
 orientalism 5, 7f
 orphan 83, 204, 206, 219, 228
 outsider 14, 39f, 42, 45f, 48, 514f, 56f, 109,
 113, 116, 119, 126, 219, 250, 258
 patriarchal narratives 109, 255f
 persuasion 127
 persuasiveness 132
 physicality 32f, 36
 polygamy 110
 postcolonial studies 205, 217
 pottery 74
 prebend families 243
 predetermination 233
 priesthood 127, 250f, 253, 257
 – barû 252
 – diviner 252
 promiscuity 6, 89, 97, 112f
 prostitution 44, 51, 57, 79f, 90–93, 97, 102,
 109, 112, 128, 133, 229f
 purity 64, 67, 125, 219, 249, 255, 257
 purity laws 67
 purple 91, 157, 161, 165–169, 172
 qipu 238
 queen mother 31
 race 6, 9, 171
 rape 44, 22
 refugee 5, 121, 179, 204, 219, 238, 240
 riddle 29, 33f, 36f, 67–71, 73, 117
 royal merchants 239, 244–246
 royal service 23
 ša reši 238, 24
 scatology 99
 seduction 33, 69f, 120, 175, 230
 separation 15, 22, 66, 129
 shaman 94, 224f
 shaming 233
 sinner 42, 54, 126
 širku-oblate 240, 248
 slaves 20f, 44, 55, 90, 97, 121, 130, 139, 176,
 195, 238, 241f, 245, 247–249
 stereotype V, 2, 6f, 10, 30, 36, 63f, 66, 73,
 75, 109, 112–114, 119f, 203, 205, 216f,
 220
 – gender ~ 36, 63, 69, 73, 205, 220
 strategic essentialism 8, 10
 subjectivization 3
 subjectivity 1, 3, 4, 10
 subjugation 3f, 176
 textile 118, 142, 159, 164–168, 171f
 third space 8, 10
 tribute 167, 225, 228
 trickster 42–45, 50, 220,
 type-scene 44f, 47, 49f, 63f, 70, 73
 votaresses 240f
 wandering personnel 225
 wealth 31–33, 36, 111, 120, 138, 140, 171,
 215, 233
 widow 50f, 204, 241, 256f
 xenophobia 121
 Zadokite priest 256f
 zakitu-oblates 240, 248