

BODY IMAGE IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AND IN SECOND TEMPLE TRADITIONS

DESCRIPTION

How was the perfect body depicted in sacred sources, and what were the socio-cultural implications of such representations? This course will explore images of the divine and human bodies, focussing upon the constructions of physicality, gender, status and ethnicity. Scholarly methods (i.e. source, text, form and historical criticism), will be complemented by more recent approaches including structural analysis, gender, feminist and psychoanalytic interpretations. The study of these contexts is relevant to the pre-history and development of sacral law, sacrificial ritual, and kinship relations, prior to their crystallization in early Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

COURSE AIMS

- To understand the significance of physical appearance in ancient societies, and how aspects of gender, status, and ethnicity informed depictions of the ideal body in sacred texts.
- To appreciate the background of the biblical images in the context of ancient Near Eastern cosmology and culture, and the substantial differences in contemporary, post-modern approaches to these images.
- To illuminate the gradual development of monotheism in light of alternative deities and rituals reflected in biblical texts and historical sources.
- To convey the importance of integrating archaeological, epigraphic and iconographic evidence into scholarly discussions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course will provide students with the following skills:

1. The ability to analyse ancient sacred sources contextually and to develop sophisticated responses to the critical issues raised by them, based on the contributions of varied critical approaches.
2. The capacity to formulate appropriate questions about the significance of human and divine images that are cognizant of, and sensitive to, the differentiations in subsequent Jewish and Christian theologies.
3. An appreciation of the social and historical background in which constructions of divine, male, and female bodies became authoritative, and also how they continue to inform contemporary doctrinal teaching.

ASSESSMENT

3,000 word coursework essay
Examination

40% of marks
60% of marks

TEACHING DELIVERY

Lectures will be interactive and will cover the following topics:

1. The Bodies of God(s) and the Divine Image
2. Gender Matters: "Male and Female He Created Them."
3. "My Covenant in the Flesh:" Circumcision and Identity
4. Child Sacrifice and the Image of the Beloved Son
5. Body Beautiful: Sexuality and Its Consequences
6. Ethnicity, Intermarriage and the Limits of Patriarchy
7. Damaged Bodies?
 - (i) Infertility Matters (ii) Purity and Danger (iii) Violence and Injury
 - (iv) Marks of Faith: Personal Devotion and the Body of the Slave
8. Bodies in Law: "Life" Crimes and the Role of Vicarious Punishments
9. Femininity and the National Body: Paradigms of Loss, and Survival of the Fittest
10. Post-Biblical Receptions: Reshaping Bodies, Re-Writing Bibles
 - (a) Sectarian Texts from Khirbet Qumran (b) Early Christian Sources

Students will be provided with a hand-out which outlines the key themes discussed. Biblical, Aramaic and cuneiform texts will be presented in translation, but can be taught in their original language if preferred. Students will need to bring any English translation of the Hebrew Bible to every class, and may prefer to have this downloaded to their lap-top. These recommended editions should be used in all assessed coursework:

- *NRSV: The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*
- *JPS/NJPS: The (New) Jewish Publication Society Bible*

Students who have not taken any prior courses in biblical studies will be provided with introductory background materials, electronically on the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment), for advance consultation.

LECTURE OUTLINES & PROPOSED TEACHING MATERIALS

1. The Bodies of God(s) and the Divine Image

Summary: This session will explore representations of the divine image and its omnipotence using techniques of inner-biblical exegesis, and recent approaches in comparative ancient Near Eastern cosmology. Divine representations will also be presented in light of archaeological and material remains.

Preliminary Bibliography

Alexander, P. "Reflections on Word Versus Image As Ways of Mediating the Divine Presence in Judaism," in *The Image and its Prohibition in Jewish Antiquity* (Journal of Jewish Studies Supplement Series, 2; ed. S. Pearce; Oxford: Journal of Jewish Studies, 2013), 10-27.

Eilberg-Schwartz, H. "God's Body: The Divine Cover Up," in *Religious Reflections on the Human Body* (ed. J. M. Law. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 137-148.

Keel, O. and C. Uehlinger, "Baal, El, Yahwh, and 'His Asherah' in the Context of Egyptian Solar and Royal Imagery: Iron Age IIB," in *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (trans. T.H. Trapp; Edinburgh: T & T Clark 1998), 171-281.

Niehr, H. "In Search of YHWH's Cult Statue in the First Temple," in *The Image and The Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism and the Rise of the Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. K. van der Toorn; Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 72-93.

Rillet-Wood, B. "When Gods Were Men," in *From Babylon to Babel: Essays on Biblical History and Literature in Honour of Brian Peckham* (ed. B. Rillet Wood et al; New York and London: T. & T. Clark, 2006), 285-300.

Smith, M.S. *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (2nd ed.; Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002).

Sommer, B.D. *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Stern, E. "From Many Gods to the One God: The Archaeological Evidence," in *One God, One Cult, One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives* (ed. R.G. Kratz and H. Spieckermann; Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 405; Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 395-405.

Zakovitch, Y. "Inner-Biblical Interpretation," in *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism* (ed. M. Heinze; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 27-63.

2. Gender Matters: "Male and Female He Created Them."

Summary: The creation of mankind and what went wrong in the garden? Theological, structural-anthropological, and feminist, responses to the actions in Eden will be provided.

Preliminary Bibliography

Bechtel, L. M. "Rethinking the Interpretation of Genesis 2.4b-3.24," in *A Feminist Companion to Genesis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 77-117.

Knohl, I. "Knowing Good and Evil: God and Humanity in J's Story of Beginnings," in *The Divine Symphony: The Bible's Many Voices* (Philadelphia: JPS, 2003), 37-49.

Pardes, I. *Countertraditions in the Bible: A Feminist Approach* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1992).

3. "My Covenant in the Flesh:" Circumcision and Identity

Summary: If man was created in the image of God, why is circumcision required? This question will be explored in relation to covenant theology, where the further significance of psychoanalytic and anthropological approaches to the rite of circumcision will be clarified.

Preliminary Bibliography

Eilberg-Schwartz, H. *The Savage in Judaism: Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

Kline Silverman, E. "The Cut of Wholeness: Psychoanalytic Interpretations of Biblical Circumcision," in *The Covenant of Circumcision: New Perspectives on an Ancient Jewish Rite* (ed. E. Wyner Mark. Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 2003), 43-57.

Cohen, S. *Why Aren't Jewish Women Circumcised? Gender and Covenant in Judaism*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

Frymer-Kensky, T. "Covenant: A Jewish Biblical Perspective", in *Studies in Biblical and Feminist Criticism* (Philadelphia: JPS, 2006). 133-156.

Vermes, G. "Circumcision and Exodus iv 24-26: Prelude to the Theology of Baptism," in *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (Second Revised Edition; Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1973), 178-192.

4. Child Sacrifice and the Image of the Beloved Son

Summary: This session will explore the background of child sacrifice, trans-generational punishment in the Hebrew Bible, in relation to ancient Near Eastern cosmology and Assmann's theory (2008:79) of "semantic transpositions."

Preliminary Bibliography

Ariel, Y. "Still Ransoming First-Born Sons? *Pidyon Habben* and Its Survival in the Jewish Tradition" in *Human Sacrifice in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (eds. K. Finsterbushe, A. Lange and K. F. Diethard Römhald; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 305-320.

Assmann, J. *Of God and Gods: Egypt, Israel and the Rise of Monotheism* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).

Berquist, J. "What Does The Lord Require?" Old Testament Child Sacrifice and New Testament Christology," *Encounters* 55.2 (1994): 107-128.

Bottéro, J. "The Substitute King and His Fate", in *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning and the Gods* (Trans. Z.Bahrani and Marc van de Mieroop; Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1992), 138-155.

Levenson, J. D. *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

5. Body Beautiful: Sexuality and Its Consequences

Summary: Why were the heroines idealized in the patriarchal narratives, and elsewhere in the biblical writings, depicted as physically attractive? This question will be considered in light of the sexual regulations in biblical law, and consider factors such as genealogical descent, paternity, sexual desire and male licence. Models of evolution biology will be presented in this discussion.

Preliminary Bibliography

Brenner, A. "Sex, Procreation and Contraception: Ideologies and Praxis," in *The Intercourse of Knowledge: On Gendering Desire and Sexuality in the Hebrew Bible* (Biblical Interpretation Series, Volume 26; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 52-89.

Douglas, M. *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (London: Barrie and Rockcliff, 1970 repr. London and New York: Routledge, 2003).

Exum, J.C. "The Ethics of Biblical Violence Against Women," in *The Bible in Ethics* (JSOT Supplement Series 207; ed. J. W. Rogerson, M. Davies and M. Daniel Carroll; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 248-271.

Frymer-Kensky, T. "The Disposable Wife," in *Reading the Women of the Bible: A New Interpretation of their Stories* (Schoken: New York 2002), 93-98.

Kawashima, R. S. "Could A Woman Say 'No' In Biblical Israel? On the Genealogy of Legal Status in Biblical Law and Literature," *AJS Review* 35:1 (April 2011): 1-22.

Malul, M. *Knowledge, Control and Sex: Studies in Biblical Thought, Culture, and Worldview* (Tel Aviv-Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publication, 2002).

Scurlock, J.A. "The Status of Women in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *The Western Perspective: A History of Civilization in the West* (P.V. Cannistraro and J. J. Reich; Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1999), 62-64.

6. Ethnicity, Inter-marriage and the Limits of Patriarchy

Summary: How was ethnic identity defined and maintained? What role did individual status play in this context? And how were these factors reflected in the diverse sects which flourished in the second Temple period? This session will examine these questions in extra-biblical Judean sources, including the Elephantine (Aramaic) papyri and The Community Rule (סֵדֶר הַיְּהוּדָה *Serekh HaYahad*) from Qumran.

Preliminary Bibliography

Azzoni, A. "Women of Elephantine and Women in the Land of Israel," in *In the Shadow of Bezalel: Aramaic, Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bezalel Porten* (ed. A. F. Botta; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 3-13.

Berkowitz, B.A. *Defining Jewish Difference: From Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: CUP, 2012).

Cohen, S.J.D. *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: London University of California Press, 1999).

Collins, J.J. "Sectarian Communities in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. T. M. Lim and J.J. Collins; Oxford: OUP, 2010), 151-172.

Collins, J.J. "The Yaḥad," in *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI., and Cambridge, England: W. W. Eerdmans, 2010), 52-87.

Frevel, Christian, ed. *Mixed Marriages: Inter-marriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period* (LHBOTS 547; New York: T&T Clark International, 2011).

Modrzejewski, J.M. "Mibtahiah and Her Husbands: A Family of Note During the Reign of Artaxerxes I," in *The Jews of Egypt from Rameses II to the Emperor Hadrian* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 26-36.

7. Damaged Bodies?
 - (i) Infertility Matters (ii) Purity and Danger (iii) Violence and Injury
 - (iv) Marks of Faith: Personal Devotion and the Body of the Slave

Lecture Summary: The intense desire for physical perfection, so crucial to the Priestly requirements of the cult, is frequently jeopardized in various prophetic and narrative sources. To what extent can source and text criticism help to resolve these tensions?

Preliminary Bibliography

Assmann, J. "Inscriptional Violence and the Art of Cursing: A Study of Performative Writing," *Stanford Law Review* 9/1 (Spring 1992), 43-65.

Bahrani, Z. *Rituals of War: The Body and Violence in Mesopotamia* (New York: Zone Books, 2008).

Douglas, M. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966; repr. London: Routledge Classics, 2006).

Jacobs, S. "The Body Inscribed: A Priestly Initiative?" in *The Body in Biblical, Christian and Jewish Texts* (ed. J.E. Taylor; Library of Second Temple Studies; New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2014), 1-16.

Monroe, L. M. "Disembodied Women: Sacrificial Language and the Deaths of Bat-Jephthah, Cozbi, and the Bethlehemite Concubine," *CBQ* 75 (2013): 32-52.

Olyan, S.M. "Mary Douglas's Holiness/Wholeness Paradigm: Its Potential for Insight and Its Limitation," in *Social Inequality in the World of the Text: The Significance of Ritual and Social Distinctions in the Hebrew Bible* (Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 187-195.

8. Bodies in Law: "Life" Crimes and the Role of Vicarious Punishments

Summary: How was the financial value of individual body (or injury to any of its limbs/organs) calculated? What role did vicarious punishment play in this context? These questions will be addressed through the framework of comparative ancient law.

Preliminary Bibliography

Démaire-Lafont, S. "The Status of Women in the Legal Texts of the Ancient Near East," in *Torah* (ed. I. Fischer and M. Navarro Puerto with A. Taschl-Erber; English edition, ed. J. Økland; The Bible and Women: An Exegesis of Cultural History 1; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 109-132.

Jacobs, S. "Instrumental Talion in Deuteronomic Law," *Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 16 (2010): 263-278.

Jacobs, S. "נפש תחת נפש A Life for A Life and Napšate Umalla," in *The Ancient Near East in the 12th-10th Centuries BCE: Culture and History. Proceedings of the International Conference held at Haifa University, 02-05 May 2010* (ed. G. Galil, et al.; AOAT 392; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2012), 241-253.

9. Femininity and the National Body: Paradigms of Loss, or Survival of the Fittest?

Summary: This session will explore constructions of women as symbols of defeat in the prophetic and historiographical writings. These will be considered through the medium of rhetorical and feminist criticism.

Preliminary Bibliography

Bergmann, C. "'Like A Warrior' and 'Like A Woman Giving Birth'," in *Bodies, Embodiment and Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (eds. S. T. Kamionkowski and W. Kim. New York and London: T & T Clark International, 2010), 38-56.

Chapman, C. *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 62; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004).

Day, P.L. "A Prostitute Unlike A Woman: Whoring as a Metaphoric Vehicle for Foreign Alliances," in *Israel's Prophets and Israel's Past: Essays on the Relationship of Prophetic Texts*

and Israelite History in Honor of John H. Hayes (eds. B.E. Kelle and M.B. Moore; London: T & T Clark, 2006), 161-170.

Frymer-Kensky, T. "Introduction: Reading the Women of the Bible," in *Reading The Women of The Bible: A New Interpretation of Their Stories* (New York: Schocken, 2002), xiii-xvii.

Lemos, T. M. "Shame and Mutilation in the Hebrew Bible," *JBL* 125/2 (2006): 225-241.

10. Post-Biblical Receptions: Reshaping Bodies, Re-Writing Bibles

(i) Sectarian Texts from Khirbet Qumran (ii) Early Christian Sources

Summary: This final session will look at early transformative interpretations of the biblical traditions, notably how body images are re-configured in the Second Temple period. Methods employed will include text criticism, alongside Lange and Pleše's theory of "transpositional hermeneutics," which is relevant to the development of these images also in the New Testament.

Preliminary Bibliography

Lange, A. and Z. Pleše, 'Transpositional Hermeneutics,' in "The Qumran Pesharim and the Dervani Papyrus: Transpositional Hermeneutics," in *Ancient Jewish and Ancient Greek Communities,* in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Context: Integrating the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Study of Ancient Texts, Languages and Cultures, Vol. Two* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 140/11; ed. A. Lange, E. Tov and M. Weigold; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 895-899.

Naijman, H. "Re-Writing as Whitewashing: The Case of Re-Written Bible," in *Vixens Disturbing Vineyards: Embarrassment and Embrace of Scriptures: Festschrift in Honor of Harry Fox - leBeit Yoreh* (Judaism and Jewish Life; ed. T. Yoreh et al.; Boston, MA Academic Studies Press 2010), 140-153.

Ratcliffe, R. "The Acts of Paul and Thecla: Violating the Inviolable Body – Thecla Uncut," in *The Body in Biblical, Christian and Jewish Texts* (ed. J.E. Taylor; Library of Second Temple Studies; New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2014), 184-209.

Zahn, M. "Rewritten Scripture," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. T. M. Lim and J.J. Collins; Oxford: OUP, 2010), 323-336.