

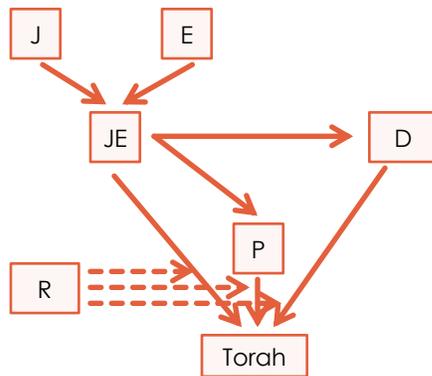
Jephthah's Daughter

CLASS 4B

The Deuteronomistic History

The Documentary Hypothesis Julius Wellhausen

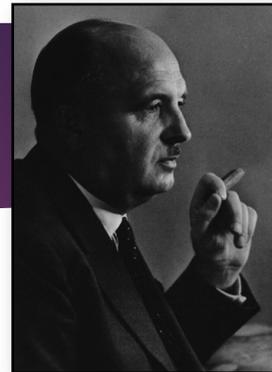
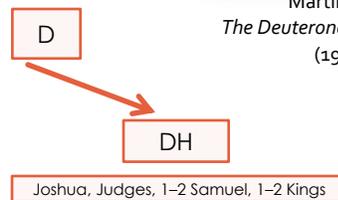
- ▶ The Torah was originally four distinct narratives, each complete and distinct



Julius Wellhausen
Prolegomena to the History of Israel
(1882)

The Hypothesis Refined Martin Noth

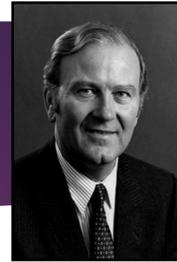
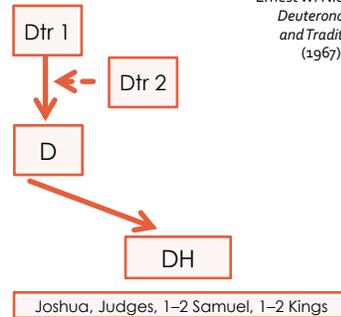
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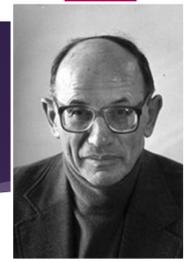
Martin Noth
The Deuteronomistic History
(1948)

The Hypothesis Refined An Earlier Start

- ▶ The Torah was originally four distinct narratives, each complete and distinct



Ernest W. Nicholson
*Deuteronomy
and Tradition*
(1967)



Moshe Weinfeld
*Deuteronomy and the
Deuteronomistic School*
(1972)

The Deuteronomistic History Social Context

- ▶ Post-exilic composition
- ▶ Roots in landed gentry circles that had backed Josiah's reforms
- ▶ Alignment with Jehoiakin in exile, and later Zerubbabel (kings)
- ▶ This would contrast the priestly project which was reconstructing a non-monarchic commonwealth after the exile





The Deuteronomistic History The Story

- ▶ Moses' final words at edge of promised land
- ▶ Conquest of land
- ▶ Establishment of kingless community in promised land
- ▶ Initial installation of kings Saul, David, Solomon
- ▶ Split of kingdom into north (Israel) and south (Judah)
- ▶ Fall of the kingdom of Israel (to Assyria)
- ▶ Restoration of united Kingdom under Josiah
- ▶ Fall of kingdom of Judah (to Babylon)

The Deuteronomistic History

Major Themes

Judges

- ▶ Supports a (restored and ethical) monarchy
- ▶ Prophets as check on royal power
- ▶ If you follow the law, you keep the land

- ▶ Women are players and pawns in this history

set in the period
before kings arise

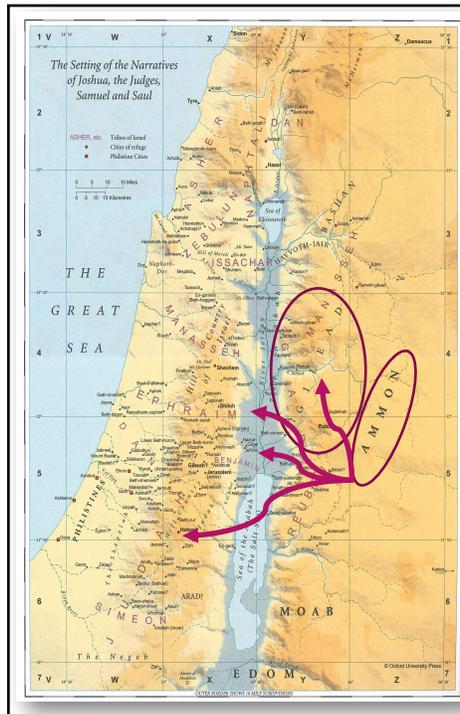
no prophets yet

a related cycle:

1. Israelites turn from Yahweh and worship other gods
2. YHWH turns them over to oppressive foreigners
3. YHWH appoints a judge to deliver them

Player: Deborah the judge,
Pawns: Jephthah's daughter &
Levite's concubine

Jephthah's Daughter



- Gilead is at the central eastern edge of the confederation of 12 tribes; Ammon is the non-Israelite people just to their east
- Story set in the period of judges, before the monarchies, 1150–1000 BCE
- Story TOLD much later; after destruction of the Northern Kingdom Israel by Assyria, during the reunification of the kingdom under Josiah and after the Babylonian Exile right after, 622–540 BCE
- The authors are referred to as the “Deuteronomists” because they write the book of Deuteronomy (literally, second law”)

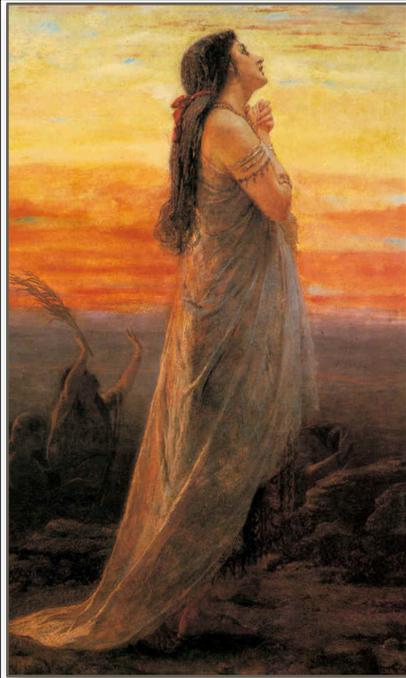
Judg. 11:1 וַיִּפְתַּח הַגִּלְעָדִי הַזֶּה גִּבּוֹר חַיִּל וְהוּא בֶן־אִשָּׁה זוֹנָה וַיִּזְלַד גִּלְעָד אֶת־יִפְתָּח: **2** וַתֵּלֶד אִשְׁת־גִּלְעָד לּוֹ בָנִים וַיִּגְדְּלוּ בְנֵי־הָאִשָּׁה וַיִּגְרְשׁוּ אֶת־יִפְתָּח וַיֵּאמְרוּ לוֹ לֹא־תִנְחַל בְּבֵית־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ כִּי בֶן־אִשָּׁה אֶתְרַת אֶתָּה: **3** וַיִּבְרַח יִפְתָּח מִפְּנֵי אָחָיו וַיָּשָׁב בְּאַרְצוֹ טוֹב וַיִּתְלַקְטוּ אֵלָיו־יִפְתָּח אַנְשִׁים רִיקִים וַיֵּצְאוּ עִמּוֹ: **פ 4** וַיְהִי מִקִּיָּם וַיִּלְחַמוּ בְנֵי־עַמּוֹן

Judg. 11:1 Now Jephthah the Gileadite, the son of a prostitute, was a mighty warrior. Gilead was the father of Jephthah. **2** Gilead's wife also bore him sons; and when his wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah away, saying to him, “You shall not inherit anything in our father's house; for you are the son of another woman.” **3** Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob. Outlaws collected around Jephthah and went raiding with him.

The Hebrew noun for prostitute here is the same word (in verbal form) that will be used for what the Levite's concubine did — “fornicated/prostituted herself”

His weakness is emphasized in the term used for the men who gather round him; not really “outlaws,” but literally “empty men”

Here the emphasis is on how this weakens him; he lacks any inheritance with the men of Gilead

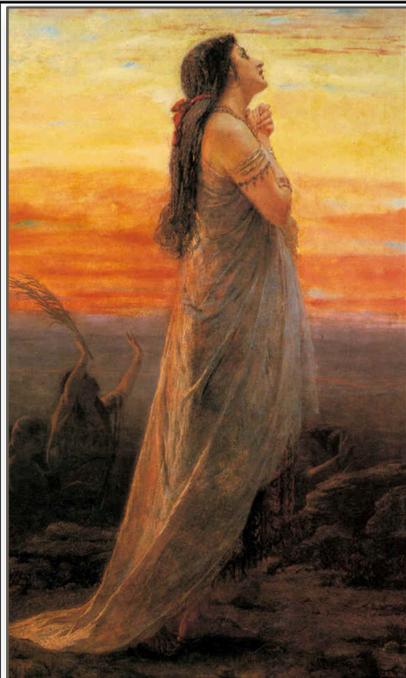


The Lament of Jephthah's Daughter, George Hicks (1871)

Judges 11:36-40

³⁶She said to him, "My father, if you have opened your mouth to the LORD, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, now that the LORD has given you vengeance against your enemies, the Ammonites." ³⁷And she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me: Grant me two months, so that I may go and wander on the mountains, and bewail my virginity, my companions and I." ³⁸"Go," he said and sent her away for two months. So she departed, she and her companions, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains.

³⁹At the end of two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to the vow he had made. She had never slept with a man. So there arose an Israelite custom that ⁴⁰for four days every year the daughters of Israel would go out to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

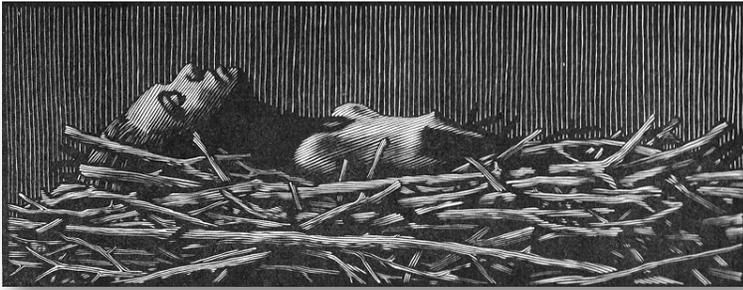


The Lament of Jephthah's Daughter, George Hicks (1871)

Male Commentators Praise Her Sacrifice

[They] came back to be far better daughters than they went out. They came back softened, and purified, and sobered at heart. They came back ready to die for their fathers, and for their brothers, and for their husbands, and for their God.

Alexander & White
writing in the Victorian era (late 1800s,
when George Hicks paints this image)



Jephthah's Daughter on the Funeral Pyre, Barry Moser (Pennyroyal Caxton Bible, 1995-1999)

A feminist reads with the hermeneutic of suspicion

The male-oriented narrator, who has all along neglected to reveal the young woman's name, is now concerned to tell us that she had never known a man (11:39), as if this somehow makes her end more tragic. A woman reader might reply that she had known men, at least one all too well, and that is the heart of her tragedy.

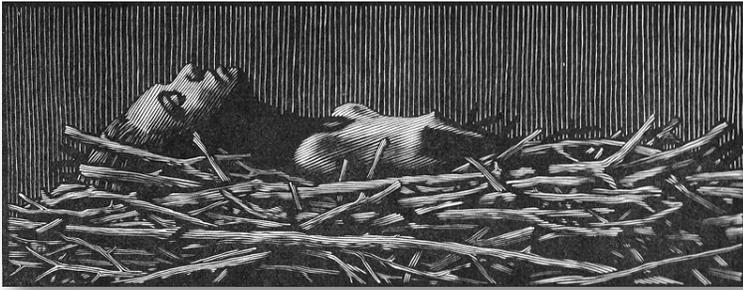
Danna Nolan Fewell
The Women's Bible Commentary



Abraham Offering His Son Isaac, George Sigal (1973)

A feminist reads with the hermeneutic of suspicion

Why is Abraham's son spared, but Jephthah's daughter is not?

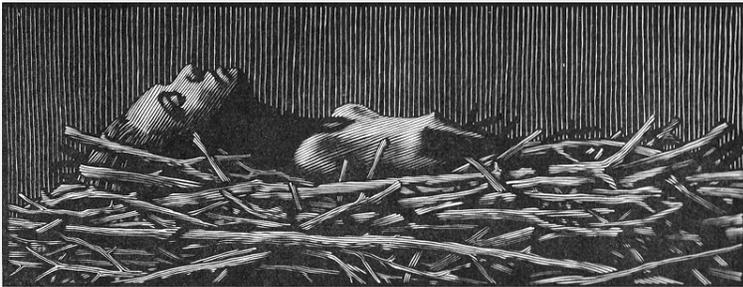


Jephthah's Daughter on the Funeral Pyre, Barry Moser (Pennyroyal Caxton Bible, 1995-1999)

A feminist reads with the hermeneutic of suspicion

Perhaps... the death of the daughter, the silence of God, and the absence of the people are but signs of something rotten with the state of Israel. God has been abandoned too many times by Israel and remembered again only when the people are under major threat that, by the time of Jephthah, God has grown impatient with the troubling of Israel....

Danna Nolan Fewell
The Women's Bible Commentary



Jephthah's Daughter on the Funeral Pyre, Barry Moser (Pennyroyal Caxton Bible, 1995-1999)

A feminist reads with the hermeneutic of suspicion

Yahweh, like Jephthah, has been cast out and is only recalled when there is fighting to be done. Yahweh is merely another party to be bargained with and, once the victory is granted, to be dispensed with, like the daughter.

Danna Nolan Fewell
The Women's Bible Commentary

Sound play/pun: ke rah • ke ray ah • ok rai

“You have crippled me, and you are my crumpling”

35 נִיהַי כְּרֹאוֹתָו אוֹתָהּ וַיִּקְרַע אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲתָהּ
 בְּתִילִי ^aתִּכְרַע הַכְרַעְתֵּנִי וְאַתָּה תִּנְיִתִי בְּעִקְרֵי וְאַנְכִי
 פָּצִיתִי־פִי אֶל־יְהוָה וְלֹא אוּכַל לָשׁוּב:

She was his only child; he had no son or daughter except her. **35** When he saw her, he **tore** his clothes, and said, “Alas, my daughter! You have brought me **very low**; you have become the cause of **great trouble** to me. For I have opened my mouth to the LORD, and I cannot take back my vow.”