

The Most High Male: Divine Masculinity in the Bible

David J.A. Clines
University of Sheffield

Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to examine the profile of the deity, as a literary character in the Bible, from the perspective of gender. Following a set of earlier papers in which I explored the masculinity of various biblical figures, I intend to consider the figure of the biblical deity under the major categories that indicate masculinity in biblical texts: strength, violence, honour, holiness, etc. It is no secret that the God of the Bible is represented as a male, but the extent to which characteristically male values permeate the depiction of the Deity in the Bible is rarely acknowledged. In the case of honour, for example, the traditional translation of *kabod* and *doxa* as 'glory' rather than 'honour' when used of God obscures the fact that the deity is represented as engaged in the same competitive quest for honour as the typical Mediterranean male. In the case of holiness, which is the quintessential quality of divinity, it is likewise rarely observed that the term is totally gendered, relating solely to the male sphere, from which women are excluded. The paper aims to exemplify the importance of masculinity studies for feminist criticism.

Right from the beginning of feminist biblical criticism, divine masculinity has been an important theme. Among early feminist writers I mention Mary Daly, whose 1973 book, *Beyond God the Father*,¹ made the first sustained attack on biblical patriarchy as a pre-eminent source of the oppression of women. Daly was not a biblical scholar, and, apart from the impulse her writing gave, there was no engagement in any depth with the biblical texts.

Phyllis Trible in her article of the same year, 'Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation',² was equally clear that 'It is superfluous to document patriarchy in Scripture'.³ Yet, focusing on two biblical passages only, Genesis 2–3 and the Song of Songs, she reached the conclusion that 'the biblical God is not on the side of patriarchy', and claimed she had found a 'depatriarchalizing principle at work in the Hebrew Bible'.⁴ In her later work also, she maximized any hints she could find of woman-friendly attitudes in the Hebrew Bible.⁵ In my view, this approach has been detrimental to feminist biblical interpretation in deflecting attention from the

¹ See Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973; new edition with a new introduction, 1986; available online [search: Daly "beyond god the father"]).

² Phyllis Trible, 'Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation', *JAAR* 41 (1973), pp. 30-48.

³ 'Depatriarchalizing', p. 30.

⁴ 'Depatriarchalizing', p. 48.

⁵ *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984). See also her article, 'God, Nature of', in *IDBS* (1976), pp. 368-69 ('Recovery of [the vocabulary of female imagery for God] tempers any assertion that Yahweh is a male deity', p. 369a).

overwhelming evidence of male supremacy in the language of the Bible by focusing on some relatively minor apparent exceptions.⁶

This is not the place to review the history of feminist biblical criticism, which has had a plethora of issues to address that touch directly on the roles of women in the Bible and on the impact of biblical texts on feminist self-understanding. On the whole, feminist criticism of the Bible has not been drawn to the question of masculinity; but I do think that the Bible's depiction of masculinity, indeed, its ubiquitous prioritization of the male, should now be regarded as a much overlooked dimension in feminist biblical criticism—and indeed of biblical criticism in general.⁷

I myself have been writing a series of essays over the last twenty years on masculinity in the Bible, looking at the portraits of a number of male biblical characters;⁸ but I have deferred until now a study of the supremely masculine character, the deity. The challenge of addressing such a vast subject deterred me, though I think I had long ago rid myself of any residual anxiety about exploring the character of the biblical deity with the same tools I had used for other biblical figures.

⁶ For a nuanced treatment of the topic, see Tim Bulkeley, *Not Only a Father: Talk of God as Mother in the Bible and Christian Tradition* (Auckland: The Author, 2011) (online bigbible.org/mothergod/author/TimB/). For a critique, cf. Paul V. Mankowski, 'Old Testament Iconology and the Nature of God', in *The Politics of Prayer: Feminist Language and the Worship of God* (ed. Helen Hull Hitchcock; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992).

⁷ I should mention at this point two striking works, by Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *God's Phallus and Other Problems for Men and Monotheism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994) and by Stephen D. Moore, *God's Gym: Divine Male Bodies of the Bible* (London: Routledge, 1996), which twenty years ago raised the issue of the masculine depictions of the deity in acute form, but have yet to find an audience worthy of them. I strike out on a different, but congruent, path in this paper.

⁸ 'David the Man: The Construction of Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible', in *Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup, 205; Gender, Culture, Theory, 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), pp. 212-43; "'Ecce vir", or, Gendering the Son of Man', in J. Cheryl Exum and Stephen D. Moore (eds.), *Biblical Studies/Cultural Studies: The Third Sheffield Colloquium* (JSOTSup, 266; Gender, Culture, Theory, 7; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 352-75; 'He-Prophets: Masculinity as a Problem for the Hebrew Prophets and their Interpreters', in *Sense and Sensitivity: Essays on Reading the Bible in Memory of Robert Carroll* (ed. Alastair G. Hunter and Philip R. Davies; JSOTSup, 348; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), pp. 311-28; 'Paul, the Invisible Man', in *New Testament Masculinities* (ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore; Semeia Studies, 45; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), pp. 157-68; 'Being a Man in the Book of the Covenant', in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham* (ed. J.G. McConville and Karl Möller; London: T. & T. Clark International, 2007), pp. 3-9; 'Dancing and Shining at Sinai: Playing the Man in Exodus 32-34', in *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond* (ed. Ovidiu Creanga; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), pp. 54-63. Four other articles from my masculinity project remain unpublished, but, like the published articles, are available at www.academia.edu: 'Loingirding and Other Male Activities in the Book of Job', 'The Book of Psalms, Where Men Are Men: On the Gender of Hebrew Piety', 'The Magnificat: A Disenchantment', and 'The Scandal of a Male Bible'.

Nevertheless I had a bad conscience about leaving the subject untouched. When I wrote in 2010 some concluding reflections for a volume of papers on biblical masculinity⁹ my final comment was this:

Most conspicuous by its absence in this volume is the elephant in the room, the quintessence of masculinity, Yahweh. In one figure, the Hebrew deity incorporates the masculinity of Hebrew culture: he is strong (supremely so), a killer (from the Flood onwards), womanless (consort-free, and approachable only by holy men), beautiful ('glorious'), and persuasive (forever speechifying). If we once begin to seriously unpick the masculinity of Yahweh, we might well wonder what will remain. Yet this is a fundamental task for the history of religion, theology, Jewish self-identity, Christian worship, and everyday popular religious belief and practice. What language exists that can be used about Yahweh that is non-masculine, or at least not offensively masculine?¹⁰

Even so, it has taken a further five years for me to address the lack that was so obvious to me then. In the meantime, a sequel to *Men and Masculinity* has appeared,¹¹ in which there is indeed one paper on one aspect of the masculinity of the deity¹² although the volume as a whole leaves the issue unexplored.

I am probably missing something (perhaps many things), but I do not know of any other undertaking in recent times to consider the figuration of divine masculinity in the Bible, a topic that is surely very much under-researched. I plan in this paper to consider the character of the deity (both Yhwh and, to a lesser degree, the God of the New Testament) using the range of criteria I have found useful in studying other biblical males.

I will not linger over obvious male language for the deity in the Bible, such as the ubiquitous pronoun 'he' and the use of terms like 'father' and 'king';¹³ I will focus rather on some common language that is equally male but much less evident, viz. the language of strength and power, size and height, violence and killing, honour and holiness.

⁹ Ovidiu Creangă (ed.), *Men and Masculinity in Hebrew Bible and Beyond* (BMW, 33; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010).

¹⁰ 'Final Reflections on Men and Masculinity', in Creangă, *Men and Masculinity*, pp. 234-39 [239].

¹¹ Ovidiu Creangă and Peter-Ben Smit (eds.), *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded* (HBM, 62; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014).

¹² Alan Hooker, 'Show Me your Glory': The Kabod of Yahweh as Phallic Manifestation?', in Creangă and Smit, *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, pp. 17-34.

¹³ The epithet 'creator' is also, in my opinion, equally gendered. The biblical idea of creation by the word of a male deity, as in Genesis 1 and Psa. 33.6, 9, is distinctly different from the idea of the world as the product of a mother god, whether giving birth to the world, or, for example, creating humankind, like the Sumerian mother deity Nintur, by mixing clay with blood of a slain god. See W.G. Lambert and A.R. Millard, *Atra-Ḥasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 57-61.

1. *Strength and Power*

First, I should justify my claim that a focus in a text on strength is a marker of masculine ideology. It arises from the simple fact that physical strength differentiates men from women. Men are about 100% stronger than women (in the upper body, at any rate, though only 50% stronger in the lower body).¹⁴ It is supported by the textual evidence of the Bible, where no woman is ever called strong.¹⁵ These two facts together suggest that in the Bible strength is regarded as a distinctively male attribute.

There are many things any god could be called, wise, benign, old, or cantankerous, absent-minded, lustful; to call one's deity 'strong' is not perhaps the most obvious compliment to pay to such a being. Yet in the Bible it is one of most favoured epithets of the deity. While the adjective עָז 'strong' is not used of Yhwh, and the verb עָזוּ 'be strong, show oneself strong' is not common, apart from

Summon your might (עָז), O God;
show your strength (עֹז), O God, as you have done for us before
(Psa. 68.29).

the noun עָז 'strength' is well attested of Yahweh. For example,

Strength (עָז) belongs to God (Psa. 62.12).

Because of your great strength (עָז), your enemies cringe before you
(Psa. 66.3).

Ascribe strength (עָז) unto God:
his majesty is over Israel,
and his strength (עָז) is in the skies (Psa. 68.35).

You are the God who works wonders:
You have shown your strength (עָז) among the peoples
(Psa. 77.15).

Yahweh is king, he is robed with majesty;
Yahweh is robed, he is girded with strength (עָז) (Psa. 93.1).

¹⁴ A.E. Miller, J.D. MacDougall, M.A. Tamopolsky and D.G. Gale, 'Gender Differences in Strength and Muscle Fiber Characteristics', *European Journal of Applied Physiology and Occupational Physiology* 66 (1993), pp. 254-62. Another study put the strength of females at 37%-69% of the muscle strength of males ('[A]ny adequate theory of men and masculinity has to have the concept of *power* at its centre' (Nigel Edley and Margaret Wetherell, 'Masculinity, Power and Identity', in *Understanding Masculinities* [ed. Máirtín Mac an Ghail; Buckingham, Bucks.: Open University Press. 1996], pp. 97-113 [117])).

¹⁵ A rapid survey of עָז in *DCH* fails to reveal any place in which a woman has 'strength' (עָז). No woman is said to be 'strong' (עָזוּ or עָזוּ or עָזוּ or עָזוּ).

Along with the more physically grounded ‘strength’ (nouns חֲזָקָה, גְּבוּרָה; verbs אָמַץ, חָזַק, תָּקַף; adjectives כְּבִיר, חָזָק, עָז) goes the more conceptual term ‘power’ (e.g. תִּקְוָה, כֹּחַ, חֵיל).

Here are some illustrations of divine power:

Your right hand, Yahweh, glorious in power (כֹּחַ)—
your right hand, Yahweh, shattered the enemy (Exod. 15.6)

You brought [your people] out of the land of Egypt with great power (כֹּחַ)
and with a mighty (קָוֶץ) hand (Exod. 32.11).

because he is great in strength (גִּבּוֹר אֱלֹהִים),
mighty (אֲמִיץ) in power (כֹּחַ),
not one [star] is missing (Isa. 40.26).

It is he who made the earth by his power (כֹּחַ),
who established the world by his wisdom (Jer. 10.12 = 51.15).

In the New Testament, there are the terms ἰσχυρός ‘strong’, δυνατός ‘capable, mighty’, and the noun ἰσχὺς ‘strength’, all of which often have connotations of physical strength. The more conceptual terms are δύναμις ‘strength, power’, κράτος ‘power, might’, ἐξουσία ‘authority, right to command or control’.

The deity is only once called ἰσχυρός explicitly (Rev. 18.8), though 1 Cor. 10.22 contains an implicit use. There is one usage of δυνατός in reference to God (‘he who is mighty has done great things for me’, Lk. 1.49). God is occasionally called ἡ δύναμις ‘the Power’ (Mt. 26.64; Mk 14.62), but very frequently is simply associated with δύναμις (e.g. Mt. 22.29; Rom. 1.16; Eph. 3.7). κράτος is in all but one of its 12 occurrences (Heb. 2.14) the power of God (e.g. Lk. 1.51; Eph. 1.19; Rev. 1.6). ἐξουσία is most often used of authority that has been granted by a more powerful person, but rarely it is used of the deity’s own authority (Lk. 12.5; Acts 1.7; Jude 25; Rev. 16.9).

In summary, we may conclude from the range of attestations of the language that divine strength or power may be creative, supportive or destructive. Wherever it appears, however, it is always a token of the masculinity of the deity.

2. Size and Height

As with strength, there is a physical substratum to the importance of size and height in the ideology of masculinity. Men in Europe are c. 22% heavier than women (18% in the US),¹⁶ and about 8% taller (8.6% in the US).¹⁷ There will be other cultural determinants of the belief in the significance of male size and height, notably the patriarchal bias that esteems male characteristics more highly than those of women. No matter the reasons

¹⁶ See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_body_weight.

¹⁷ See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_height.

behind the male belief that size (and height) matters; the main thing for the present purpose is that it is an unfailing pointer to male ideology.

The key biblical words here are גָּדוֹל and μέγας, 'great', גדל and μεγαλύνω, 'make great', 'regard as great', and רום and ὑψόω 'be high, make high'. As for the words for 'great', we should not overlook the fact that the word 'great' in our English versions of the Bible is just a formal word for 'big'. And it is almost invariably a word for men. Only once in the Hebrew Bible (never in the NT¹⁸) is a woman called 'great' (גְּדוּלָה), but in that place it probably does not mean 'great' but 'wealthy'.¹⁹

Not surprisingly, the male deity is everywhere called 'great', for example:

Great (גְּדוֹל) is Yahweh and greatly to be praised (Psa. 48.1).

Yahweh is great (גְּדוֹל) in Zion; he is exalted (רָם) over all the peoples (Psa. 99.2).

There is none like you, O Yahweh; you are great (גְּדוֹל), and your name is great (גְּדוֹל) in might (Jer. 10.6).

What god (אֱל) is as great (גְּדוֹל) as [our] God (אֱלֹהִים)? (Psa. 77.13).

I know that Yahweh is great (גְּדוֹל), our lord is [greater] than all gods (Psa. 135.5).

[Jerusalem] is the city of the great (μέγας) King (Mt. 5.35).

Such language may seem quite innocuous, but one cannot help recalling that every beheading in Syria and Iraq today, and many another atrocity, is accompanied with the cry *Allāhu akbar* 'God is the greatest, God is the most big',²⁰ a testosterone-fuelled inscription of exactly the same masculine ideology. The Isis warrior at the moment of honouring his deity's size is enhancing his own stature by his association with divine bigness.

As for 'height', which is another exemplification of size, Yahweh is often called, especially in hymnic texts, the 'Most High' (Elyon), the tallest of the tall, the 'God of height' (אֱלֹהֵי מְרוֹם, Mic. 6.6). He is high (גְּבוּהָ, e.g. Isa. 5.16):

Is not God the height of heaven (הֲלֹא־אֱלֹהִים גְּבוּהַ שָׁמַיִם),

¹⁸ Artemis of the Ephesians is 'great' (Acts 19.27, 28, 34, 35), but she is a deity, not a woman.

¹⁹ It is the woman of Shunem, whom Elisha visited (2 Kgs 4.8); she is wealthy enough to be able to set aside a purpose-built room on the rooftop for occasional visits of the prophet. Elsewhere גְּדוּלָה means 'rich' at 1 Sam. 25.2; Dan. 11.2; perhaps Jer. 5.5.

²⁰ *Akbar* is the elative (superlative) of the adjective *kabīr* 'great', attested also in the Hebrew adjective כְּבִיר אֵל Job 36.5 'God is a mighty one' (though the MT text may be defective).

i.e. as high as heaven? (Jb 22.12).

The term 'be high', 'be exalted', or to be regarded as exalted, i.e. as made high (רום), is common:

Be exalted (רום), O Yahweh, in your strength (עז);
We will sing and praise your power (גבורה) (Psa. 21.14).

The imperative²¹ does not suggest that Yahweh is not already high; it must signify that the speaker earnestly wishes for something that is already the case. It is almost as if the speaker envisages himself as in part responsible for the uplifting of the deity.

Says Yhwh:

I am exalted (רום) among the nations, I am exalted (רום) in the earth
(Psa. 46.11).

The height of Yahweh is sometimes, as here, explicitly a competitive matter: he is higher than the nations, i.e. presumably, than the gods of the nations (so too Psa. 113.4).

The language of height appears often in clusters of typical masculine language, for example:²²

For thus says the high (רם) and lofty one (נשא)
who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy (קדוש):
I dwell in the high (קרום) and holy (קדוש) place (Isa. 57.15).

In a striking image of the height of Yahweh, a psalmist depicts the ark of the covenant on which he is riding being too tall to pass through the gates of the city. He can enter the city only if the gates are demolished and rebuilt:

Lift up (נשא) your heads, O gates!
and be lifted up (נשא), O ancient doors!
that the King of honour (קבוד) may come in (Psa. 24.7).

We cannot help but notice the masculine terms that accompany 'height', words like strength (עז) and power (גבורה) and honour (קבוד) and holiness (קדוש). It is a coherent and self-reinforcing world, this world of male dominance, and the language mirrors the real-life network of power relations.

3. Violence and Killing

Masculine strength can be used for pacific and salvific purposes, but it is no secret that male strength is typically on display when it is being used aggressively, for fighting with other males and for killing them. No

²¹ As also in Psa. 57.6, 12; 108.6.

²² The masculinity of the language of holiness (קדוש) will be treated below.

documentation about violence and killing among human males in the Bible is called for here, but we do need to consider some examples of divine violence and divine killing as features of the masculine construction of the biblical deity.

Here is a small collection of such utterances:

Woe to my worthless shepherd ...
May the sword smite his arm
and his right eye!
Let his arm be wholly withered,
his right eye utterly blinded! (Zech. 11.17).

'I am against you',
says Yahweh, Lord of Fighting Men,²³
'I will burn up your chariots in smoke,
and the sword will devour your young lions.
I will leave you no prey on the earth.

You are my hammer and weapon of war;
with you I break nations in pieces;
with you I destroy kingdoms.
with you I break in pieces the horse and his rider;
with you I break in pieces the chariot and the charioteer;
with you I break in pieces man and woman;
with you I break in pieces the old man and the youth;
with you I break in pieces the young man and the maiden;
with you I break in pieces the shepherd and his flock;
with you I break in pieces the farmer and his team;
with you I break in pieces governors and commanders'
(Jer. 51.20-23).

This is all the language of masculinity. No doubt women can be cruel and bloodthirsty, too, and can urge their menfolk to battle, but no one can deny that it is men who do the killing. The deity is a typical male.

If we look at the seven key words in Hebrew for killing, Yahweh is found as a subject in all of them: אבד hi., הרג, טבח, מות, hi., נכה, hi., קטל, and שחט.²⁴ The same is true for the six key terms for destroying: כלה pi., I, שמד hi., שדד, I, שחת pi., hi., and תמם hi. No woman is the subject of any of these verbs.²⁵

It is fascinating how the theme of the 'divine warrior' has become so frequented a topos in the (always male) scholarly

²³ This is how I would translate 'Yahweh Sebaoth'; the 'hosts' are not, as some think, the heavenly bodies, but the human troops Yahweh controls.

²⁴ There is one exception, the verb רצח 'murder', but it is not surprising that Yahweh is never said to engage in unlawful killing or unintentional killing (manslaughter), which are the meanings of the term (see *DCH*, VII, p. 546a).

²⁵ This is not to say that no woman in ancient Israel ever killed anyone: the case of Jael (Judg. 4-5) comes to mind, as also of the woman of Thebez who dropped a millstone on the head of Abimelech b. Jerubbaal (Jg. 9.50-54; recalled at 2 Sam. 11.21).

literature,²⁶ and how severely objective is the scholarly language of the history of its tradition. It is hard to resist digressing from a merely descriptive account of the divine killer in order to raise for a moment the ethical problem of the depiction of the deity as a warrior.

I will do so merely by quoting what I believe is a typical notation of the theme:

The understanding of God as a warrior is grounded in the origins of biblical religion. The image of the divine warrior dominates the oldest Israelite poetry, remains a frequent characterization of God throughout the biblical period, and gains a new prominence in the apocalyptic literature of both Jewish and Christian communities.²⁷

Israel's prophets shared the tribal and royal conception of God as a warrior whose involvement in military engagements determined their outcome and preserved or destroyed nations ... The fervent concern for justice among Israel's prophets, however, gave a unique emphasis to

²⁶ Cf., for example, G. Ernest Wright, 'God the Warrior', in his *The Old Testament and Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969; reprinted in *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology: A Reader in Twentieth-Century Old Testament Theology, 1930-1990* [ed. Ben C. Ollenburger, Elmer A. Martens and Gerhard Hasel; Sources for Biblical and Theological Study, 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns], pp. 100-19 [2nd edition, *Old Testament Theology: Flowering and Future* (ed. Ben C. Ollenburger; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 2004), pp. 75-91]); Patrick D. Miller, Jr, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Harvard Semitic Monographs, 5; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); Marc Brettler, 'Images of YHWH the Warrior in Psalms', *Semeia* 61 (1993), pp. 135-65; Tremper Longman, III and Daniel D. Reid, *God is a Warrior* (Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995); Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, 'Put on the armour of God': *The Divine Warrior from Isaiah to Ephesians* (JSNTSup, 140; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1997); Martin Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven: God as Warrior and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography* (Orbis biblicus et orientalis, 169; Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag, 1999); Patrick D. Miller, 'God the Warrior: A Problem in Biblical Interpretation and Apologetics', in his *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 356-64; Richard D. Nelson, 'Divine Warrior Theology in Deuteronomy', in *A God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller* (ed. Brent A. Strawn and Nancy R. Bowen; Winona Lake, IL: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 241-59; Matthew J. Lynch, 'Zion's Warrior and the Nations: Isaiah 59:15b-63:6 in Isaiah's Zion Traditions', *CBQ* 70 (2008), pp. 244-63; Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritche Ames, and Jacob L. Wright (eds.), *Warfare, Ritual, and Symbol in Biblical and Modern Contexts* (Ancient Israel and its Literature, 18; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014).

In the New Testament: Bruce A. Stevens, 'Jesus as the Divine Warrior', *ExpT* 94 (1983), pp. 326-29; Stevens, "'Why 'Must' the Son of Man Suffer?'" The Divine Warrior in the Gospel of Mark', *BZ* 31 (1987), pp. 101-10; Paul Brooks Duff, 'The March of the Divine Warrior and the Advent of the Greco-Roman King: Mark's Account of Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem', *JBL* 111 (1992), pp. 55-71; Andrew R. Angel, 'Crucifixus vincens: The "Son of God" as Divine Warrior in Matthew', *CBQ* 73 (2011), pp. 299-317.

²⁷ Theodore Hiebert, 'Warrior, Divine', in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David Noel Freedman; New York: Doubleday), VI, pp. 876-80 (876).

their apprehension of the kinds of warfare in which the divine warrior was engaged. For the prophets, the divine warrior entered military conflicts against any nation characterized by injustice and political hubris. Thus prophetic circles associated the warfare of God with the divine maintenance of justice in the world, a justice which would eventuate ultimately in the abolition of war and the reign of peace.²⁸

In these quotations we may observe that (1) if the conception of God as warrior is 'grounded in the origins of biblical religion', biblical religion itself might be undermined if it were to be surgically extracted from it, (2) that if the conception 'dominates' the oldest Israelite poetry (and remember, in biblical scholarship, old = authentic), remains frequent throughout the Bible, and even so manages to gain a 'new prominence' in the (presumptively climactic and supersessive) religion of Christianity, it is to be applauded, (3) once the warfare of God can be connected with the maintenance of justice and the Great Lie of the 'war to end war' can be invoked, only an enemy of peace could find a unkind word to say against it, and (4) caught up into a utopian vision of the 'abolition of war and the reign of peace' the quintessential masculinity of the idealization of violence can be totally ignored.²⁹

I conclude this section with a single verse from a psalm,

Blessed be Yahweh, my rock,
who trains my hands for war,
and my fingers for battle (Psa. 144.1),

as a reminder of how implicated are human and divine violence and killing. Killing is not for this psalmist a regrettable necessity or just the way of the world, but is the ground of praise to his deity who is the instigator of his male violence and his role model in killing.

4. Honour

Honour in the world of Bible is a distinctively male concept. Only in the last 30 years has it been properly recognized in biblical scholarship that Mediterraneans past and present inhabit an honour–shame culture controlling a vast array of social relations. Honour is a recognition by the group of the status of a man. It is a competitive matter, for a man's honour ranking is relative to those of all the other males in his group. It is constantly open to challenge, and a man with honour always has to be prepared to

²⁸ Hiebert, 'Warrior, Divine', p. 878.

²⁹ Thomas Römer speaks of the 'disarmament' or 'demilitarization' of the warrior god by Deuteronomistic editing that 'counterbalances' the tradition of Yahweh as a God of conquest (*Dieu obscur: Le sexe, la cruauté et la violence dans l'Ancien Testament* [Essais bibliques, 27; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1996], pp. 77-96 [87]) but, as the quotation above from Hiebert shows, a picture of a pacific future need not in the least countervail against the image of the warrior God, but may in fact serve as its ultimate justification.

defend it.³⁰

It is perhaps not so widely recognized that honour is an exclusively male property. Women are not said in the Bible to have honour, though they can be the site of shame.³¹ Even if in reality individual women had authority

³⁰ Among the few specialized studies of honour and shame in reference to biblical texts we may note (most of them in reference to the NT): Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981); D. Daube, 'Shame Culture in Luke', in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C.K. Barrett* (ed. Morna D. Hooker and Stephen G. Wilson; London: SPCK, 1982), pp. 355-72; Halvor Moxnes, 'Honor, Shame, and the Outside World in Paul's Letter to the Romans', in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee* (ed. Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, Peder Borgen and Richard Horsley; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), pp. 207-18; Lyn M. Bechtel, 'Shame as a Sanction of Social Control in Biblical Israel: Judicial, Political, and Social Shaming', *JSOT* 49 (1991), pp. 47-76; Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, 'Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World', in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. Jerome H. Neyrey; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 25-66; Margaret S. Odell, 'An Exploratory Study of Shame and Dependence in the Bible and Selected Near Eastern Parallels', in *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspectives: Scripture in Context IV* (ed. K. Lawson Younger, Jr, William W. Hallo and Bernard F. Batto; Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies, 11; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1991), pp. 217-33; Gary Stansell, 'Honor and Shame in the David Narratives', in *Was ist der Mensch ...? Beiträge zur Anthropologie des Alten Testaments: Hans Walter Wolff zum 80. Geburtstag* (ed. Frank Crüsemann, Christof Hardmeier and Rainer Kessler; Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1992), pp. 94-114 [= *Semeia* 68 (1994), pp. 55-79]; Halvor Moxnes, 'Honor and Shame', *BTB* 23 (1993), pp. 167-76; David A. deSilva, 'Despising Shame: A Cultural-Anthropological Investigation of the Epistle to the Hebrews', *JBL* 113 (1994), pp. 439-61; Victor H. Matthews, 'Honor and Shame in Gender-Related Legal Situations in the Hebrew Bible', in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Victor H. Matthews; JSOTSup, 262; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 97-112; Johanna Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Robert Jewett, 'Paul, Shame, and Honor', in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), pp. 551-74.

³¹ There are a handful of passages in the Bible that seem to contradict this view. (a) In Exod. 20.12 (|| Deut. 5.16) a son is commanded to 'honour' his father and mother'. Such honour would be quite unlike honour generally, since the mother exists in the domestic sphere, not the public, which is the usual forum for the exercise of honour. What is intended by honouring one's father is perhaps analogous, for it is hard to see how a son could honour his father in the public sphere, but not too difficult to see how a son could avoid shaming him. (b) Prov. 11.16 'A gracious woman (אִשָּׁה יְהוָה) seizes, or, keeps hold of (תָּמַךְ), 'honour' might on the surface regard a woman as capable of possessing honour, but the whole sentence may be corrupt, and it is interesting that the LXX has 'arouses, or, stirs up (ἐγείρω) honour for [her] husband' (cf. NJB footnote), which sounds much more likely. (c) In Prov. 8.18 Wisdom, personified as a woman (i.e. not a 'real woman'), says, 'Riches and honour are with me'; that, however, does not mean that she herself has honour, but that through her the young man who is addressed will attain honour (as v. 21 makes clear in reference to wealth, 'I endow those who love me with wealth'). (d) In Isa. 66.11, where Jerusalem as a mother is said to have

and power and honour such was not the case for the majority of women, and in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament honour is consistently male.

What is true of males in human society is true also of the male deity. He too is caught up in the quest for honour, striving to maintain the status he holds. This fact is perhaps not so apparent because Bible translators, from the Vulgate onward, have united in disguising the fact that the deity is said to have or gain 'honour'.³² Almost everywhere that Yhwh's כְּבוֹד is spoken of it is translated 'glory', perhaps because it was thought that the everyday term 'honour' might not be seemly for a deity.³³

It is indeed true that in a number of passages in the Hebrew Bible, כְּבוֹד is not at all the same thing as the honour of esteemed men, but is sometimes a quasi-physical phenomenon representing the deity that can 'appear' (e.g. Exod. 16.10) or 'rest' (Exod. 24.16) or 'stand' (Ezek. 3.23) or 'go out' (Ezek. 10.18) or 'fill' the tabernacle (Exod. 40.34, 35) or the temple (Ezek. 44.4) or the earth (Num. 14.21; Isa. 6.3), and whose appearance is 'like fire' (Exod. 24.17). It would appropriate to use the term 'glory' for these cases. But such usages are largely restricted to descriptions of theophanies, and a majority of biblical references depict the deity's honour in the same sense as that of human honour.

We should consider some cases where, in reference to the deity, 'honour' is the better translation. A key text is Exod. 14.4:

I will get honour (ni. כבוד) over (ב) Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh (similarly vv. 17, 18).³⁴

By leading Israel across the sea and so defeating the pursuing Pharaoh Yahweh will gain honour as the superior party, i.e. gain it from Pharaoh, who will consequently lose honour, honour being a zero-sum game. This is an example of honour won competitively.

Again,

But you have increased the nation, Yahweh,

glory, those who mourn for her are to suck and be satisfied with her breasts of consolation; they should drain them out and delight themselves 'in the fulness of her glory' (מזון כבוד). An honour consisting of full breasts is nothing like the honour that men possess. (e) The idea that a woman's long hair is her honour (1 Cor. 11.15) is similar; it is certainly not a marker of comparative status like male honour.

³² Interestingly, some passages where כְּבוֹד is regularly translated 'glory' in reference to Yahweh, were translated 'honour' by KJV, as in Exod. 14.8 where Yahweh speaks of the time when 'I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh' (similarly Psa. 26.8; 66.2; 71.8).

³³ An exception is Mal. 1.6 'If then I am a father, where is my honor?', but that is clearly accounted for by the metaphor of Yahweh as a (human) father.

³⁴ Clearly, commentators do not invest this clause about honour with the same importance as I do; Childs, Propp, Durham do not refer to it, and Noth, I believe, misunderstands it by speaking of Yahweh's 'show[ing] his glory in the sight of Pharaoh and all his proud host' (*Exodus: A Commentary* [London: SCM Press, 1962], p. 111); כֹּן cannot mean 'in the sight of'.

you have increased the nation; you have won honour;
you have enlarged all the borders of the land (Isa. 26.15).

Plainly, to enlarge the borders of one's country involves taking land from others, and the honour that accrues to a chieftain, or a deity, for so doing is an honour won in competition with those he has defeated.³⁵

Again,

I am against you, O Sidon,
and I will win honour in your midst.
They shall know that I am the LORD
when I execute judgments in it (Ezek. 28.22).

Yahweh wins honour for himself when he overcomes a foreign city.

Again,

I am Yahweh, that is my name;
my honour I give to no other,
nor my praise to idols (Isa. 42.8).

For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it,
for why should my name be profaned?
My honour I will not give to another (Isa. 48.11).

One cannot literally 'give' one's honour to another, for honour is something that is acquired, and cannot be given away; so 'give' here must mean 'voluntarily allow someone else to diminish my honour by gaining honour for themselves, that is, at my expense'.

Sometimes the sense of כְּבוֹד, is closer to our idea of 'fame'. One such instance is

I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Put, and Lud—which draw the bow—to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away that have not heard of my fame (שִׁמְעוּ) or seen my 'glory' (כְּבוֹד); and they shall declare my 'glory' among the nations (Isa. 66.19).

'Fame' belongs to the everyday world, and so, one would imagine, does כְּבוֹד here; it is not the quasi-physical phenomenon that surrounds the deity, but reputation or fame. Likewise,

Lift up your heads, O gates!
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
that the King of 'glory' may come in.
Who is the King of 'glory'?
Yahweh, strong and mighty,

³⁵ NIV 'You have gained glory for yourself', and NJB 'won yourself glory' are two English translations that have seen the point, but NEB 'won thyself honour' and REB 'won honour for yourself' are even more appropriate; so too Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39* (AB, 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), p. 366: 'won honor for yourself'. Kaiser, Watts, Oswalt all miss the competitive aspect in honour.

Yahweh, mighty in battle (Psa. 24.7-8).

The image is of a victorious warrior, who has won honour or fame for himself on the field of battle; again the **כְּבוֹד** would seem to be this-worldly 'honour' rather than supernatural 'glory'.³⁶

Recognition of the sense of **כְּבוֹד** as 'honour' rather than 'glory' also explains the concept of 'honouring', 'glorifying' and 'giving glory' (**נָתַן כְּבוֹד** pi.; **שִׁים** or **כְּבוֹד + שִׁים**). Thus, in

You who fear Yahweh, praise him!
all you offspring of Jacob, 'glorify' him,
and stand in awe of him,
all you offspring of Israel! (Psa. 22.24).

All the nations you have made shall come
and bow down before you, Yahweh,
and shall 'glorify' your name (Psa. 86.9).

to 'glorify' is to increase the honour of the one 'glorified'. The **כְּבוֹד** in these passages has nothing to do with the quasi-physical glory I discussed earlier; for it would hard to see how such a manifestation could be increased (or diminished, for that matter) by a human or otherwise. It is rather the 'honour', the reputation, of the high-ranking male that is enhanced by the praises or obedience or gestures of reverence of his inferiors.

The overriding point is that, in whatever sense **כְּבוֹד** is being used, it is a male term, that belongs to the world of male achievement and competition, and that its use in reference to the deity is just another example of the masculine cast of the biblical god.

In the NT **כְּבוֹד** is represented by both **δόξα** and **τίμη**, terms that often occur together in the LXX, and 14 times in the NT. **Δόξα** is well attested in the sense of 'honour', in reference to humans, including Jesus, who says he does not seek his own honour (**δόξα**, Jn 8.50); cf. Rom. 2.7 'those who by patiently doing good seek for "glory" (**δόξα**) and honor (**τίμη**) and immortality'; 1 Thess. 2.6 'we did not seek honour (**δόξα**) from humans'; 2 Cor. 6.8 '[we commend ourselves ...] in honour (**δόξα**) and dishonour (**ἀτιμία**), in ill repute and good repute'. But 'honour' is sometimes the proper term also in reference to the deity: 'whatever you do, do everything for the honour of God' (1 Cor. 10.31). But much more often in the New Testament **δόξα** seems to denote some ineffable aura that surrounds the deity,³⁷ not

³⁶ We do indeed also speak of a warrior clothing himself with 'glory' in a this-worldly sense, but it might be better, in writing about the biblical texts, to reserve the term 'glory' for supernatural manifestations of the divine.

³⁷ BDAG, 257a, actually offers as the first sense of **δόξα** 'the condition of being bright or shining, *shining, brightness, splendor, radiance*', remarking that this is 'a distinctive aspect of Heb. **כְּבוֹד**, a view entirely without foundation, in my opinion (though *HALOT*, p. 457, claims it is 'often connected with manifestations of light [orig. a weather-god, or the god of a volcano?]); such a sense, as in Acts 22.11, is clearly secondary. Most lexicographers stress the connection of **כְּבוֹד** rather with

inappropriately rendered 'glory'. It is now not so much a relational term for the esteem that others give to the honoured man, but a property of the deity, rarely of humans.³⁸ The term retains its masculine flavour, however, being some 13 times connected with δύναμις, e.g. Mt 24.30 where the Son of Man is coming on the clouds of heaven with δύναμις and great δόξα; Rev 4.11 'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory (δόξα) and honor (τίμη) and power (δύναμις)'.³⁹

The term δοξάζω, 'honour', 'glorify', occurring some 53 times, is defined by Danker as 'to influence one's opinion about another so as to enhance the other's reputation, *praise, honor, extol*'.⁴⁰ It is used equally of honouring humans (e.g. Mt. 6.2; Lk. 4.15) and honouring God (e.g. Mt. 5.16, and over 30 times). Like the Hebrew כבוד pi., when it is used of the deity it is never in reference to the aura that surrounds him but always to the status of honour, and always to increasing that status.

The overriding point is that, in whatever sense תִּבְרָךְ or δόξα (or their corresponding verbs) are being used, they are in all their 550+ occurrences male terms, which belong to the world of male achievement and competition, and that their use in reference to the deity is just another evidence of the masculine cast of the biblical god.

5. Holiness

I would define the 'holy' as what pertains to the deity. God himself is 'holy', and so is everything connected with him, everything, that is to say, that is in his sphere.⁴¹ I would distinguish it from 'the divine', which to my mind refers properly to the deity itself; thus priests may be holy, but not divine.⁴²

כבד *be heavy*, though that too, in my opinion, is more or less irrelevant to the meaning of the word in its Hebrew contexts.

³⁸ E.g. Mt. 4.8 the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 6.29 Solomon in all his glory.

³⁹ In Lk. 4.6 it is connected with ἐξουσία, 'authority'.

⁴⁰ Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 258a.

⁴¹ David P. Wright, 'Holiness. Old Testament', in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, III, pp. 237-49), defines holiness thus: 'In the OT, holiness is a positive cultic or moral condition of God, people, things, places, and time. It may be an inherent condition or achieved through ritual means. It is defined on the one hand as that which is consistent with God and his character, and on the other as that which is threatened by impurity.' I dissent from the claim that holiness is a *moral* condition of the deity, and I would insist that the phrase 'condition of God, people, things, places, and time' be qualified as a 'condition of God and of certain people, things, places, and time that are closely related to the deity' (not of people, things, places, and time in general).

⁴² I am aware that in English usage 'divine' has a wider range of meanings, approximating to the 'holy'. Thus *OED* offers the senses: '1. Of or pertaining to God or a god; 2. Given by or proceeding from God; having the sanction of or inspired by God. 3. Addressed, appropriated, or devoted to God; religious, sacred. 4. Partaking of the nature of God; characteristic of or consonant to deity; godlike; heavenly, celestial.' This account may be compared with its senses for 'holy': '1. Kept or regarded as inviolate from ordinary use, and appropriated or set apart for religious

The language of holiness is in Hebrew exclusively the verb **שָׁדַד**, the adjective **שְׁדֻדָּה** and the noun **שְׁדֻדָּה**, in Greek the verb **ἁγιάζω**, the adjective **ἅγιος**, and the noun **ἁγιοσύνη**. In Hebrew **שָׁדַד** means in qal 'be holy', in ni. 'be holy', 'be regarded as holy' and 'show oneself holy', in pi. and hi. 'make holy' and 'treat as holy' (only in hi. is Yahweh the object). In Greek the verb **ἁγιάζω** can mean both 'make holy' and 'regard as holy'. There is no evidence that the term **שָׁדַד** has anything to do with the idea of 'separation', as is often claimed.⁴³

Obviously, the deity cannot be said to be 'made holy' since he is already holy by virtue of being the deity. All that **שָׁדַד** can mean in such a context is 'regard as holy', for example:

Yahweh of hosts, him you shall regard as holy (**שָׁדַד** hi.);
let him be your fear, and let him be your dread (Isa. 8.13).

they will regard the Holy One of Jacob as holy (**שָׁדַד** hi.),
and will stand in awe of the God of Israel (Isa. 29.23).

The important point for my present purpose is that 'holiness' and the 'holy', like the others we have already considered, are gendered terms in the Hebrew Bible. Women are not, are never, indeed cannot be, holy, sanctified or consecrated.⁴⁴ In the New Testament, the situation is almost exactly the same; only twice is 'holy' used of a woman (1 Cor. 7.34; 1 Pet. 3.5).⁴⁵ It is a strange but symbolically

use or observance; consecrated, dedicated, sacred. 2. As applied to deities, the development of meaning has probably been: held in religious regard or veneration, kept reverently sacred from human profanation or defilement; (hence) of a character that evokes human veneration and reverence; (and thus, in Christian use) free from all contamination of sin and evil, morally and spiritually perfect and unsullied... 3.a. Of persons: specially belonging to, commissioned by, or devoted to God (or so regarded): e.g. angels, the Virgin Mary, prophets, apostles.... b. Of things: pertaining to God or the Divine Persons; having their origin or sanction from God, or partaking of a Divine quality or character...'

⁴³ BDB, p. 871a, concedes only that 'possibly' the original idea in the word was of separation, withdrawal, while *HALOT*, p. 1072, says: 'an original verb, which can only with difficulty be traced back to a root **קָדַד** "to cut"; if this is the case the basic meaning of **שָׁדַד** would be "to set apart"—which cannot be construed as a strong endorsement of the view. There is no question but that holiness can *involve* separation, as in 'You shall be holy to me; for I Yahweh am holy, and have separated (**בָּדַל** hi.) you from the peoples, that you should be mine' (Lev. 20.26); what I would deny is that separation is fundamental or always in view.

⁴⁴ A woman (Bathsheba) is once said to 'sanctify' herself (**שָׁדַד** hithp.) 'from her uncleanness' by bathing (2 Sam. 11.4), but it is self-evident that this ritual makes her clean, not holy; there must be a confusion of categories here, which I plan to examine in a paper on *The Holy and the Clean: Category Confusion in Semitic?* at the SBL Annual Meeting in Atlanta, November 2015.

⁴⁵ It is not improbable that women are 'included' (whatever that means) in the term 'saints' (**ἅγιοι**), frequently used by Paul for members of the Christian congregations (e.g. Rom. 1.7; 12.13). It is no doubt a similar situation to that of **ἀδελφός** 'brother', where we cannot ever be sure that 'sisters' are also 'in mind' when the word is in

meaningful fact that the adjective 'holy' (קדוש) never occurs in the feminine in the Hebrew Bible.⁴⁶

The male deity himself is 'holy' (e.g. 1 Sam. 6.20; Isa. 5.16). And what belongs to the male deity is also holy; thus his name (e.g. Amos 2.7), his temple and its objects (Jer. 51.51), his sabbaths (Isa. 58.13) and his priests (Exod. 19.22) are all holy. Among humans, it is only males that are holy (in Israel, unlike many cultures, there are no female priests). In the NT also, God himself is holy (e.g. Jn 17.11; Rev. 6.10), and so is his name (Lk. 1.49), his angels (e.g. Mk 8.38; Acts 10.22), his prophets (Lk. 1.70), his apostles (Eph. 3.5), the temple (e.g. Heb. 8.2), and congregations of Christian believers (e.g. Acts 9.13; Rom. 1.7).⁴⁷

A possible doubt may be cast on the claim that women are not holy by the fact that one of the things that is said in the Hebrew Bible to be 'made holy' is 'the people' (עַם, e.g. Exod. 19.10; Jos. 7.13; Ezek. 46.20). Would that not include women? I have not reviewed all the 1869 occurrences of the term in the Hebrew Bible, but I would note the following passages:

[Abraham] brought back his kinsman Lot with his goods, and the women and the people (עַם, Gen. 14.16).

... the men of Sodom, both young men (נְעָרִים) and old men (זְקֵנִים), all the people (עַם) in their entirety (Gen. 19.4).

Abimelech said, 'What is this you have done to us? One of the people (עַם) might easily have lain with your wife' (Gen. 26.10).

The people (עַם) said to Aaron, 'Up, make us gods, who shall go before us' ... And Aaron said to them, 'Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters' (Exod. 32.1-2).

the plural; it is noticeable that while there are six references in the Gospels to 'brother and sister' there is only one in Paul (1 Cor. 7.15, which can be explained by the circumstance that the text is expressly about a separation of a husband and wife).

⁴⁶ If you want to say 'holy city' in Hebrew, you must say 'city of holiness' (עִיר קְדוֹשָׁה), as in Neh. 11.1, 18; Isa. 48.2; Dan. 9.24 (the only occurrences). It is different in the NT, where 'holy city' occurs six times. The meaning of the term קְדוּשָׁה, perhaps 'female cult functionary', like that of its male equivalent קְדוּשָׁה, is highly debatable, and not directly relevant to the present study.

⁴⁷ The two cases where 'holy' is used of a woman are interesting: in 1 Cor. 7.34 it is women who are (currently) unmarried (ἄγαμος) and virgins (παρθένος) who strive to be 'holy in body and spirit' (they are contrasted with married women, who apparently do not strive to be holy, since they are concerned to please their husbands). In 1 Pet. 3.5 holy women of old (there are apparently no such women around any longer) used to dress modestly, subjecting themselves (ὑποτάσσομαι) to their husbands. There is a whiff of sex here (what does 'holy in body' mean, and how does a wife please her husband best or 'submit' to him?), but strangely in 1 Cor. 7.34 a woman's holiness appears connected with sexual abstinence whereas in 1 Pet. 3.5 a woman's holiness involves 'submitting' to her husband.

Moses heard the people (אִישׁ) weeping throughout their families, every man (אִישׁ) at the door of his tent (Num. 11.10).

And [Joshua] said to the people (אִישׁ), 'Go forward; march around the city, and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the LORD' (Jos. 6.7).

And Joshua arose early in the morning and mustered the people (אִישׁ, Jos. 8.10)

In every one of these cases, the 'people' must be the males.⁴⁸

What the masculinity of holiness means is that holiness is an exclusionary term: nothing is holy if it is female, if it is domestic, if it is from the realm of the moral, if it is outside the sphere of the male God himself and the objects and practices of his cult. All the 900+ occurrences of the 'holy' in the Bible are in reference to males.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this paper is that masculine language about the deity is far more pervasive in the Bible than is generally recognized. The well-known indicators of masculinity in the biblical texts, like the masculine pronouns for the deity, are now shown to be only part of the picture. When we add to them the language of strength and power, of greatness and height, of violence and killing, of honour and of holiness, we have not simply added new items to the evidence for masculinity, but have executed a step change, I would argue, in understanding the profile of the biblical deity.

It remains to be said that none of the evidence presented in this paper is to be found in any Hebrew or Greek lexica, in any theological dictionaries of the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament, in any Bible dictionaries, or (as far as I am aware) in any commentaries on biblical books. All these resources are astonishingly gender blind. It is striking that after 40 years of feminist biblical criticism so much grist for the feminist mill still awaits us.

This paper, along with the others I referred to at the beginning, is intended as a contribution to the still far from completed project of feminist biblical criticism. Not only women, but men of conscience also committed to social justice, are still in need of a bout of consciousness-raising on the subject of the oppressive masculinity adopted by the Bible's language about the deity.

⁴⁸ The question how the whole people, even defined as the males only, can be thought of as 'holy', as in 'you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Exod. 19.6), when the priests are self-evidently a class within the people as a whole is another matter; see, for example, the elaborate discussion of William H.C. Propp (*Exodus 19–40* [AB, 2A; New York: Doubleday], 2006), pp. 157-60.