

Hanna Tervanotko

# Denying Her Voice: The Figure of Miriam in Ancient Jewish Literature



Hanna Tervanotko: Denying Her Voice

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Hanna Tervanotko

## Style and Abbreviations

Style and abbreviations generally follow P. H. Alexander et al. (eds.), *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999).

### Primary Sources

<i>Aet.</i>	<i>De aeternitate mundi</i>
<i>Agr.</i>	<i>De agricultura</i>
<i>ALD</i>	<i>Aramaic Levi Document</i>
<i>A.J.</i>	<i>Antiquitates judaicae</i>
<i>apocrPent. B</i>	<i>Apocryphon Pentateuch B</i>
<i>B. J.</i>	<i>Bellum judaicum</i>
<i>b.Meg.</i>	Babylonian Talmud, <i>Megillah</i>
<i>b.Sanh.</i>	Babylonian Talmud, <i>Sanhedrin</i>
<i>b.Šebu.</i>	Babylonian Talmud, <i>Shevu'ot</i>
<i>b.Šotah</i>	Babylonian Talmud <i>Sotah</i>
<i>b.Ta'an.</i>	Babylonian Talmud, <i>Ta'anit</i>
<i>Cant</i>	Canticles
<i>CD</i>	Cairo Genizah copy of the <i>Damascus Document</i>
<i>Cher.</i>	<i>De cherubim</i>
<i>Congr.</i>	<i>De congressu eruditionis gratia</i>
<i>Contempl.</i>	<i>De vita contemplativa</i>
<i>C. Ap.</i>	<i>Contra Apionem</i>
<i>Chr</i>	1–2 Chronicles
<i>D</i>	Deuteronomist source
<i>Dan</i>	Daniel
<i>Decal.</i>	<i>De decalogo</i>
<i>Deut</i>	Deuteronomy
<i>DSS</i>	Dead Sea Scrolls
<i>Esth</i>	Esther
<i>Exod</i>	Exodus
<i>Exod. Rab.</i>	<i>Exodus Rabbah</i>
<i>Ezek</i>	Ezekiel
<i>Flacc.</i>	<i>In Flaccum</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>De fuga et inventione</i>
<i>Gen</i>	Genesis
<i>H</i>	<i>Hodayot</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Historiae</i>
<i>Hos</i>	Hosea
<i>Hypoth.</i>	<i>Hypothetica</i>

<i>Ios.</i>	<i>De Iosepho</i>
Isa	Isaiah
J	Jahwist source
Jdt	Judith
Jer	Jeremiah
Josh	Joshua
<i>Jub.</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>
Kgs	1–2 Kings
KJV	King James Version
<i>L.A.B.</i>	<i>Liber antiquitatum biblicarum</i>
Lam	Lamentations
<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Legum allegoriae 1–3</i>
<i>Legat.</i>	<i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>
<i>Let. Aris.</i>	<i>Letter of Aristeas</i>
Lev	Leviticus
4QLev-Num <sup>a</sup>	Leviticus-Numeri <sup>a</sup> (4Q23)
LXX	Septuagint
M	<i>Milḥamah</i>
Macc	1–4 Maccabees
Mal	Malachi
<i>Mek. Exod.</i>	<i>Mekilta on Exodus</i>
Mic	Micah
<i>Migr.</i>	<i>De migratione Abrahami</i>
<i>m.Ketub.</i>	Mishnah <i>Ketubbot</i>
<i>m.Naš.</i>	Mishnah <i>Nashim</i>
<i>m.Nidd.</i>	Mishnah <i>Niddah</i>
MMT	<i>Miqṣat Ma'asê ha-Torah</i>
<i>Mos.</i>	<i>De vita Mosis 1–2</i>
MT	Masoretic Text
<i>Mut.</i>	<i>De mutatione nominum</i>
Neh	Nehemiah
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
Num	Numeri
4QNum <sup>b</sup>	Numeri <sup>b</sup> (4Q27)
<i>Opif.</i>	<i>De opificio mundi</i>
P	Priestly source
1QpHab	Pesher Habakkuk
<i>Plant.</i>	<i>De plantatione</i>
<i>Post.</i>	<i>De posteritate Caini</i>
<i>Praep. ev.</i>	<i>Praeparatio evangelica</i>
<i>Praem.</i>	<i>De praemiis et poenis</i>
<i>Prob.</i>	<i>Quod omnis probus liber sit</i>
Prov	Proverbs
Ps	Psalms
QE	<i>Quaestiones et solutiones in Exodum 1–2</i>
QG	<i>Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin 1–4</i>
Qoh	Qohelet

RP	<i>Reworked Pentateuch</i>
S	<i>Serekh ha-Yahad</i> (Manual of Discipline)
Sam	1–2 Samuel
<i>Sobr.</i>	<i>De sobrietate</i>
<i>Somm.</i>	<i>De somniis 1–2</i>
SP	Samaritan Pentateuch
<i>Spec.</i>	<i>De specialibus legibus 1–4</i>
<i>Strom.</i>	<i>Stromata</i>
Syr.	Syriac
T	Temple Scroll
<i>Tanḥ.</i>	<i>Tanḥuma</i>
<i>Tg. Neof. 1</i>	<i>Targum Neofiti 1</i>
<i>Tg. Ps.-J.</i>	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan</i>
VA	<i>Visions of Amram</i>
Vg.	Vulgate
<i>Virt.</i>	<i>De virtutibus</i>
VL	Vetus Latina
Wis	Wisdom of Solomon
Zeph	Zephaniah

### Secondary Sources

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
ALGHJ	Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i>
ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
ARM	Archives royales de Mari
ArOr	<i>Archiv Orientalní</i>
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
<i>BRev</i>	<i>Bible Review</i>



BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
CHJ	<i>Cambridge History of Judaism</i>
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CSCO	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium
CSCT	Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DSD	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
DSSSE	The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition
DSSR	<i>The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader</i>
EHAT	Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
<i>EncJud</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GCS	Die griechische christliche Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte
GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i>
HALOT	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
HAR	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HR	<i>History of Religions</i>
HRCS	Hatch, E. and H. A. Redpath. <i>Concordance to the Septuagint and Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament</i>
HSAT	<i>Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTB	Histoire du texte biblique
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDBSup	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
JAJ	<i>The Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>
JANESCU	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JFSR	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
Joüon	Joüon, P. A. <i>Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>

JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods: Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSP	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LHB/OTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i>
NCB	New Century Bible
NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NIB	<i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i>
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDB	<i>New International Dictionary of the Bible</i>
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTP	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i>
OTS	Old Testament Studies
PVTG	Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RevQ	<i>Revue de Qumrân</i>
RHPR	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SBLABS	Society of Biblical Literature Archeology and Biblical Studies
SBLAIL	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Israel and Its Literature
SBLCP	Society of Biblical Literature Centennial Publications
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLSP	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
SBSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SC	Sources chrétiennes
Sem	<i>Semitica</i>
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SRB	Studies in Rewritten Bible
STDJ	<i>Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah</i>
StPB	Studia post-biblica
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti pseudepigraphica
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>
Text	<i>Textus</i>

<i>ThWAT</i>	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum/Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZBK AT	Zürcher Bibelkommentare Alten Testament

# 1. Introduction

There is neither a first nor last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context (it extends into the boundless past and the boundless future). Even past meanings, that is, those born in the dialogue of past centuries, can never be stable (finalized, ended once and for all)—they will always change (be renewed) in the process of subsequent, future development of the dialogue.

At any moment in the development of the dialogue there are immense, boundless masses of forgotten contextual meanings, but at certain moments of the dialogue's subsequent development along the way they are recalled and reinvigorated in renewed form (in a new context).

*Mikhail M. Bakhtin*<sup>1</sup>

The task of this study is twofold. On the one hand, I will analyze the treatment and development of the literary figure of Miriam as a literary character in ancient Jewish texts. I will do this by taking into account all the references to this figure preserved in ancient Jewish literature from the exilic period to the early second century C.E.: Exod 15:20–21; Deut 24:8–9; Num 12:1–15; Num 20:1; Num 26:59; Mic 6:4; 1 Chr 5:29; the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q365 6 II, 1–7; 4Q377 2 I, 9; 4Q543 1 I, 6 = 4Q545 1 I, 5; 4Q546 12 4; 4Q547 9 10; 4Q549 2 8); *Jub.* 47:4; the Septuagint; *Demetrius Chronographer* frag. 3; *Exagoge* 18; texts by Philo of Alexandria: *Contempl.* 87; *Leg.* 1.76; 2.66–67; 3.103; *Agr.* 80–81; *L.A.B.* 9:10; 20:8; and finally texts by Josephus: *A.J.* 2.221; 3.54; 3.105; 4.78.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, in the light of poststructuralist literary studies that treat texts as reflections of specific social situations, I will ask what the depiction of Miriam in ancient Jewish literature tells us about the reception of women in different eras and contexts.

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1 Mikhail Bakhtin, "Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (trans. Vern McGee; ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 159–172, 170.

2 The oral traditions of some compositions that are known as the rabbinic texts were surely known in the early first century C.E. This is the case with the Tannaitic compositions such as the Mishnah. Other rabbinic texts can also mirror ideas that go back to the Second Temple era. Despite these views, the rabbinic literature is generally dated to the period post 70 C.E. E. g., Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Early Judaism and Rabbinic Judaism," in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (ed. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010), 279–290. Moreover, when the rabbinic literature is discussed, many of the texts are given a rather large time span. Recently, Paul V.M. Flesher and Bruce Chilton, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2011), 55, claim the Targums were written mostly between 70 and 600 C.E. Hence, the earliest forms and strata of the rabbinic

## 1.1 Background

The term “ancient Jewish literature” that appears in the title of this study requires some clarification. In this context this term is used to designate texts composed in a specific time period. Ancient Judaism is often described as a period from the Babylonian exile to the seventh century C.E. The latter date marks the time when the Babylonian Talmud was written. In this study the understanding is that ancient Judaism can be divided into two eras: antiquity and late antiquity. The period of antiquity comprises events from the Babylonian exile to the Bar Kokhba revolt (135 C.E.), whereas late antiquity is the time after the revolt until the seventh century C.E. My study concentrates on the period of antiquity, and the texts deriving from that era will be quoted as “ancient Jewish literature.”

The inspiration of ancient Judaism is notably reflected in the rich textual corpora. Most of the texts of this study were actually composed after the exile, but some of them may have even earlier origins. This applies particularly to the texts that belong to the Hebrew Bible. Some compositions could have been known in some form before the exile. Despite their earlier provenance, they went through an extensive editing that lasted for centuries. Therefore it can be assumed that none of them was actually finished before the exile.

Apart from denoting the time period when the compositions that this study examines were produced, the term “ancient Jewish literature” also points to the content of the material that this work deals with. The Jewish literature of this era has been transmitted to our time under different labels. Apart from the Hebrew Bible, which is a fixed collection, ancient Jewish literature has been divided into other different groups, categories or collections of texts such as “the Apocrypha,” “the Pseudepigrapha” or “the Dead Sea Scrolls.”<sup>3</sup> It is now a scholarly commonplace to maintain that these categories are problematic in many ways. They are broad and they do not describe the content of the texts accurately. Furthermore, “Pseudepigrapha” reflect the status that later traditions have given these texts rather than their actual content, whereas the title “the Dead Sea Scrolls”

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texts that would with certainty go back to the Second Temple period are difficult to establish. In this study I have consciously left these texts out, claiming that despite reflecting ideas that can go back to antiquity, they probably received their final form later in the first centuries C.E. Hence, they do not provide firsthand information concerning the interpretation of the figure of Miriam. Nonetheless, the rabbinic texts will be taken into consideration when they offer complementary information for the texts of this study in parallel material.

<sup>3</sup> I acknowledge that various Christian denominations recognize different canons. They include different texts (or books) in their Old Testament canons. This remark is not crucial for my study, because the status of the texts of the Hebrew Bible included in this research is not questioned. Moreover, while using the term “Hebrew Bible” instead of “Old Testament” my intention is to emphasize the Jewish origin of these texts.

points mostly to the history of discovery of these texts.<sup>4</sup> Hence the various titles attributed to the ancient Jewish texts contain difficulties.

First, by referring to the texts taken into consideration in this study as “ancient Jewish literature” my intention is to highlight that despite the later categories applied to them, they represent the rich literature of the given time period. The texts are examples of literature—produced during that time without further categories of significance. Second, the title “ancient Jewish literature” emphasizes that all the references to Miriam are given equal weight in the analysis. They serve as important witnesses to the interpretation of women in general and the figure of Miriam in particular.

## 1.2 History of Research

### 1.2.1 Biblical Female Figures<sup>5</sup>

It has been recognized for a long time that ancient literature is not value neutral. It reflects the ideas of its own time and its voice belongs to the people of its time. The Hebrew Bible has been described as a “men’s book.” It was written by an “urban elite of male religious specialists.”<sup>6</sup> Therefore, various texts of the Hebrew Bible reflect these selected men’s interests and manly language. Traditionally this

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4 The definition of “the Apocrypha” (or the Deuterocanonical Books) is rather clear. This collection contains the majority of the books included in the LXX, but not in the Hebrew Bible. Meanwhile, “the Pseudepigrapha” is far more difficult to determine. For discussion concerning the terminology see, e.g., Annette Yoshiko Reed, “The Modern Invention of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,” *JTS* (2009): 1–34; Molly M. Zahn, “Talking about Rewritten Texts: Some Reflections on Categories,” in *Changes in Scripture: Rewriting and Interpreting the Authoritative Traditions in the Second Temple Period* (ed. Hanne von Weissenberg, Juha Pakkala, Marko Marttila; BZAW 419; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 93–120; Eibert Tigchelaar, “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Scriptures,” in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Scriptures* (ed. Eibert Tigchelaar; BETL 270; Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 1–18.

5 I use the term “Biblical” here as an anachronism. Some ancient female figures are known primarily because of their appearance in the Hebrew Bible. Yet I acknowledge that by the time that most of the different texts of Miriam studied in this research were written, there was no “Bible” as we understand it today.

6 Phyllis Bird, *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 53. Further, see Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 11–13. Here I refer to the Hebrew Bible because the rest of the literary corpus I deal with has not yet been addressed from a perspective that emphasizes women’s marginality in the texts. See Tal Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine: An Inquiry into Image and Status* (TSAJ 44; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 42, who writes concerning the Jewish texts of the Greco-Roman era: “The way the literary sources treat women as a group is reminiscent of the intellectual attitude adopted towards other groups categorized as ‘outsiders’. This can be explained by the obvious fact that all the sources of the period were propounded by and for educated Jewish men.”

was received without much criticism. It was accepted that women were given less importance in religious and historical texts and hence also in the Hebrew Bible. Significantly, since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the attitudes towards the lack of women in the Hebrew Bible and related literature has changed. It has been recognized that the weakness of the historical-critical method, which has been the primary method of Biblical studies in past centuries, is that the method assumes it is possible, at least to a certain extent, to reconstruct ancient realities through the texts. Reaching the historical realities of those who are present in the texts is somewhat possible, but reaching the realities of groups that are under-represented in the texts remains problematic. Evidently women, who only seldom appear in ancient literature, belong to those that are under-represented in the texts. Moreover, it has been pointed out that the attitudes to women reflected in the texts cannot be taken as actual history concerning women, as they often do not present a truthful image of historical women.<sup>7</sup>

During the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, the so-called second wave of feminist interest, feminist biblical scholars proclaimed that the texts of the Hebrew Bible preserve only marginal references to women.<sup>8</sup> After making this observation, however, second wave feminist researchers did not rest with this view. The minor role that female figures seemed to play in the Hebrew Bible led researchers to ask about women's place in ancient Jewish texts.

Since then, questioning women's role in the Hebrew Bible has been done on various levels. On the level of methodology, scholars have established an approach that seeks to challenge the previous status quo that women are just simply not present in the texts. This feminist or gender perspective discusses questions related to gender and sex and equality between men and women in ancient Jewish texts, arguing that even if women's presence is marginalized, questions related to them are still present in the texts.<sup>9</sup>

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7 Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine*, 41–42.

8 The first wave of the feminist movement belonged to the end of the nineteenth century. The best-known literary product of this era is Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman's Bible* (2 vols; New York: European Publishing Company, 1895 and 1898). Cf. the third wave of the feminist movement that is often argued to have started in the 1980s and to continue to the present, but whose exact boundaries are a subject of debate. For a variety of perspectives that are still applicable, see Carolyn Osiek, "The Feminist and the Bible: Hermeneutical Alternatives," in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* (ed. Adela Yarbro Collins; SBLCP 10; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 93–105; Alice Ogden Bellis, "Feminist Biblical Scholarship," in *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books and in the New Testament* (ed. Carol L. Meyers, Toni Craven and Ross S. Kraemer; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 24–32.

9 See e.g., *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* (ed. Adela Yarbro Collins; SBLCP 10; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985); Bird, *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities*, and *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books and in the New Testament*.

Those women that are present in the texts (named or unnamed) have been studied from various perspectives. Several studies examine the role of women in their ancient Jewish context.<sup>10</sup> Also, commentaries that highlight the presence of specific women in the Hebrew Bible and Apocrypha are now available.<sup>11</sup> While women in the context of the Hebrew Bible have been carefully analyzed, much less work has been concentrated on the rest of ancient Jewish literature. The lack of research can be partly explained by the history of research. Almost all of the texts found at Qumran and in the nearby caves were not published until the middle of the 1990s. Therefore it is only recently that all the textual material regarding this collection has been made available. The DSS have profoundly challenged our ideas of canon and shed new light on texts that were important in the period following the exile.<sup>12</sup> The texts questioned the earlier self-evident supremacy of the Hebrew Bible (and the Masoretic Text) and raised other texts next to it as equal witnesses to ancient Judaism, thus calling for new attention to a broader corpus of ancient Jewish literature. All in all, the DSS have contributed to a re-evaluation of the significance of all ancient Jewish texts in the field of Biblical Studies.

In the field of the DSS, it was Eileen Schuller who first called for the role of women, which was previously claimed to be non-existent, to be revised.<sup>13</sup> Schuller's claim, that the community of Khirbet Qumran was not a celibate community but that it consisted of both men and women, was soon followed by others.<sup>14</sup> Schuller's

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10 E.g., Athalya Brenner, *The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative* (The Biblical Seminar 2; Sheffield: JSOT, 1985); Meyers, *Discovering Eve*; Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine*.

11 Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, eds., *The Women's Bible Commentary: Expanded Edition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster: John Knox Press, 1998); Athalya Brenner, ed., *Feminist Companion to the Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, now Continuum, 1993–2003).

12 For the significance of the DSS to the study of Pseudepigrapha, see Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, 143–162, 157–161; Tigchelaar, "Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Scriptures," 1–13.

13 Eileen M. Schuller, "Women in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects* (ed. Michael O. Wise et al.; Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 722; New York: New York Academy of Science, 1994), 115–32; eadem, "Evidence for Women in the Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World* (ed. J.S. Kloppenborg and S.G. Wilson; London: Routledge, 1996), 262–285; eadem, "Women at Qumran," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Critical Assessment* (ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 2:117–144; eadem, "Women in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Research in the Past Decade and Future Directions," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Contemporary Culture: Proceedings of the International Conference held at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem July 6–8, 2008* (ed. Adolfo D. Roitman, Lawrence H. Schiffman and Shani Tzoref; STDJ 93; Brill, 2010), 571–588.

14 In particular and almost contemporarily with Schuller, Lawrence H. Schiffman, who already in 1992 discussed women and the DSS in "Laws Pertaining to Women in the Temple Scroll," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research* (ed. Devorah Dimant and Uriel



studies led the way for other studies to follow up on how women are actually depicted in the DSS.<sup>15</sup> These studies have challenged earlier ideas concerning the celibate community profoundly and called for a re-evaluation of the role of women in ancient Judaism.

Concerning the study of women in the DSS and the Pseudepigraphic texts, the titles of many of the above cited studies show that various studies usually make use of only one text. The studies concentrate on analyzing that one text's portrayal of women. Meanwhile an analysis that would ask about the image and depiction of a particular female figure in multiple sources and would compare the results with each other is still missing.

### 1.2.2 The Figure of Miriam

Among the female figures of the Hebrew Bible, the figure of Miriam has also been analyzed previously. Two monographs focus on Miriam: Rita Burns, *Has the Lord Indeed Spoken only Through Moses? A Study of the Biblical Portrait of Miriam* (SBLDS 84, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987) and Ursula Rapp, *Miriam: Eine feministisch-rhetorische Lektüre der Miriamtexte in der hebräischen Bibel* (BZAW 317; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002).<sup>16</sup> These studies acknowledge the fragmentary picture

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Rappaport; *STDJ* 10; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 210–228; see also, idem, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 127–144; John Strugnell, “More on Wives and Marriage in the Dead Sea Scrolls: 4Q416 2 ii 21 [Cf. 1 Thess 4:4] and 4QMMT B,” *RevQ* 17 (1996): 547–557; Cecilia Wassen, *Women in the Damascus Document* (Academia Biblica 21; Atlanta: SBL, 2005); Eyal Regev, “Cherchez les femmes: Were the *yahad* Celibates?” *DSD* 15 (2008): 253–284; Tal Ilan, “Women in Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Oxford Handbook to the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 123–146.

15 Maxine Grossman, “Reading for Gender in the Damascus Document,” *DSD* 11 (2004): 212–239; Moshe J. Bernstein, “Women and Children in the Legal and Liturgical Texts from Qumran,” *DSD* 11 (2004): 191–211; Sidnie White Crawford, “Mothers, Sisters, and Elders: Titles for Women in Second Temple Jewish and Early Christian Communities,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. James R. Davila; *STDJ* 46; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 177–191; eadem, “Not According to Rule: Women, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Qumran,” in *Emanuel: Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (ed. Shalom M. Paul et al.; VTSup 94; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 127–150.

16 Before these book length studies Miriam was analyzed next to other female figure of the Hebrew Bible. See e.g., Phyllis Bird, “Images of Women in the Old Testament,” in *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 68–85; John H. Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed: The Status of Women in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 158, 173, have inquired about Miriam's position as a prophetess and her status in the cult. Meanwhile, Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (trans. B.W. Anderson; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1972), 182–183, has dealt with Miriam as a character that appeared next to Aaron and Moses, being first associated with Aaron and only later with Moses.

of Miriam that is preserved in the Hebrew Bible and both suggest that once there was a larger tradition around this figure, but a significant portion has been lost forever. The methods of these two books to overcome the gaps in the narration of the Hebrew Bible concerning Miriam are different. Burns grounds her analysis in the traditional historical-critical methodology. This is particularly clear in her analysis concerning the Pentateuchal passages referring to Miriam. There Burns bases her study notably on Martin Noth's earlier work.<sup>17</sup> Apart from the historical-critical perspective, Burns also engages with the texts of the neighboring ancient Near Eastern (ANE) cultures, finding parallels between some ANE texts and the references to Miriam.<sup>18</sup> Fundamentally, throughout her study Burns argues that whereas the title prophetess (Exod 15:20) should be understood anachronistically in Miriam's case, the depiction of Miriam in the Hebrew Bible corresponds better to a figure that had a cultic function. Burns finally raises the possibility that Miriam was a priestess.

The methods and conclusions of Ursula Rapp's study are different. First of all, Rapp thoroughly examines the passages of the Hebrew Bible from the perspective of literary criticism, using rhetorical analysis as her key method. This allows Rapp to pay particular attention to Miriam's speeches and interaction with other characters and to give the figure a more pronounced voice in the Hebrew Bible. Through her literary analysis, Rapp reaches conclusions concerning the history of the Miriam texts. In her conclusions she divides the texts into those that deal with Miriam positively and those that display a more critical attitude towards her. She concludes that the former group, which understood Miriam as one of the early leaders next to Moses and Aaron, represents the voices of those people who remained in Judah during the Babylonian exile and who later advocated after the return for a more egalitarian and non-hierarchical religious leadership system.

Apart from these monographs several articles that analyze the figure from various perspectives are dedicated to the figure of Miriam. Generally, an interest in Miriam's role as a prophetess characterizes several studies. As the Hebrew Bible does not give an explicit answer to the question concerning the nature of Miriam's prophecy, scholars have tried to overcome the gaps in the narration by using different methods. Some studies seek to give Miriam a more pronounced voice by carefully reading all of the references to her preserved in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>19</sup>

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17 Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*; idem, *Exodus: A Commentary* (trans. J.S. Bowden; OTL; London: SCM Press, 1962), and *Numbers: A Commentary* (trans. James D. Martin; OTL; London: SCM Press, 1968). I will return to the relationship between the studies of Noth and Burns during the analysis of the Pentateuchal passages.

18 The term ancient Near East applies to the ancient civilizations of the region that corresponds roughly to the area that is today known as the Middle East.

19 Marie-Theres Wacker, "Mirjam: Kritischer Mut einer Prophetin," in *Zwischen Ohnmacht und Befreiung: Biblische Frauengestalten* (ed. Karin Walter; Freiburg: Herder, 1988), 44–52; Phyllis Trible, "Bringing Miriam Out of the Shadows," *BRev* 5 (1989): 14–25, 24; eadem, "Subversive