

Questioning Biblical Patriarchy Through the Marriage Laws of Deuteronomy

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ABSTRACT

The book of Deuteronomy in the Hebrew Bible contains an extensive list of laws, from cultic regulations to laws addressing everyday affairs. As a legal collection, it can be observed as a symbol of practices and values of the ancient Israelites (the people by and for whom the Hebrew Bible was formed). Many prescriptions in the Bible are perplexing and controversial according to our modern Western standards, especially those regarding gender equality in marital provisions. This essay examines the marriage laws of Deuteronomy within its specific geographical, cultural, and historical context (the ancient Near East) including comparisons to various law codes of nearby regional and other Biblical traditions, to argue that perspectives found in Deuteronomy are relatively progressive in protecting women's rights. I challenge the common and often unquestioned assumption amongst scholars, religious followers and general readers that the Bible is sexist and misogynistic. More broadly, I advocate for the need to assess historical and religious works on gender in their appropriate context, in order to obtain a more complex and earnest understanding of ancient traditions.¹

Introduction

The Bible and its religions have been, are, and will continue to be pervasive in our modern world. It is a text that shapes our collective psyche, affecting not only religious and academic, but also political and cultural institutions, ranging from ethics and legal systems to art (Fischer 4, Meyers 7). Acknowledging its vast influence, I question the equally pervasive assumptions of gender inequality in the Bible and ancient Israelite society,² to more carefully consider a historical system of gender dynamics. More specifically,

I focus on Deuteronomy, a legal collection. Some question whether the laws were actually practiced (McKeating 58-66, Meyers 22-3).³ But regardless of practice, I believe that ancient Near Eastern legal codes portray the standards for virtuous moral and social conduct, serving as an indicator of their dominant ideology (Edenburg 57; Phillips 5; Ziskind, "Part II" 236). Therefore, I view unique developments in Deuteronomy as societal motives to establish new, progressive norms.

First, I give reasons for a feminist approach to the Bible. Next, I provide descriptions of women's roles in the ancient Near East to disprove the image of exclusive patriarchy in the region.⁴ Focusing then on Deuteronomy, I explain that the Deuteronomic period is a time of reform, a befitting occasion for progressive changes. Finally, I delve into the marriage laws of Deuteronomy and compare them to other relevant ancient Near Eastern legal codes to provide evidence that Deuteronomy does, in fact, demonstrate progressive values relative to its historical and cultural milieu. I aim to contribute to the growing body of feminist Biblical literature by situating the marriage laws within its rightful ancient Near Eastern context, which helps us obtain a more accurate picture of women's positions in ancient Israelite society. More generally, I work to discredit generalizations of the ancient Near East, specifically ancient Israel, as unequivocally patriarchal; such tendencies threaten to diminish the complexities of dynamic human societies.

Reasons for a Feminist Approach

The Bible has long suffered from labels of sexism, patriarchy, and misogyny. Stanton, writer of *The Woman's Bible*, summarizes the Bible as "the origin of women's subjection" (18). Gardener, a 19th century American author, laments that "the Bible require[s] of woman everything, and ... repay[s] her with contempt and oppression" (9). Charles Kingsley, an English priest, asserts that "there will never be a good world for woman till ... the canon (Biblical) law is civilized off the earth" (328).

However, feminist scholars (with whom I identify) see many of these sentiments as outdated (Fuchs, Fischer et al., Meyers). They arise from male-dominated church leadership and scholarship that have neglected issues regarding women in the Bible, and served male interests to exclude and marginalize women (Fuchs 208-9; Fischer et al. 5; Meyers 7, 201). Each wave of feminism from the 1970s to the 1990s has produced more nuanced analyses of the Bible that deeply considers the

Bible's positions on women. Acknowledging the Bible's almost exclusively male authorship, some feminist scholars question whether its stories reflect actual practice of the ancient Israelites, others focus on positive depictions of female figures, and some simply reject the authority of the Bible (Meyers 7-8). Regarding narratives of violence against women, some feminist scholars argue that they do not advocate misogyny, but serve to condone such horrific acts and criticize a sinful Israelite society (Meyers 7). The most relevant argument to this essay, and the most important I believe, is that Biblical texts are interpreted out of context (Fuchs 208-11; Meyers 8, 181). Refusing to read the Bible within its appropriate historical and cultural background in virtue of academic objectivity "made it impossible for feminist discourse to insert itself into the self-authorizing discourse" of Biblical scholarship (Fuchs 208). The stereotypical view held by scholars, media and general readers—that the Bible and ancient Israel are rigidly patriarchal—assumes that gender roles in premodern cultures are inherently hierarchical and neglects more thoughtful interpretations (Meyers 180-1).

With regards to feminist Biblical scholarship, Cottrell argues that a feminist analysis of the Bible is a "distort[ion] to fit a preconceived viewpoint" and a "misuse [of] [s]cripture" (Cottrell 23, 24). Throughout his critique of feminist studies of the Bible, he accuses feminist Biblical scholars of failing to provide contextual justification of crucial passages (23, 32, 57, 260). Stanton claims that "the unvarnished texts speak for themselves [of the degradation of women]" and that Deuteronomy "emanat[es] from the most obscene minds of a barbarous age" (Stanton 7, 126). In objection, I review the Deuteronomic texts with a contextually appropriate lens to consider the complexities of a patriarchal culture and challenge the notion of patriarchy in the ancient Near East as a cultural universal.

Questioning Patriarchy in Ancient Israel

To examine Deuteronomy's position on gender equality, we start by questioning the concept of absolute patriarchy in ancient Israel. In this essay, the term "patriarchy" refers to the sociocultural system of male dominance, referring to their privileges and authority over women, as well as the designation of the male as the head of the house who holds legal power over his wife and daughters as part of his property (Meyers 15). I do not contest that the Bible is androcentric as it undeniably consists mostly of stories of men, told by men, to men. I also accept that ancient Israel is generally patriarchal, that most women did not enjoy the same status as men. However, I recognize the wealth of evidence for female agency, which deter a superficial depiction of ancient Israel as a static system of social and power arrangements.⁵

Ancient Near Eastern societies were dominantly based on kinship. Families were patrilinear (descent traced through the male line) and patrilocal (the woman moves to her husband's home). Women's main responsibilities typically lay within the household: raising and educating children, preparing food, and working in the field. However, Meyers cautions against imposing modern, negative notions of female domesticity on ancient cultures; ancient Near Eastern societies were primarily agricultural, meaning that maintenance activities done by women were indispensable in sustaining the household and community (Meyers 121-127). Furthermore, archaeological and textual evidence show that women also participated in economic activity by producing commodities such as textiles and houseware, engaging in trades, buying land, and even signing legal documents (*New Oxford Annotated Bible [NOAB]*, Prov. 31.10-31, Meyers 21, Leith "Women"). The Bible also includes professional women: Deborah is a leader and judge (Judges 4), Miriam (Exod 15.20) and Huldah (2 Kings 22.1) are prophets, and Queen Athaliah is a ruler (2 Kings 11). Women

of the ancient Near East were also powerful and demanded fear due to their seductive prowess, as evidenced by Tamar (Gen. 38), Jael (Judg. 4), Pugat in Aqhat (a Near Eastern myth), and Ishtar, the beautiful but deadly Sumerian goddess.

Why, then, are Israelite women's lives and voices so rare in the Bible, despite evidence of active women in the ancient Near East? The dominance of male voices and stories of men can be attributed to the fact that the Bible's authors were primarily urban, elite men. Rural women held greater authority and influence over their families and males held positions of political and religious power. Therefore, the Bible's limited authorship may not be holistically representing ancient Israelite gender norms (Ackerman, Leith "Women", Hackett 144). As well, because both the authors and intended audience were male, Biblical references to women were largely excluded, thus contributing to the patriarchal tone of the text.

Deuteronomy: A Period of Change

To better appreciate the Deuteronomic text as progressive for its time, it is important to recognize the Deuteronomic period as one full of changes. The words of Deuteronomy were first proclaimed by Moses (the great leader and prophet), immediately after Israel's Exodus out of Egypt (in 16th century BC) and before their entry into the Promised Land. In other words, it was a time of liberation, instability, and new beginnings. The covenant, or contract, with God from Exodus was being renewed after a period of idol worship and severe fragmentation of their relationship with God in Egypt. Presented upon their entry into a new land and era, Deuteronomy had immense authority for the Israelites, "creating the expectations of the people who called themselves Israel" (Campbell Jr., 216). Moreover, traumatized by years of slavery under Egyptian rule, Deuteronomy's speaker sought to emphasize equity, justice, and social morality, especially for the underprivileged (Frymer-Kensky, "Deuteronomy" 52). Deuteronomy was not just a repetition of the old covenant. It

contained significant revisions to reform the religious and social life of Israel, in order to “serve as the foundation of national well-being” and the “rallying-point” in a period of turbulence (Driver lii).

Later, the book was excavated by King Josiah of Judah in 622 BC during Assyrian reign.⁶ Deuteronomy served as the basis for his sweeping reforms. Taking advantage of Assyria’s period of weakness, Josiah’s nationalist campaign worked to build a unified Israel, abandoning Assyrian customs and renewing the covenant with God once again (von Rad 25, Mayes 85, *NOAB* 247). Given that Deuteronomy was revised and disseminated during times of revolution, “its authors were convinced that older conventions of ... social organization were no longer viable” (*NOAB* 248). As Hackett notes, during times of change, women and marginalized groups are more likely to hold power (144). In periods of instability, people are valued based on merit rather than regularized systems, and traditions are more easily subverted.

The revised laws posed in Deuteronomy outline, with great deliberation and authoritative significance, customs for the Israelites in an effort to re-establish Israel’s distinct identity (von Rad 29, *NOAB* 248, Nicholson 88). Deuteronomy “represents the first serious attempt made to counteract the tendencies of the age” (Driver li); this historical context provides a ripe setting for progressive change, including reformations for women’s rights. In the following sections, I will convey how Deuteronomy introduces women and men to be equal subjects under the law.

Deuteronomy 22.13-19: The Slandered Bride

Deuteronomy 22.13-19 discusses the case of the slandered bride, who is accused of premarital unchastity by her inchoate husband. We can assume that the man slanders his bride to divorce her while avoiding the dowry and divorce fines

(Frymer-Kensky “Virginity” 93, Otto 135, Mayers 309). Already, requiring divorce fines from the man is an improvement from Assyrian laws, in which the husband may choose not to give the woman monetary compensation even if she were faultless (MAL A37). In Deut. 22.13-19, the bride and her family may present bloodied bedsheets (from the tearing of the hymen) as proof for the bride’s innocence. With this evidence, the man was convicted of lying and defamation, and received a daunting triple punishment: corporal (the verb “punish” (*yissēr*) implies corporal punishment), financial (he must pay 100 shekels⁷), and stripped of his patriarchal authority (he relinquishes his right to divorce her). This is a heavy penalty in comparison to a similar case in CH 127, which only sentences the slandering husband to shave half of his head. Therefore, this decree denotes a significant punishment to the man for daring to defame the woman. Deuteronomy is also significant in allowing the woman’s side a chance at a defense, as opposed to Num 5.12-15, which authorizes the priest to determine the woman’s fate. Another similar law, CH 131, states that if an accused wife is “not surprised with another man” (i.e. not caught), she merely has to take an oath of fidelity and be absolved (Hammurabi 24). CH 131 could be observed as even more lenient than this Deuteronomy passage, in exonerating her with a simple oath. However, Deut. 22.13-19 is more empowering for the woman by allowing her to carry out a legally meaningful act in front of the court of elders. Although the father is to present the evidence, assigning the daughter’s fate to her original patriarch, Deut. 22.15 explicitly states that not just the father but also the mother be involved, and that the community serve as the judge. The involvement of others suggest that the girl is not being treated solely as the patriarch’s property, but a significant member of the family and community (Von Rad 142, Frymer-Kensky, “Deuteronomy” 57).

Retributions paid to the father may seem to imply that he, and not the daughter, is the victim. Yet, Otto points out that a married couple presumably shares property; if the money were given to his

wife, it would essentially remain in his grasp, thus not serving as a fine at all (135). The dowry and any fines given to the father function as insurance, in case she is widowed or divorced, which would return her to her father's care. Thus, the money passes through the father as an indirect contribution to the bride herself. Furthermore, in practice, Pressler notes that the rabbis later amended the fine to be given to the girl directly (96).

Within a male-dominated society, the case of the slandered bride is a progressive consideration of the woman's interests. The comparatively harsh punishments for the man discourages the utterance of baseless allegations which would sentence her to death. By requiring a trial and recognizing the possibility that she may be a victim of her husband, this law portrays the bride as an individual legal subject, independent from the whims of her husband. Therefore, the law not only protects the woman from the man's false accusations, but also affirms a sense of autonomy over her fate (Phillips 11). The law also designates the daughter's family to present the evidence rather than the husband, contrasting other Near Eastern laws regarding false accusations that allocates the burden of proof on the accuser (CH 1, 3, 9-11, 127, 131-32; MAL 17-19; Edenburg 50). In this case, this burden is advantageous; given that the parents can easily smear some fake blood on the sheets as evidence, it is much easier for the daughter's side to win the case (Frymer-Kensky, "Virginity" 95).

At first, the no divorce provision seems like a misogynistic measure that binds the bride to a suspicious and hateful husband. However, even if her innocence was proved, her name would already be defiled and public suspicion of her promiscuity would persist (Ziskind, "Part I" 154). If they were to separate, as a divorcee and non-virgin, her value as a woman and thus chances of remarriage would be significantly lowered. Thus, relinquishing the man's right to divorce her represents Deuteronomy's humanitarian attempt to deter slander and protect her economic security and

social status. This provision, recurrent throughout Deuteronomy, is a new concept to ancient Israelite society (contrast to Exod. 22.16), which acknowledges the girl has been victimized—an advancement towards feminist ideals (Phillips 9).

Deuteronomy 22.22: Death for Both

Deut. 22.22 continues to set out consequences of infidelity, this time involving both men and women. This section is presumably a derivative of other ancient Mesopotamian laws (MAL A15, A56, HL 197-198, and CH 129). However, the Mesopotamian codes permit the husband to forgive and pardon both the adulterous wife and male lover from punishment, whereas in Deuteronomy, no such right is granted to the husband. The Deuteronomic author reinforces the woman as an independent legal subject, revoking the patriarch's authority to determine her fate. Furthermore, these laws are unique in explicitly prescribing equal penalty for both the man and the woman. In comparison, LE 28 fails to mention the consequence for the illicit male lover and more significantly, LU 7 sentences the woman to death if she initiates the adulterous relationship but leaves the consenting man blameless (Ziskind, "Part II" 232).

Deut. 22 introduces women as a subject of criminal law, noting that the stories of Sarah (Gen. 20.3,7, 12.17), Rebekah (Gen. 26.9-10), and Bathsheba (2 Sam 11-12), mention punishments only for the male figures (Phillips 15). For the first time in the Hebrew Bible, women are admonished for their voluntary association in the extramarital relationship as legal independents. Furthermore, the specific repetition in the passage, "both of them shall die, the man ... as well as the woman," strengthens the claim that mutual condemnation is a newly introduced concept in the Bible (Deut. 22.22).⁸

Deuteronomy 22.23-27:

Town vs Countryside

Deut. 22.23-27, is the first passage in Deuteronomy that distinguishes between adultery and rape. If a man sleeps with a virgin, betrothed woman in the country, the law assumes that no one would have heard her cries for help. Thus, the man would be accused of rape and stoned while the woman is left blameless. Deut. 22.26 is noteworthy for identifying that the woman is an independent victim, explicitly recognizing rape as a crime of violence toward the woman (Frymer-Kensky, "Deuteronomy" 58). If the incidence occurs in town, it is assumed that the woman consented and thus, both would be punished by death for adultery. Deut. 22.24 clearly differentiates why each partner should be punished: the woman, for failing to scream for help, and the man, for violating another man's wife. The distinct transgressions imply that she is legally independent from the man, stoned for her own intentional delinquency (Edenburg 54, Otto 134, Reeder 133).

Deuteronomy 22.28-29:

Intercourse with an Unmarried Woman

Deut. 22.28-29 resembles Exod. 22.16-17 in describing the case of a man deflowering a virgin, unbetrothed woman. In Deuteronomy, the law forces the man to marry the woman and revokes his right to divorce her. However, in Exodus, the father is given the right to deny the marriage and financially benefit from it, as the assaulter is required to pay the bride-price for virgins regardless of whether he weds her. Various views are taken on this distinction. Ziskind favors Exodus for taking a greater interest in the woman, for she is not required to marry her assaulter ("Part I" 154). On the contrary, Frymer-Kensky remarks that it is the father, not the daughter, who is given the authority to make this decision. She argues that the provision serves to return to the father his control of the girl, which he momentarily lost through the rape incident, and re-

establish his status as her patriarch ("Virginity" 91). However, we must remember that as a deflowered young woman, her prospects for marriage has been significantly lowered. Therefore, similar to Deut. 22.19, the no divorce provision in Deut. 22.28-29 is favorable for the girl, because it assures her economic and social stability. This passage also allows cases for elopement: a forbidden couple in love can force the father to accept the marriage, challenging the father's patriarchal authority over his daughter (Frymer-Kensky, "Virginity" 93). A comparison to MAL A55 further accentuates Deuteronomy's regard for women. In the Assyrian law, the father of the victim may rape and keep the man's wife (assuming the man had been married)—a horrific, talionic decree that objectifies the blameless wife as a mechanism to settle the feud between the two men.

Deuteronomy 25.5-10:

The Widow & The Levir

As opposed to the relative passivity of women in previous laws, a legally powerful woman can be found in Deut. 25.5-10. If a man living with his brother dies, the widow is taken by the levir (the husband's brother). As cohabitants, it is assumed that the property is undivided amongst the two brothers. And not having begot a son, the property of the deceased husband would automatically go to the brother, leaving him no motivation to fulfill the levirate marriage (Otto 140). As a result, Deut. 5.5 serves to ensure the legal and economic security of the widow. This is a humanitarian exception to Lev. 18.16, which forbids sexual relations between a man and his sister-in-law for the sake of the vulnerable widow.

Deut. 25. 7-10 explains, in detail, a revolutionary procedure. In the instance that the brother refuses his duties, the widow can bring the dispute to the elders who will try to persuade him; if unsuccessful, she is then given the right to publicly humiliate the brother and his family line, granted full usufruct, and is freed from her duty to her husband's family. Essentially, she can instigate legal action against a

man to assure her quality of life for herself, a unique provision in a male-dominated society (Otto 140).

Motivations of Deuteronomy

Traditionally, women's sexuality was understood as the patriarch's property (Frymer-Kensky, "Deuteronomy" 61; "Virginity" 84, *NOAB* 286, Reeder 130). Her chastity and sexual fidelity were measures of male competence, "for real men have the strength and cunning to protect and control their women" (Frymer-Kensky, "Virginity" 84). However, Deuteronomic laws relegate the power of the patriarch and assign authority to the public realm. The community becomes the judge and executioner, responsible for ensuring the woman's fidelity (Deut. 22.21, 24; Deut. 25.8).

The passing of authority to the community reveals the fundamental intention of Deuteronomic laws: to strengthen the order, unity, and obedience of Israel as God's covenant people. Throughout the Bible, marital metaphors are used to depict the relationship between God and Israel (Ezek. 16:8-14; Hos. 2.7, 3.1-3; Jer. 3.20, 31.31-33; Isa. 50.1). Thus, decrees of absolute fidelity of woman to man parallel God's demand of the Israelites' exclusive loyalty (Frymer-Kensky, "Deuteronomy" 57, Maier 95, Reeder 135). Both idolatry and adultery prompt death by stoning, with an order to "purge the evil from your midst" (Deut. 13.5,10; 17.5; 22.21,22,24). In Deuteronomy, adultery is removed from family law—a private matter decided by the husband (MAL A14-16, 23; HL 197-8, Exod. 22.17)—and re-designated as a crime against the community (Edenburg 57, Phillips 5). The adulterous woman is punished by the townspeople, for she risks covenantal faithfulness of the entire community. In effect, Deuteronomy invites women into the covenantal community. It brings women into the realm of law, responsible for upholding utmost fidelity to God, just like men. Its distinctions of women as independent subjects under communal law reflect "contemporary interests of the Deuteronomists and directly

results from their innovatory legislation" to raise women to a more egalitarian standing (Phillips 14).

Furthermore, patrilineality should be distinguished from patriarchy. Virginity and fidelity were necessary measures to ensure a legitimate heir carrying the family blood was born; the issue of promiscuity was not simply of patriarchal authority, but mainly of paternity (Leith, Mayes 311, Meyers 27, Phillips 7, Reeder 134). In Deut. 22.17, the blood on the bedsheet may not only represent the hymen tearing to affirm her virginity, but it may also be menstrual blood to prove that she has not been impregnated by another man, to avoid confusion of paternal heritage if a child were born (Frymer-Kensky, "Deuteronomy" 57; Phillips 7).⁹ This is further supported by Numb. 5.21-22 where a priest was to curse a married, pregnant woman whom the husband suspected of infidelity. If the child was illegitimate, she would suffer a miscarriage so that a new child with rightful and verified parentage can be had. Therefore, strict control of women's sexuality must be understood not as a measure that aims to subjugate women, but to preserve the family bloodline.

Conclusion

In this essay, I argue against the tendency to paint ancient Near Eastern societies, more specifically ancient Israel, under one broad stroke of patriarchy. By comparing Deuteronomy to other books in the Bible and legal codes in the region, I hope to have shown that no different from our own societies, ancient Near Eastern civilizations have subtle yet notable ideological variations throughout time and space. As seen, Deuteronomy aims to protect vulnerable women such as hated wives, non-virgin girls, and widows from exploitation and explicitly includes and distinguishes women as independent legal subjects, which can be seen as relatively progressive efforts to establish women's rights.

My intent was not to deny that ancient Israelite society was patriarchal, but to illuminate its subtle progressions towards a more egalitarian

society compared to its neighbors and its own past. Assuming solely male-domination in the Bible not only hinders accurate understanding of its historical, cultural, and social reality, but also discourages complex investigations of gender in ancient civilizations, which still affects us today. As a globally and timelessly influential text, the Bible's ideas on gender and gender roles must be treated with careful consideration and intense scrutiny: the Bible informs perspectives and behaviors of not only the church, but also of families and personal relationships, as well as social, educational, and political institutions. As part of this rigorous investigation, legal texts such as Deuteronomy should be placed in context, observed alongside narratives and other comparisons in nearby cultures, as we try our best to suspend ethnocentric judgments. We must be aware that our understanding of patriarchy, gender roles, and gender identity are inevitably subjective, clouded with our specific modern, cultural lens. When engaging with texts of antiquity, we must be humble, remembering that history provides us with mere data onto which we inscribe our own interpretations and meanings; our pursuits do not provide absolute truths, but continual enlightenment of both past and present ideologies.

Notes

1. Abbreviations for Near Eastern legal texts

HL = Hittite Laws (Hittites = an ancient Indo-European people of 17th -13th centuries BC; the Hittite Empire occupied modern-day Turkey)

CH = Code of Hammurabi (Hammurabi = Babylonian king in 18th century BC; the Babylonian Empire occupied modern-day Iraq)

LE = Laws of Eshnunna (Eshnunna = Old Babylonian city in modern day Baghdad, Iraq; time period is unclear but precedes CH)

LU = Laws of Ur-Namma (Ur-Namma = Sumerian king in 21st century BC; the Sumerian Empire preceded the Babylonian Empire in a similar but smaller region; oldest legal code discovered to this day)

MAL = Middle Assyrian Laws (Assyria = great northern empire in modern day Iraq and Turkey; written in 12th century BC)

2. Put simply, Ancient Israel refers to the main authors and audience of the Old Testament of the Bible.

They are situated in the ancient Near Eastern region, where their history began in approximately 1200 BCE. The Ancient Israelites inhabited areas of Egypt and the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. The Kingdom of Israel split in 924 BCE into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. For this essay, "Ancient Israel(ites)" will refer broadly to the peoples of the Northern and Southern kingdoms. For a more in depth and accurate description, see Knauf and Guillaume 3-17 and 103-133; and Williamson 1-12.

3. For example, in the narratives of Dinah and Tamar, neither women are executed for their extramarital intercourse as outlined in Deut. 22.22. Likewise, Onan in Gen. 38.10 is punished by death rather than the public humiliation prescribed by Deut. 25.5-10.

4. The ancient Near East refers to a historical, geographical, and cultural region that spans modern-day Turkey, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Iran—what we know today as the Middle East. The history of the ancient Near East is generally accepted to span 3000 – 300 BC, containing numerous empires and peoples. Mesopotamia (meaning *between the rivers*), the central region within the Near East, is the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Major Mesopotamian civilizations include Sumerian, Assyrian, Akkadian, and Babylonian empires. The Hittites of Anatolia occupied the northwestern region of the Near East, modern Turkey. See Van de Mieroop 1-10.

5. Some scholars such as Pressler claim "without question, Deuteronomy emerges from and is thoroughly shaped by a patriarchal culture" ("Deuteronomy" 89). In contrast, Meyers outright rejects the notion of patriarchy in ancient Israel, citing reasons such as it being a Eurocentric system, and that it obscures considerations of other inequalities including race, class, and ethnicity. To summarize her argument, which I believe requires serious consideration, she states "patriarchy is a value-laden and diffuse term ... unsuitable for characterizing any society" (195). See Meyers pp. 180-201.

6. Although Josiah was king of Judah, the tone of Deuteronomy is directed to Israel as a whole (before its separation) and its teachings are strongly linked to those of Northern prophets such as Hosea. See von Rad 26, Campbell Jr. 216, and *NOAB* 248.

7. 1 shekel is equal to about 11.4g of silver.

8. Lev. 20.10 may seem to predate Deuteronomy in commanding both individuals to be executed. However, the grammatical form of the phrase *mot yumat* (meaning “he shall surely die”) is singular, which suggests that the inclusion of the woman in Leviticus was a later addition (Phillips 6).

9. The Hebrew term *betulah* here means young adolescent girl, but not necessarily a virgin (Frymer-Kensky, “Deuteronomy” 57).

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