

# Masculinities of the Husbands in the Genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1:2-16)

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## Abstract

From a narrative approach, and through the lens of masculinity studies, this article examines a particular group in the genealogy of Jesus: the men associated with a woman in their “begetting”: Judah with Tamar, Salmon with Rahab, Boaz with Ruth, and David with the wife of Uriah. What traits characterize this specific group of biblical men put forth as Jesus’s ancestors? What kind of husbands and fathers are they? What is the effect on readers as they peruse this list of masculine prototypes? These male figures are then compared to Joseph and to Jesus. The Gospel of Matthew does not present the masculinities of Joseph and Jesus in the same way as it portrays those of others in the genealogy. Basically, the genealogy supports and subverts ancient hegemonic constructions of masculinity, by proposing a reversal of the values associated with masculinity.

## Keywords

masculinity – genealogy – Gospel of Matthew – gender studies – intertextuality

The four women in the Matthean genealogy have generated such scholarly interest that we almost forget that it is a patrilineal genealogy which follows a male line from Abraham to Jesus. In recent studies, most exegetes underscore the foreign aspects of the four women. For example, M. Konradt shows how they anticipate the universal dimension of the salvation brought by Jesus and how Israel was always open to non-Jews.<sup>1</sup> Other scholars such as P.-B. Smit have

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1 M. Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), pp. 268-72.

used a gender-sensitive approach to the Matthean genealogy in order to analyze the women of this list,<sup>2</sup> but no specific research has explored the masculinities represented in the succession of male individuals.<sup>3</sup> The approximately 40 men in this genealogy have been overlooked and understudied.

From a narrative approach, and through the lens of masculinity studies, I plan to examine a particular group in the genealogy of Jesus: the men associated with a woman in their “begetting”: Judah with Tamar, Salmon with Rahab, Boaz with Ruth, and David with the wife of Uriah.<sup>4</sup> I chose these personages for a case study, because the reader’s attention is naturally drawn toward deviations of the pattern “x begets y” in Matthew’s genealogy.<sup>5</sup>

As S. Alkier suggests, each name in the genealogy is a metonymy, a way to evoke with a single name entire stories about the individual mentioned.<sup>6</sup> What traits characterize this specific group of biblical men put forth as Jesus’s ancestors? What kind of husbands and fathers are they? What is the effect on readers as they peruse this list of masculine prototypes? To answer these questions, I will use a narrative and intertextual approach to trace the impact of Matthew’s genealogy on a reader that is familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures, and is conscious of the ways these texts structure gender.

I will then compare these male figures to Joseph and to Jesus. The Gospel of Matthew does not present the masculinities of Joseph and Jesus in the same way as it portrays those of others in the genealogy. Basically, the genealogy supports and subverts ancient hegemonic constructions of masculinity, by proposing a reversal of the values associated with masculinity.

Like all other forms of identity, masculinity is culturally and socially constructed.<sup>7</sup> I will not define biblical masculinity in a “quasi-structuralist” catalogue of representations of rules, codes, and conventions that enable and

2 P.-B. Smit, “Something about Mary? Remarks about the Five Women in the Matthean Genealogy,” *NTS* 56.2 (2010), pp. 191-207.

3 S.D. Moore and J.C. Anderson presents the genealogy as an alternative model of masculinity that prepares readers for what will come in the rest of the Gospel (“Matthew and Masculinity,” in S.D. Moore and J.C. Anderson (eds.), *New Testament Masculinities* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), pp. 67-91). My article deepens Anderson and Moore’s insight by examining the masculinities of various male characters in the Matthean genealogy.

4 For lack of a better word, I use the term “husbands” in the title of this paper.

5 Many exegetes emphasize the importance of such irregularities. See, for example: J. Nolland, “Genealogical Annotation in Genesis as Background for the Matthean Genealogy of Jesus,” *TynBul* 47.1 (1996), pp. 115-22.

6 S. Alkier, “From Text to Intertext: Intertextuality as a Paradigm for Reading Matthew,” *HvTSt* 61.1-2 (2005), pp. 1-18.

7 For an overview of the biblical research on masculinities, see S.E. Haddox, “Masculinity Studies of the Hebrew Bible: The First Two Decades,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 14 (2016), pp. 176-206.

determine the production, the construction, and the performance of masculinities. Rather, I will examine the stories with a consciousness of the inherently unstable nature of those interpretations.<sup>8</sup> I will be attentive to “hegemonic masculinity,” a concept theorized by Robert W. Connell on the basis of both anthropological and psychoanalytic perspectives.<sup>9</sup> Hegemonic masculinity points to the expression of masculinity that becomes dominant and is the standard against which all other masculinities are judged. Connell’s early conception of hegemonic masculinity has been influential. With time, critical discussion has helped refine this concept.<sup>10</sup> In this essay, I will use it as defined by S. Haddox:

Hegemonic masculinity is the specific gender construction that is dominant in cultural and political power structures. Even if no actual men embody that form of masculinity, the combination of traits still dominates as the ideal masculinity because of its association with power. Thus, a particular gender construction is imitated and propagated by those who seek to rise in the hierarchy of status and power. Nevertheless, hegemonic masculinity is not stable, but is continuously shaped by competing subversive masculinities and the political tensions these represent.<sup>11</sup>

### Association to Women: Undermining Masculinity

As a whole, this genealogy represents a very androcentric way of introducing a narrative. The Matthean genealogy is patrilineal, embodying the standard ancient assumption that the male “begets” (γεννάω) children. Men play the crucial role in reproduction. In this culture, to be a man was to be capable of reproduction. Matthew’s genealogy is very patriarchal, but at the same time, this list seems strange to a (post)modern eye. Indeed, we are presented with a

8 This is the approach suggested by S.D. Moore; see his “Final Reflections on Biblical Masculinity,” in O. Creangă (ed.), *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010), p. 246.

9 R.W. Connell, *Gender and Power* (Sydney: Allen, Mercer and Urwin, 1987). See also T. Carrigan, R.W. Connell and J. Lee, “Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity,” in H. Brod (ed.) *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men’s Studies* (Boston: Allen & Unwin 1987), pp. 63-100.

10 See D.Z. Demetriou, “Connell’s Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique,” *Theory & Society* 30.3 (2001), pp. 337-61, as well as R.W. Connell and J.W. Messerschmidt’s revisionary essay “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” *Gender and Society*, 19.6 (2005), pp. 829-59.

11 Haddox, “Masculinity Studies of the Hebrew Bible,” p. 179.

list of male-generating males. It is almost as if women do not have anything to do with the reproductive process. Most of the other biblical genealogies, such as Luke's genealogy of Jesus, do not mention women at all. So at least, Matthew's genealogy puts forth a counter-narrative by mentioning some women, even though they are vastly outnumbered by males in the account.<sup>12</sup> All of the males in this list demonstrate their virility by begetting sons.<sup>13</sup> However, the fact that the text points out a woman in the begetting process makes these husbands' masculinities suspect. For example, if Abraham begets Isaac, who begets Jacob, who in turn begets Judah without the mention of any women, then why does Judah beget Perez and Zerah with Tamar? What the other men of the genealogy seem to manage on their own – generating males – is noted as being done with women in the case of these four husbands. A possible effect on the reader is to undermine, or to present as irregular, the masculinities of these four individuals.

In his 1995 seminal article about David's masculinity, David Clines points out several characteristics of masculinity in biblical culture.<sup>14</sup> He contends that an important part of biblical masculinity is not to be associated with women.<sup>15</sup> In this list, the four husbands are specifically associated with women. The masculinities of these individuals therefore seem questionable, even before studying their specific narratives.

### Judah: Unjust or Hegemonic Male?

Ἰούδας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Φάρες καὶ τὸν Ζάρα ἐκ τῆς Θαμάρ (Matt. 1:3)

By naming Judah, Tamar and their sons, the genealogy reminds the reader of the curious narrative of Genesis 38. In this account, Judah's masculinity does

12 For a narrative study of the four women as a feminist counter-narrative in Matthew, see E.A. Clements, *Mothers on the Margin? The Significance of the Women in Matthew's Genealogy* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2014).

13 Virility is an important masculine trait. According to Haddox, "A visible sign of a man's masculinity is the ability to reproduce" (Haddox, "Masculinity Studies of the Hebrew Bible," p. 181).

14 Clines's list of David's masculine characteristics are: the fighting male, the persuasive male, the beautiful male, the bonding male, the woman-less male, and the musical male. See D. Clines, "David the Man: The Construction of Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible," *Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), pp. 212-41.

15 Clines writes, "A man does well to steer clear of women, a man does not need women, a man is not constituted by his relationship with women" ("David the Man," p. 15).

not correspond to what a biblical reader would expect of a patriarch. Many elements cast doubt on his ability to be a “man.”

Judah does not follow the Law. The point of this story is to illustrate the importance of levirate marriage. Judah transgresses the Law by refusing to give Tamar his third son as a husband. In the end, he acknowledges himself to be less righteous than Tamar (Gen. 38:26).

Judah is not persuasive; on the contrary he is persuaded by a woman. The ability to persuade others was very important to the assertion of one’s masculinity in antiquity.<sup>16</sup> Not only is Judah not persuasive in his accusation, he is persuaded by Tamar that his own actions were wrong.

Judah is deceived, specifically deceived by a woman. The shame he wants to attribute to Tamar rebounds on himself. He wants to kill her, because her sexuality brings shame to the family honor. Instead, it is he who brings shame to the family. The way in which his actions are publicly revealed is a blow to his honor and to his masculinity.

The fact that Judah has sex with a prostitute is not a problem in the biblical context. A man could have sex with a non-married woman. However, it comes to light that this sexual encounter involves incest. The last comment of the narrator shows that this relation is problematic: “He had no further intercourse with her” (Gen. 38:26). The episode as a whole shows that Judah does not have control of his family, nor does he possess the self-control expected of a male patriarch.

This portrait of Judah’s masculinity in Genesis 38 is the complete opposite of the other narratives in which he plays a role. The Hebrew Bible recounts other stories about Judah, which can be studied to gain insight into how his masculinity is portrayed. Although Judah is only the fourth son of Jacob, he is expressly depicted in Genesis as assuming a leadership role in relation to his brothers, including speaking up against killing Joseph, negotiating with his father regarding Joseph’s demand that Benjamin be brought down to Egypt, and pleading with Joseph for Benjamin’s life. Other biblical texts show that Judah’s name was used to designate an important area of the land. For example, Matthew’s second chapter takes place in the land of Judah (2:1, 5, 6, 22). This indicates Judah’s importance as a patriarch and as a founder of the nation. Indeed, Judah is remembered for some very masculine exploits.

In Genesis, Judah receives the most favorable treatment of all Jacob’s sons. The blessing of Jacob from his deathbed portrays Judah’s hegemonic masculinity at its finest:

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16 According to Clines, “To be master of persuasion is to have another form of power, which is not an alternative to, and far less a denatured version of, physical strength, but part of the repertory of the powerful male” (“David the Man,” p. 9).

Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He crouches down, he stretches out like a lion, like a lioness – who dares rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and the obedience of the peoples is his. Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he washes his garments in wine and his robe in the blood of grapes; his eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk (Gen. 49:8-12).<sup>17</sup>

This text evokes images of dominance, and has messianic undertones. Judah is portrayed as a leader through the images of the lion, the scepter, the prostration of his brothers, and the allusions to a perpetual lineage of David. The physical beauty of Judah, in reference to his eyes and teeth, is also praised. This also sustains Judah's superiority. In the Bible, beautiful men are born to rule.<sup>18</sup> This monologue by Jacob represents fatherly praise of Judah's hegemonic masculinity.

In fact, the portrayal of Judah is one of the clearest images of hegemonic masculinity found in Genesis. But Matthew's genealogy, by specifying that he begat Perez and Zerah with Tamar, directs the reader's attention to the specific story in which Judah loses control because of his lack of justice. Matthew seems to have tamed the lion of Judah.

This lack of righteousness contrasts with other characters in Matthew's Gospel. Joseph is described as δίκαιος (“a righteous man”) a few verses later (1:19). Unlike Judah, he does not condemn his wife to death for adultery. Justice is an important concept of many of the teachings of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>19</sup> Just as Judah's masculinity lacks justice when compared to Tamar in

<sup>17</sup> Bible quotations are from the NRSV.

<sup>18</sup> Examples of beautiful male rulers include Moses (Exod. 2:1-2), Joseph (Gen. 39:6), Saul (1 Sam. 9:2), David (1 Sam. 16:18), and also a king of Tyre (Ezek. 28:12).

<sup>19</sup> See M. Warner, “Uncertain Women: Sexual Irregularity and the Greater Righteousness in Matthew 1,” *Pacifica* 18 (2005), pp. 18-32; R.G. Olender, “Righteousness in Matthew with Implications for the Declaration of Joseph's Righteousness and the Matthean Exception Clauses,” (Ph.D. diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008); E. Cuvillier, “Obéissance à la loi et radicalisation dans le premier évangile: contribution à la question du lien entre Matthieu et le judaïsme du premier siècle,” *ETR* 85 (2010), pp. 387-403; B. Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew and His World of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Press, 1980); J. Glessner, “On ‘Being a Just Man’ (Matt. 1.19): Joseph of Nazareth, Gender, and Empire in Matthew's Infancy Narrative,” in I. Fischer (ed.), *Gender Agenda Matters: Papers of the “Feminist Section” of the International Meetings of the SBL 2012-2014* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), pp. 125-59.

Genesis, it is also wanting when compared to the way Jesus and Joseph exercise this important virtue in the Gospel of Matthew. All things considered, the genealogy undermines Judah's hegemonic masculinity.

### Salmon: Subordinate Masculinity

Σαλμών δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Βόες ἐκ τῆς Ῥαχάβ (Matt. 1:5)

There are no biblical narratives about Salmon. His name occurs in two Hebrew Bible genealogies (1 Chron. 2:10-11 and Ruth 4:20-21) and two New Testament genealogies (Matt. 1:4-5 and Luke 3:32). In each of these, he is described as the son of Nahshon and the father of Boaz. There is not much to say about Salmon, which in itself conveys a lot. Most of the men in the first part of Matthew's genealogy are important patriarchs in Israel's history, but not Salmon.

Salmon is only known because of other people in his family. The genealogy in 1 Chronicles stresses that Nahshon, father of Salmon, is the leader of Judah's army. With a father who continues Judah's hegemonic heritage, Salmon's masculinity seems pale at best. Matthew lists him in connection to his wife: Rahab.<sup>20</sup> In the book of Joshua, Rahab plays a pivotal role in the fall of Jericho. She manifests many "masculine" qualities in a military context. Rahab hides Hebrew spies and deceives Jericho's soldiers. She takes care of her family by her actions and negotiation, saving them from destruction. Rahab also gives one of the most important professions of faith found in the Hebrew Bible (Josh. 2:9, 11). The epistle to the Hebrews (11:31) portrays her as an example of faith, and the book of James (2:25) mentions that she was justified by her works.

In light of this, being Rahab's husband is a difficult situation for a "man." She is a well-known and important character in Israel's history, but Salmon is not. She is a prostitute, so he is only one of many men who had intercourse with her. She saves him and their family. Her actions decide that they will all be integrated into Israel. She is the head of the family. The lack of narratives mentioning Salmon in the Hebrew Bible prevents us from reaching any strong conclusions. However, his father's hegemonic qualities and his wife's leading role certainly cast a strong shadow on Salmon's masculinity.

20 There is nothing explicitly mentioned linking this Rahab to the Rahab in the book of Joshua. However, scholars such as Raymond Brown show that in the context of the biblical canon, we can assume that the two are the same; see Brown, "Rahab in Matt. 1:5 Probably Is Rahab of Jericho," *Biblica* 63 (1982), pp. 79-80.

### Boaz: Generosity

The book of Ruth describes Boaz, son of Rahab and Salmon, as a wealthy landowner in Bethlehem. His wealth is a positive masculine trait, as is his way of taking care of Ruth and Naomi who are not only poor but also widows.<sup>21</sup> Boaz invites Ruth to eat with him and his workers, deliberately leaving grain for her to gather as he keeps a protective eye on her (Ruth 2:13-15).

Boaz's masculinity becomes a little more complicated when Naomi, a woman, plans out how Ruth will seduce Boaz. In this crucial moment, Boaz is shown as having eaten and drunk, lying on the threshing floor in a potentially vulnerable position. After this scene involving "feet," Boaz agrees to exercise his right of kinship and marry her, provided that another with a superior claim declines to do so. Naomi's plan worked. Boaz was "played" by a pair of women. The narrative shows that he is not in charge at all. An even bigger blow to Boaz's masculinity is that Obed, the child resulting from his intercourse with Ruth is deemed to be the offspring, descendent, and heir of Elimelech and Naomi. The villagers shout that "A son has been born to Naomi" (Ruth 4:17). In marrying Ruth, Boaz revives Elimelech's lineage, and secures the future of Naomi's family.

In the end, Boaz is presented as a generous, kind man who cares for and protects women in a precarious situation. But he is not in charge of his own family. The son resulting from his intercourse with Ruth is not considered to be his. Boaz does what Onan had refused to do in Genesis 38. His masculinity is therefore very unique: he gives his seed to revive another man's lineage. He is very generous, maybe too generous.

### David: Hero or Not?

Δαυίδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σολομῶνα ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου (Matt. 1:6)

David was the first biblical character to be examined by masculinity studies.<sup>22</sup> Because of the great number of biblical texts that speak of him, I will not do an

<sup>21</sup> Haddox writes, "Another component of masculinity is a man's ability to provide for his household ... Hospitality not only shows a man's generosity, but also his ability to provide not only enough for his own family, but for visitors as well" ("Masculinity Studies of the Hebrew Bible," p. 181). See also M. Herzfeld, "As in Your Own House: Hospitality, Ethnography, and the Stereotype of Mediterranean Society," in D.D. Gilmore (ed.), *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (Washington: Special Publication of the American Anthropological Association, 1987), pp. 75-89.

<sup>22</sup> See Clines, "David the Man."



in-depth analysis. I will simply point out important traits about David's masculinity in other narratives, before examining the David/Bathsheba story alluded to in Matthew's genealogy.

Men in power, such as David, generally try to maintain an image that conforms to the norms of hegemonic masculinity. For Clines, David represents the ideal hegemonic masculinity of the culture that composed the stories about him.<sup>23</sup>

"Warfare is emblematically male, and the discourse of violence is closely imbricated with that of masculine sexuality."<sup>24</sup> Examples of David's courage and violence pervade several biblical texts. His military career begins when he kills Goliath, the Philistine giant. In this scene, young David is portrayed as the bravest of all of the men on the battlefield. In his many military campaigns, David kills more than 100,000 men.

David is also capable of intelligent speech and persuasion. In his many encounters with Saul, David is extremely persuasive. Saul agrees to send him to battle Goliath (1 Sam. 17:34-36). When Saul later pursues David, David is cleverer than he is. M.V. Măcelaru rightly shows that Saul is characterized by many feminine traits, and David by more masculine ones.<sup>25</sup> For instance, David is beautiful (1 Sam. 16:12). This is an aspect of "real manhood," for which a man can expect praise and admiration, a quality pertaining to royalty. David is also a leader of men, a king with great qualities. He is remembered and celebrated as the quintessence of kingship.

On the one hand, David is a great warrior, a king, a "real man" that excels at taking his rightful place with a hegemonic type of masculinity. On the other hand, David is a fallible hero, as evidenced by the Bathsheba story (2 Samuel 11) and its consequences.

In this narrative, David is not presented as a brave military leader; quite the contrary. He is at home having sex while his men are dying for his sake on the battlefield. Uriah seems much more interested in fighting for the nation than David. Uriah refuses the comfort of his house and of his wife, because of the war in progress.

23 Clines writes, "[M]y guess is that the myth of masculinity inscribed in the David story was a very potent influence upon Israelite men, and I am quite sure that the construction of masculinity in the David story was not invented by its author – or by some historical David – but reflects the cultural norms of men of the author's time" ("David the Man," pp. 4-5).

24 H.C. Washington, "Violence and the Construction of Gender in the Bible: A New Histori-  
cist Approach," *BibInt* 5 (1997), pp. 324-63 (330).

25 M.V. Măcelaru, "Saul in the Company of Men: (De)Constructing Masculinity in 1 Samuel 9-31," in O. Creangă and P.-B. Smit (eds.), *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2014), pp. 51-68.

Intelligence and persuasiveness are associated with masculinity in biblical texts, but ruse and acting as a trickster are associated with women as we saw with Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth. Here, though, it is David who tries to get himself out of trouble by attempting to deceive Uriah. David's plan does not work, because he is not able to convince Uriah to sleep with his wife. As an authority figure, David should not need to resort to trickery; his actions therefore place him in an unmanly position that reflects badly on his masculinity.

When his son is born, David tries to persuade God by his overzealous grieving.<sup>26</sup> This action is unsuccessful. The account of the child's death is found in a passage describing how God humbles David. David is defeated in his attempt to change the negative outcome of his actions.

David is usually portrayed as a just and God-fearing man. But in this instance, he breaks many of the laws that he, as king, is supposed to uphold. He commits premeditated adultery and/or rape, as well as murder.<sup>27</sup> His actions are worse than Judah's, which have already been presented as being unrighteous.

David is described as beautiful, but so is Bathsheba. In other narratives about David, he is not normally associated with women. But in this case, it is his sexual appetite that ends up causing him great shame.

The consequence of this story unfolds with Absalom's raid on David's harem. In the end, David cannot protect the women he is responsible for, and he does not punish his son. Ultimately, he loses control of his family and of his kingdom.

Two very contrasting images of David's masculinity are put forth in the biblical narratives about him. Matthew's genealogy points to his failings. The text could have said that David begat Salomon, or that David begat Salomon with Bathsheba, but Matthew 1:6 specifies that "David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah." This occurs in the narrative even though Bathsheba was likely David's lawful wife at the time Salomon was conceived. The wording of the genealogy alludes to David at his worst moment.

26 On David's weeping, see M. Kirova "When Real Men Cry: The Symbolism of Weeping in the Torah and the Deuteronomistic History," in O. Creangă and P.-B. Smit (eds.), *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, pp. 35-50.

27 Did David rape Bathsheba? See: A.I. Abasili, "Was It Rape? The David and Bathsheba Pericope Re-Examined," *VT* 61 (2011), pp. 1-15; and Clements, *Mothers on the Margin?*, pp. 140-41.

## Overview

Here is an overview of the husbands' masculine traits emphasized by the narratives to which the genealogy of Jesus directs the readers. Judah is not a hegemonic patriarch. The genealogy points to a narrative that accentuates his lack of justice, lack of persuasion, and lack of control; he does not follow the Law and is deceived by a woman. Salmon is overshadowed by the virtues of his father and of his wife. Boaz is a rich landowner who takes care of the marginalized, but he is persuaded and played by women. Very generous, he even gives his seed to preserve another man's lineage. As for David, instead of portraying him as the great king and leader of men, the genealogy alludes to a narrative that stresses David's lack of control, lack of persuasion, lack of military courage, and lack of justice, in a story that describes how these weaknesses lead to his downfall.

It seems to me that the genealogy subverts hegemonic masculinity by associating these four biblical "men" with women and by pointing out their flaws. We could certainly say in the case of Judah and David that their hegemonic masculinities are emasculated. This is subtler in the case of Boaz, who gives up his claim to fatherhood for another man. As for Salmon, there is not enough material to reach a definite conclusion, but when compared to his father or to his wife, his masculinity is far from hegemonic.

The genealogy critiques the way manhood is presented in Israel's scriptures, by accentuating the flaws of these men. My hypothesis is that this is done in order to prepare the readers for the non-hegemonic aspects of Joseph's and Jesus's masculinities, to which we now turn our attention.

## Who's Your Daddy?

Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος χριστός. (Matt. 1:16)

At the end of Matthew's genealogy, the pattern is broken. Jacob begets Joseph, but Joseph is not described as begetting a child. He is associated with Mary, of whom is begotten (passive voice) Jesus. The genealogical pattern is broken and creates the possibility for readers to discern a non-hegemonic counter-narrative. How is Joseph's masculinity represented in the first two chapters of Matthew?

Joseph is presented as being a δίκαιος or "a just man" (1:19). There is no interpretative consensus on how to interpret this quality. For some critics, it stresses

his obedience to the Law;<sup>28</sup> for others, it emphasizes his mercy and compassion.<sup>29</sup> Some see him as a first example of the greater righteousness required by the Matthean Jesus, a model for disciples and for the reader.<sup>30</sup> There is a possible intertextual link with Genesis 38 that has already been evoked in Matt 1.3: “Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar.” In both cases, a woman is in danger because of the child she bears. The men in both stories present an inadequate plan. In Genesis, Judah is put to shame and presented as being less just than Tamar. In Matthew, it is an angel of the Lord that presents Joseph with an alternative plan. Judah lost the rhetorical battle to a woman, but Joseph is corrected by divine intervention. His masculinity is presented as being subordinate to God’s. I propose that he is presented as “just” because he lets God “be the man” instead of acting out his own plan.<sup>31</sup> Judah is less just because he tried and failed to perform a hegemonic masculinity. On the other hand, Joseph adjusted his plan even if it meant to enact a non-hegemonic masculinity.<sup>32</sup>

In the narrative that occurs after the genealogy, Joseph exactly follows the divine plan revealed to him in dreams. The repetition of the details described in the dream in the account of Joseph’s actions can even seem tedious to the reader. However, this shows that he listens and acts according to God’s plan and not his own. Before the first of these dreams, Joseph wanted to secretly divorce Mary, but he changes his course of action following a divine revelation. Like Boaz, Joseph takes into his home a woman who is in a precarious position,

28 W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*. Vol. 1: *Introduction and Commentary on Matthew 1-VII* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), p. 203; R.E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), pp. 127-28; Przybylski, pp. 101-102; P. Lefebvre, *Joseph, l'éloquence d'un taciturne: enquête sur l'époux de Marie à la lumière de l'Ancien Testament* (Paris: Salvator, 2012), pp. 93-94.

29 See Warner, “Uncertain Women,” pp. 22-23; R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew* (trans. R.R. Barr; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 19; and U. Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary* (Hermeneia, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), p. 95.

30 G. Claudel, “Joseph, figure du lecteur modèle de Matthieu,” in D. Senior (ed.), *The Gospel of Matthew at the Crossroads of Early Christianity* (Leuven: Peeters 2011), pp. 349-74; Olender, “Righteousness in Matthew,” p. 82.

31 My use of “man,” and later “father,” in regard to God does not signify in an ontological sense. This usage is a way that God is characterized as a persona in this Gospel. In Matthew, hegemonic masculinity is reserved for the divine. This is one of the reasons why human characters who express hegemonic masculinity, such as Herod in Matthew 2, are negatively qualified.

32 The Judah/Joseph antitypology is developed in Clements, *Mothers on the Margin?*, pp. 63-64.

and protects her and her child, even though in Joseph's case the child did not belong to him.

Far from the hegemonic type, Joseph's masculinity shows tension in several aspects. In contrast to his virile forebears, he is not the source of his wife's pregnancy. He takes care of a son that is not from his seed. He is persuaded to put his personal will aside and follow a divine plan. He submits his masculinity to the Deity who is the "real father" of this family. All things considered, Joseph is portrayed as expressing a subordinate masculinity when compared to God's. It is God, not Joseph and not through Joseph, who seems to be the "real man," the "real father" of this family. Indeed, God is implied in the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18-20) and in the possible divine passive of verse 16. It is God who directs the course of action of the family and protects them from a direct threat through revelations by the angel of the Lord. Essentially, Joseph's masculinity is to let God take first place.<sup>33</sup> He recognized that his first impulse as a man was not appropriate when he is presented with the divine plan. This characteristic is similar to many of Israel's patriarchs who do not perform hegemonic masculinities in order to let God be "the man."<sup>34</sup>

### Jesus, Man or Son of God?

Recent biblical scholarship argues that the gendered nature of Jesus Christ is rather unstable, complex, and ambiguous.<sup>35</sup> Matthew's Gospel, as well as the other canonical Gospels, shows both hegemonic and subordinate masculine traits being attributed to Jesus.

Jesus's hegemonic traits are numerous. C.M. Conway shows how ideal masculine status is accentuated in Matthew when compared to Mark, "as Jesus becomes the bearer of royal honorific titles, a prolific public speaker, a righ-

33 Joseph's masculinity is presented as that of a subversive trickster who submits to the divine will according to J. Glessner; see Glessner, "The Making(s) of an Average Joe: Joseph of Nazareth vs. Empire, in Three Rounds," in Creangă and Smit (eds.), *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, pp. 191-227.

34 Suzan Haddox summarizes different studies on this topic: "The prominent male figures in the text often do not represent the ideal of manhood in Israelite culture, but display subordinate masculinities, as they are men most willing to submit to God. What is an appropriate expression of masculinity in one context may represent less power and prestige in another context" (S.E. Haddox, "Masculinity Studies," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2015], vol. 1, pp. 533-42).

35 A.S. van Klinken and P.-B. Smit, "Jesus Traditions and Masculinities in World Christianity," *Exchange* 42 (2013), pp. 1-15.

teous teacher, and a bold agitator in a heightened conflict with his opponents.”<sup>36</sup> His ministry is outdoors and public, as opposed to the private house setting associated with women. This “son of David” interacts with public political figures. Jesus gains honor by prevailing in many public challenges.<sup>37</sup> He is known to be persuasive in both word and action. His miracles are powerful acts that impress the crowds. He is the leader of a group of people – called his disciples – who leave everything behind to follow him. He is sometimes described as strong or violent, even though this violence is more verbal than physical.

However, Jesus is also associated with significant characteristics that show a non-hegemonic masculinity. Conway shows that in Matthew, Jesus presents an alternative masculinity with regards to family life.<sup>38</sup> His teachings about discipleship and life in community tap into more marginalized gender discourses. Jerome Neyrey shows that in Matthew, Jesus redefines the prevailing male value of honor.<sup>39</sup> Like Joseph, Jesus submits to the will of his God/Father. The best example is at Gethsemane, where Jesus expresses and then suppresses a personal will that is divergent with his Father’s. During his arrest, Jesus asks his disciples not to commit acts of violence and retaliation. Ultimately, Jesus is crucified, a shameful way to die. He is not a free man; he dies as a criminal.<sup>40</sup> This last element is very important and changes everything. The cross is not a place for a hegemonic man. It is where “lesser men” are sent to die at the command of hegemonic men. For Tat-siong Benny Liew, the crucifixion shows Jesus’s submission to the will of God, his Father; Liew points out that patriarchal masculinity norms often destroy obedient sons such as Jesus.<sup>41</sup>

36 C.M. Conway, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 108.

37 For a study of Jesus’s masculinity in public outdoor setting, see T.B. Liew, “Re-Mark-able Masculinities: Jesus, the Son of Man and the (Sad) Sum of Manhood?” in Moore and Anderson (eds.), *New Testament Masculinities*, pp. 98-105.

38 Conway, *Behold the Man*, p. 108.

39 For example, Jesus’s new honor code includes the honor of taking up one’s cross (Matt. 16:21-28), the honor of being worthless like a child (Matt. 18:1-6), the honor that comes from the loss of wealth and power (Matt. 19:16-30) or from sharing wealth (Matt. 20:1-16), or the honor of being last and the servant of all (Matt. 20:20-28). See J.H. Neyrey, “Jesus, Gender, and the Gospel of Matthew,” in Moore and Anderson (eds.), *New Testament Masculinities*, pp. 43-66.

40 In his postcolonial reading, E. Thurman states that Jesus’s execution as a criminal provides an interpretive key for viewing his actions as a strategically failed mimicry of divinity and hence of masculinity. See Thurman, “Looking for a Few Good Men: Mark and Masculinity,” in Moore and Anderson (eds.), *New Testament Masculinities*, pp. 137-61.

41 T.B. Liew, “Re-Mark-able Masculinities,” pp. 93-135.

### Like Fathers, like Son?

I contend that the genealogy prepares readers for Jesus's complex masculinity. Joseph and Jesus, like the husbands in the genealogy, express masculinities that are in tension. However, there are important differences between Joseph/Jesus and the husbands. The men associated with women in the genealogy are associated with "lapsed" masculine performances so that women have to step into prominence. It is striking that Joseph and Jesus succeed in maintaining their standing as "men" – even if or when displaying non-hegemonic traits or roles – in ways the men in the genealogy do not. The husbands of the genealogy are each undone by or surpassed by women in ways that Joseph and Jesus are not. The comparison of Joseph and Boaz is a good example. Both might step back in prominence by raising children identified by other parental figures. But where Boaz is truly overshadowed by Naomi and Ruth in that role, Joseph in Matthew is never overshadowed or upstaged by Mary. Joseph is the main actor in the story about Jesus's origins. He acts "justly" by obeying God, protecting Mary, and leading his family to Egypt and back.

The genealogy supports and subverts ancient hegemonic constructions of masculinity. We have shown how this text emphasizes the flaws of great hegemonic men such as Judah and David. Jesus is a son of David, but he expresses his masculinity in a very different way. He is the Christ/Messiah, the heir of King David, but his kingship and his masculinity are very different from the hegemonic kingship and masculinity of David. Jesus differs from all the men of the genealogy, including Joseph, in a very relevant way with respect to masculinity: he is not a husband or father. Consequently, he is not undone or surpassed by any woman. The "Son of Man" is not a "man" in the same way as his fathers were. Matthew's Gospel orients readers to an alternative model of masculinity.

One of the important objectives of this paper is to bring a fresh perspective of the group of women in the Matthean genealogy. Many hypotheses have been put forth to explain their presence, but without reaching a scholarly consensus.<sup>42</sup> Instead of searching for the cause of their presence, I propose to pay

42 Diverse interpretations of the women's presence in Matthew's genealogy include (1) they are examples of sin in David's lineage, see J.P. Heil, "The Narrative Roles of the Women in Matthew's Genealogy," *Biblica* 72 (1991), pp. 544-45; (2) they are positive examples of foreigners included in God's people, see M. Konradt, pp. 268-272; S.B. Hakh, "Women in the Genealogy of Matthew," *Exchange* 43 (2014), pp. 109-118; and C.S. Keener, "Interethnic Marriages in the New Testament (Matt. 1:3-6; Acts 7:29; 16:1-3; cf. 1 Cor. 7:14)," *CTR* 6 (2009), pp. 25-43; (3) these women have sexual unions outside the norms that will ultimately allow the destiny of Israel to take shape, see D.J. Weaver, "Wherever This Good News Is

attention to the effects of their presence. Also, instead of isolating them, I suggest putting as much effort into studying the men who are associated with them. The link between Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary is not as clear as scholars would like it to be. Judah, Salmon, Boaz, and David have never been compared to Joseph and Jesus. I argue that this comparison can help us to better understand the literary genius of Matthew's genealogy, a piece of literature that puzzles readers and directs them on a quest to understanding Jesus and his origins.

This paper only presented four Hebrew Bible characters from Matthew's genealogy. It would be valuable to continue research on the other men mentioned in this list. This would permit us to see if they express their masculinities in different ways than do the four men associated with women.

From this encounter with the domain of masculinity studies, I have discovered the importance of this field of research. Analyzing masculinities in ancient texts helps us to be more conscious of our society's gender constructions. Although patriarchy has evolved, it still exists today. Biblical narratives show how patriarchal masculinity patterns can lead to oppression of men and women. How do men express hegemonic masculinity in our society? How do I express my own masculinity? Do we have to use power and exclusion to "be a man" today? A greater consciousness of biblical masculinities can only help us to interrogate and subvert hegemonic masculinities, and encourage us to find more inclusive ways of "being a man," by deconstructing male gender scripts that promote inequality.

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Proclaimed: Women and God in the Gospel of Matthew," *Int* 64 (2010), pp. 394-96; E.M. Wainwright, "Tradition Makers/Tradition Shapers: Women of the Matthean Tradition," *WW* 18 (1998), pp. 380-388 (382); W.J. C. Weren, "The Five Women in Matthew's Genealogy," *CBQ* 59 (1997), pp. 288-305; R.E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, pp. 73-74; (4) they are examples of "greater righteousness," see Warner, "Uncertain Women"; (5) they represent marginalized people, see A.-J. Levine, "Matthew," in C.A. Newsom and S.H. Ringe (eds.), *The Women's Bible Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), pp. 340-41; (6) they gain honor that is attributed to Jesus, see K.C. Hanson and D.E. Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), pp. 51-57; and B.B. Scott, "The Birth of the Reader in Matthew," in P.W. Meyer, J.T. Carroll, C.H. Cosgrove, E.E. Johnson (eds.), *Faith and History* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990), pp. 41-42.