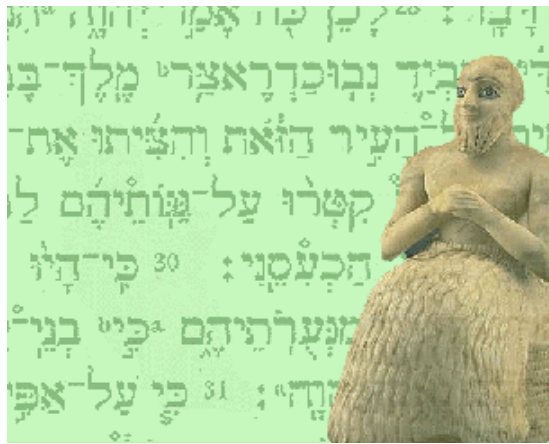


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**TALIA SUTSKOVER,
LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS (GEN 19:30–38).
FURTHER LITERARY & STYLISTIC EXAMINATIONS**

LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS (GEN 19:30–38). FURTHER LITERARY & STYLISTIC EXAMINATIONS

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1. INTRODUCTION

After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:1–29), Lot and his two daughters take refuge in a cave. When night falls, the daughters intoxicate Lot and have sexual intercourse with him, one each night on two successive nights. As a result of these two acts of sexual congress,¹ Lot's daughters become pregnant and give birth to Moab and Ben-ammi, the fathers of the biblical nations known as Moab and Ammon. Although the wider context of the Torah reinforces the position that the sexual encounter between family members is to be viewed negatively (e.g. Lev 18:6–7), the text of Gen 19:30–38, on the other hand, does not explicitly condemn the physical contact between the father and daughters. The Lot story is oddly reminiscent of the narrative of Gen 9:18–29, when the son of the drunk Noah sees his father's nakedness. Here, too, the intoxicated father is viewed in an unseemly way by a child. But that story strongly condemns the act. The two older sons who cover their father are deemed praiseworthy (vv 25–27).

In the following discussion I shall look closely at some of the stylistic and literary features of Gen 19:30–38, and consider whether the account employs judgmental features, whether it favors certain characters or is neutrally phrased. My approach is literary and synchronic, with a particular interest in semantics and the micro-structures of the text.² I intend to show that the dominant seman-

¹ Westermann cautions that it would be best to avoid labeling the daughters' actions with terms such as "incest" or "incestuous" that have judgmental or pejorative connotations (C. Westermann, *Genesis 12–36. A Commentary* [trans. John J. Scullion; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985], 314).

² In this literary approach to the biblical text I follow the methodology of commentators such as S. Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (trans. Dorothea Shefer-Vanson in conjunction with the author; Sheffield: Almond, 1989); R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); F. Polak, *Biblical Narrative. Aspects of Art and Design* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1999; in Hebrew); Y. Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2001); A. Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: Almond, 1983); and M. Bal, *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1997).

tic fields of kinship and sexual encounter, the recurrence of certain possessive suffixes, and the focal points chosen by the narrator all contribute to shaping both the theme and the reader's attitude toward the actions of Lot and his daughters. But first, as a preliminary to my own findings, some of the main approaches to this text will be surveyed.

When examining this short narrative, many commentators focus on the statement attributed to the elder sister in Gen 19:31: "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth" (biblical quotations in English follow the RSV unless stated otherwise). As for these words of the elder sister, Westermann comments that inhabitants of a city might well experience its destruction as the destruction of the world.³ According to Speiser: "from the recesses of their cave somewhere up the side of a canyon formed by the earth's deepest rift, they could see no proof to the contrary."⁴ We can further develop these arguments, which attempt to delve into the characters' heads, by considering the larger context of this episode; Lot's personal biography indicates that he has probably already acquired some geographical perspective. When separating from Abraham in Genesis 13, he is specifically described as lifting up his eyes and looking at the Jordan valley before choosing it (Gen 13:10); he has also travelled through the land of Canaan before, and has come from Haran (Gen 11:31, 12:5). Hence, it is quite possible that Lot would not think the whole world had been destroyed. Moreover, if Lot did not perceive the destruction to be total, he could have said something to reassure his daughters. Nevertheless, it may be that his orientation in the land remained personal knowledge that he purposely never shared with them. If this were so, the readers might ask themselves why, and come to the conclusion that Lot was an abusing father who relished the prospect of remaining isolated in a cave with his two virgin daughters.⁵

Gunkel thinks the daughters' acts were at some point considered heroic.⁶ Historic-documentary analyses such as those of Westermann, Speiser, and Skinner distinguish between different layers of the account. These commentators speak of an old form of the story, embodying the judgment and annihilation that befell Sodom, with the addition of a further brush stroke and its genealogical

³ Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 297, 311–312.

⁴ E.A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB; Garden City NY: Doubleday, 1964), 145.

⁵ Rashkow, as shall be discussed further on, describes Lot as an abusive father. See I.N. Rashkow, "Daddy-Dearest and the 'Invisible Spirit of Wine,'" A. Brenner (ed.) *Genesis. A Feminist Companion to the Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 82–107. See also I.N. Rashkow, *Taboo or Not Taboo. Sexuality and Family in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

⁶ H. Gunkel, *Genesis* (trans. Mark E. Biddle; from the third German edition, 1910; Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997), 216–217.

implications, to describe ancient Israel's contemporary neighbors. Hence, the discord between the elder daughter's words (that there is no man left in the land) and our knowledge, based on the previous paragraphs that tell of a local destruction, is resolved through an approach that posits different authorial layers.⁷

Von Rad comments that in spite of the coarse material, the emphases are nicely put, and no judgment is expressed concerning the happenings. But he also observes: "without doubt the narrative now contains indirectly a severe judgment on the incest in Lot's house, and Lot's life becomes inwardly and outwardly bankrupt."⁸ He defines this as a product of popular political wit by which Israel tried to get even with her sometimes powerful enemies, the Moabites and Ammonites, for everything she had suffered at their hands, by means of this derogatory story "about their most disgraceful origin." However, he also suggests that in the original tradition, the ancestral mothers were glorified, since they are not ashamed of the origin of their children, but rather proclaim it openly and fix it in their sons' names.⁹ Von Rad also suggests that the daughters' actions may be explained more simply from the circumstance that Lot and his daughters had been separated from their native group and found themselves living by other rules.

A different and more recent view is suggested by Rashkow and Exum who psychoanalyze Lot's behavior and suggest that offering his daughters to the Sodomites (Gen 19:8) is the first expression of Lot's secret fantasy to have sexual relations with them. They argue that the design of the story as if the daughters initiate sexual contact, actually conveys the father's unconscious, unacknowledged desires.¹⁰ Miller however argues that Lot might hand his

⁷ J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930), 314; Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 314–315; Speiser, *Genesis*, 145–146. Weisman suggests that this narrative aims to exclude Lot's descendants from the genealogy of Abraham, and links it to Ezra and Nehemiah's prohibition to marry foreign women. Hence, as opposed to the above mentioned critical commentators, who generally attribute the story to the authorship of J, Weisman proposes a rather late date of composition or redaction, assigning it to the Second Temple period (Z. Weisman, "Ethnology, Etiology, Genealogy, and Historiography in the Tale of Lot and his Daughters (Genesis 19:30–38)," M. Fishbane and E. Tov (eds.) *Sha'arei Talmon. Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992], 43*–52*.)

⁸ G. Von Rad, *Genesis. A Commentary* (trans. J.H. Marks; OTL; London: SCM Press, 1963), 218–219.

⁹ Following Gunkel, von Rad thinks that the story once glorified the heroic mothers and stressed the proud sons who were born with pure blood (Gunkel, *Genesis*; von Rad, *Genesis. A Commentary*, 218–219).

¹⁰ Rashkow, "Daddy-Dearest"; J.C. Exum, "Desire Distorted and Exhibited: Lot and His Daughters in Psychoanalysis, Painting, and Film," S.M. Olyan and R.C. Culley (eds.) *A Wise and Discerning Mind. Essays in*

daughters over to the mob to protect his guests, but he would not knowingly have had intercourse with his daughters. Hence he had to be intoxicated.¹¹ Still, Low insists on going back to the Sodom and Gomorrah scene and states that he feels repulsion in a much earlier stage in the story, when Lot assumes that his daughters' sexuality is at his disposal, and offers their bodies to the angry mob.¹² Tonson argues that this narrative is morally ambiguous. In the Sodom and Gomorrah narrative Lot has to choose between his guests and his daughters and offers the latter to the Sodomites to protect his guests, while ambiguity also characterizes the position of the daughters, who can find fulfillment as mothers only by violating the code of sexual relationships.¹³ The narrator may have intended to reflect ambiguity, and hence, suggests Tonson, a moralistic reading should be avoided. Nevertheless, I find too many literary and semantic elements that point to a certain characterization of Lot and his daughters, even if they are unconsciously invoked by the narrator. The following examination of the microstructures of the narrative will uncover further notions that can be posited as complementary to Rashkow and Exum's psychological portrayal of the characters involved.

2. SEMANTIC FIELDS, POSSESSIVE SUFFIXES, AND REPETITION

A close examination of the nine verses of the story of Lot and his daughters reveals a frequent occurrence of words from the semantic fields of kinship and sexuality. Such terms appear repeatedly at key points in the plot, some of them highlighted by sound play and semantic puns, as I will soon show. Characters and place names in this narrative also consist of terms from the recurring semantic fields, a phenomenon which stresses their role as theme markers.¹⁴

The story begins as follows: "Now Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the hills with his *two daughters*, for he was afraid to

Honor of Burke O. Long (Providence, RI: Brown University, 2000), 83–108.

¹¹ J.E. Miller, "Sexual Offences in Genesis," *JSOT* 90 (2000), 41–53 (42).

¹² K.B. Low, "The Sexual Abuse of Lot's Daughters," *JFSR* 26 (2010), 37–54 (40).

¹³ P. Tonson, "Mercy Without Covenant: A Literary Analysis of Genesis 19," *JSOT* 95 (2001), 95–116.

¹⁴ Faber and Wallhead analyze the semantic field of vision in John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (P. Faber and C. Wallhead, "The lexical field of visual perception in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* by John Fowles," *Language and Literature* 4 (1995), 127–144. They too connect between the dominant semantic field and the themes of the narratives, explaining that the field of vision in this novel portrays the Victorian age as an age of appearances. For the connection between dominant semantic fields and theme see T. Sutskov, "The Themes of Land and Female Fertility in the Book of Ruth," *JSOT* 34 (2010), 283–294.

dwelt in Zoar; so he dwelt in a cave with his *two daughters*” (Gen 19:30). Twice in this verse it is said that Lot is with his two daughters. It would have sufficed for the narrator to write “them” the second time, but the long wording and the repeated specification of the family relations among the people now dwelling in the cave were preferred. Reinharz notes that in Genesis 19 all actors are unnamed, apart from Lot. The two women are designated exclusively as his daughters. This designation, says Reinharz, emphasizes the primacy of their relationship with their father. Their anonymity actually allows us to focus on their identities as Lot’s daughters.¹⁵

In the next verse, the elder daughter embarks on the controversial, much debated dialogue. In vv 31 and 32 the elder sister addresses the younger: “And the first-born said to the younger, *our father* is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth. Come, let us make *our father* drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring through *our father*.” The kinship terms in v 31 are: בכירה (first born), צעירה (the younger), and אבינו (our father). “Our father is old,” says the older sister, using “father” with the addition of the possessive suffix -נו (אבינו), stressing the family relationship: that he is *their* father. In her suggestion that they make their father drink wine and then sleep with him (v 32), the older sister uses the kinship terms: זרע “seed” or “offspring,” and “father.” She repeats the word אבינו (our father), used in the previous statement, again in the possessive, thus emphasizing the close familial relationship between father and daughters. Going on to v 33 we read of the implementation of the elder sister’s suggestion to lie with Lot. Instead of giving a general summary saying that she has carried out what she had planned, the narrator gives a detailed description of what has transpired, an almost word for word repetition of the suggestion. Here the word “father” is repeated twice, again with suffixes that stress the family relations between father and daughters: “their father” and “her father.” The word “first-born” from the semantic field of kinship is mentioned, as well as the verbs: ותבא (went in), ותשכב (lay), ידע (knew), בשכבה (when she lay), from the semantic field of sexual encounter.

Repetition of phrases, sentences, and paragraphs in the Hebrew Bible often deserves close attention: here too repetition requires explanation.¹⁶ Why has the narrator chosen to describe the implementation of the sister’s suggestion in detail? I wish to raise another explanation apart from that concerning the emphasis on the act of incest between father and daughters. Perhaps the elder sister’s initiative was not carried out exactly as she planned. The

¹⁵ A. Reinhartz, “Why Ask My Name?”. *Anonymity and Identity in Biblical Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 127.

¹⁶ Bar Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 22–26, 169–172. Polak, *Biblical Narrative. Aspects of Art and Design*, 59–81.

Bechirah (the first-born sister) tries to persuade the younger sister to sleep with their father. As we have seen, she initiates the plan and explains its necessity. She uses the first person plural נשקה (let us make our father drink wine), ונשכבה (we will lie with him), ונחיה (we may preserve). Her intention is that they act together. Nevertheless, during the execution described in v 33, they both make their father drink wine, but only the elder sister lies with Lot on the first night. Has the younger sister shown resistance? The text doesn't say anything about the younger sister's feelings or thoughts, but the *Bechirah* needs to repeat the suggestion in order to convince the younger to also lie with their father.¹⁷ It is this initiative and persistence of the *Bechirah* that is stressed by the repetition. No verbal response comes from the younger sister but we know she is convinced, because on the second night, both sisters give their father wine and the younger lies with him. The second instance is described in almost the exact words of the suggestion. This repetition together with the initiation on the part of the elder sister form a pattern which departs from a common biblical pattern in which the younger siblings are dominant and theologically prominent (e.g. Jacob, Isaac, Joseph).¹⁸ Not only in their actual doings, but in their way of thinking and in the way they conduct their dialogue, Lot's daughters form a pattern distinct from the ones the Israelites had created for themselves.¹⁹

Within the repetitive description of the younger daughter lying with her father, kinship terms are mentioned again, v 35: אביהן (their father), צעירה (the younger), together with terms from the domain of sexuality: ותשכב (lay), ידע (knew), בשכבה (when she lay with). According to v 36, both women became pregnant as a result of these initiatives. The exact wording is: "Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father." The women are referred to as "the daughters of Lot," and the father is alluded to as מאביהן (by their father), with the addition of the possessive suffix.

The use of the possessive in this fashion and its repetition also contributes to the formation of uncommon narrative patterns; instead of the usual and expected patriarchal relationship in which

¹⁷ *Num. Rab.* 20:23 explicitly condemns the elder sister for initiating the sexual act. This interpretation is based on the different preposition used to describe the sexual acts between sisters and father. The elder sister is described ותשכב את אביה (she lay with her father, v 33) and the younger sister ותשכב עמו (she lay with him, v 35).

¹⁸ F.E. Greenspahn, *When Brothers Dwell Together. The Preeminence of Younger Siblings in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

¹⁹ This may not be considered surprising by commentators such as Gunkel or Skinner, who hold the view that the narrative has a Moabite *Sitz im Leben*. However, since I refer to the MT in its present version, I can treat this initiative of the elder sister as an interesting finding, whether structured by an Israelite or Moabite narrator.

daughters belong to their fathers,²⁰ in the present narrative, the use of possessive suffixes conveys the sense that the daughters own and control their father.²¹ It may be that the possessive pronouns are inevitable since the daughters weren't given personal names, but still, since they are mentioned and repeated, they add their own specific semantic input to our understanding of the narrative.

The last two verses of this short narrative are genealogical in character. Verses 37–38 consist of words from the field of kinship: ותלד (bore), הבכירה (first-born), בן (a son), אבי־מואב (the father of the Moabites, v 37); והצעירה (the younger), ילדה (bore), בן (a son), בן־עמי (Ben-ammi), אבי בני־עמון (the father of the Ammonites, v 38).

3. NAMES RELATED TO THE DOMINANT SEMANTIC FIELDS

There are instances in which place names that denote the setting of biblical scenes, as well as the names of the characters, are connected to the dominant semantic field in the story, even drawing attention to it.²² Commentators acknowledge that both names, Moab and Ben-ammi, are etymologized to refer to incest: Moab is construed as מ (מ) – אב, “from the father,” and Ben-ammi (yielding the name of the nation בני־עמון is construed as “my own kinsman's son.”²³ The very names of the children born are connected to a semantic field dominant in this episode, that of kinship.

Moreover, the name of the place in which the actions occur (the cave) and one of the main characters (the younger daughter),

²⁰ Num 30:5–6, and Exod 21:7 are only two of many biblical examples that demonstrate patriarchal relations in which fathers govern and own their daughters. See Esther Fuchs, *Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative. Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman* (JSOTSup, 310; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 64.

²¹ Westermann explains the almost literal repetition in the cases of vv 33 and 35, and the implementation (34) repeating the suggestion as “simply to say that the plan went without hitch” (Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 313). Exum explains that the repetitions express the secret desire of the narrator himself to have sexual intercourse with his daughters: “The narrator obviously enjoys replaying the scene in his mind” (Exum, “Desire Distorted and Exhibited,” 94). Exum (p. 91) suggests that the characters in the scenario represent split-off parts of the narrator.

²² See, for example, Sutskofer, “The Themes of Land and Female Fertility in the Book of Ruth,” 285–286.

²³ R. Alter, *Genesis. Translation and Commentary* (New York: W.W. Norton 1996), 90. M. Garsiel, *Biblical Names. A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns* (trans. P. Hackett; Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991), 33–34. Garsiel speaks of the pun מואב – מאביהן and the recurrence of the preposition עמו (“with him” vv 30, 32, 34, 35), which together stress that the daughters have slept *with* their father (Garsiel's emphasis).

are formed by terms from the fields of sexual relations and kinship. According to Rashkow and followed by Exum, the noun **מערה** suggests puns on several terms with sexual connotations, such as: the verb **ערה** (be naked, bare), **ערוה** (genitals), **מעור** (nakedness).²⁴ Taking into account that **ערה** appears in biblical contexts concerning inappropriate sexual intercourse, e.g. Lev 20:19, Isa 3:17, Lam 4:21, **מערה** can be connected to the field of sexuality by sound resemblance, and hint at the sexual act that is performed in it.²⁵

In addition, the name of the place to which Lot was afraid to go was Zoar, which according to biblical dictionaries stems from the root **צער** meaning “little, to be slight,” a root that is related to the Akkadian *ṣehru(m)* meaning “small, young.”²⁶ Zoar derives from the same root as the adjective **צעירה**, used in reference to Lot’s younger daughter, mentioned four times in the narrative (19:31, 34, 35, 38). Hence, through etymological connections to the word **צעירה**, Zoar is related to the semantic field of kinship in the present context. Moreover, mentioning the place name Zoar foreshadows the sexual intercourse between Lot and the daughters, the younger one in particular. This is especially noticeable in the words of v 23, **ולוט בא צעה** (“Lot came to Zoar”). Significantly, the verb **בא**, carries the meaning of “to come to a place,” but it may also mean to come into a woman, that is, to have sexual relations.²⁷ Hence, Lot comes to Zoar, but he will also be coming into the *ṣeirah*.

²⁴ Exum, “Desire Distorted and Exhibited,” 96. See also Rashkow, “Daddy Dearest,” 102.

²⁵ The semantic fields dominant in this story connect to the previous Sodom and Gomorrah narrative of Gen 19:1–29. Repetition of the sounds of **ערה** in the words **עמרה**, **הערים**, **מערה** (19:28, 29, 30) contribute to the cohesion of the two stories. These are verses that Westermann suggests have emerged from different authorial layers. See also **צערה** (23), **מצער** (20), and **הרעה** (19). But based on such repetitions of sounds in words of the prominent semantic fields, I would prefer to see the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, 19:1–29, together with Lot’s plea to flee to Zoar vv 18–22, and the episode of Lot and his daughters, as a single well-constructed and cohesive unit.

²⁶ HAL, “**צעיר**” (Koehler, L., and W. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* [trans. M.E.J. Richardson; revised by W. Baumgartner and J.J. Stamm; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–1999]); CAD, vol. S, 179 (A.L. Oppenheim, et al., *The Assyrian Dictionary* (CAD; Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956).

²⁷ Jackson points at the irony in the story of Lot’s daughters. Lot knows (sleeps with) his daughters without knowing (being aware). The irony is aided by the use of the Hebrew **ידע** with its connotations of both sexual and cognitive awareness (M. Jackson, “Lot’s Daughters and Tamar as Tricksters and the Patriarchal Narratives as Feminist Theology,” *JSOT* 98 [2002], 29–46 [39]).

4. FOCALIZATION

Most significantly, in connection with the focal point of the story, the assertion that there is no man left is not a report given by the all-knowing biblical narrator, but rather is put into the mouth of the elder sister. According to Bal, the speech act of narrating is actually separated from the vision, the memories and thoughts that are being recounted. She argues that focalization is the layer between the linguistic text and the fabula, and the focalizer serves as the point from which the elements are viewed.²⁸ Accordingly, not only is the elder sister in this narrative more dominant in her actions, as I have suggested above, but she is also the focalizer in vv 31–32, and 34. Her point of view has been chosen by the narrator, and we learn of the isolation of the remnants of this family specifically through her eyes. According to Berlin, direct speech is the most dramatic way of conveying the characters' internal psychological and ideological point of view.²⁹ We may note the implications that arise from a comparison of the focalizers of the story. Verses 30 and 36 are told from the perspective of the narrating voice, and use the proper name "Lot." In vv 33 and 35 the narrating voice stays with the kinship term "father," thus continuing the elder daughter's point of view, giving it additional narrative volume. By using the same kinship terms as she has, and by also avoiding the use of the personal name of the father, it is as if the distorted point of view of the elder sister is taken on by the narrator, enhancing it and thus drawing attention to it. Bal points out that if the focalizer coincides with the characters, the position of that character in the story will be enhanced. The reader watches with the character's eyes, and will be inclined to accept the vision presented by that character.³⁰ Thus it is not surprising, as noted above, that various commentators side with the sisters, ascribe positive motivation to their acts and even describe them as heroic.

Moreover, taking into account that a critical statement in this narrative is attributed to the elder sister, the biblical text opens up the possibility of questioning her reliability. When words are put into the mouth of a particular character rather than being attributed to the narrator or to God, then the reader is free to suspect that some hidden motive is being imputed to the character.³¹ This as-

²⁸ Bal, *Narratology*, 142–174. Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse. Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 151–153. Berlin, *Poetics*, 43–82. On focalization and parallel terms see S. Horstkotte, "Seeing or Speaking: Visual Narratology and Focalization, Literature to Film," S. Heinen and R. Sommer (eds.), *Narratologia. Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 170–192.

²⁹ Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 64.

³⁰ Bal, *Narratology*, 146.

³¹ Polak, *Biblical Narrative. Aspects of Art and Design*, 313, 318–319.

pect of the dialogue, which emerges from attending to changes of focalization, strengthens the suggested reading of this narrative, in which the elder sister is seen as dominant and negative.

5. CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, although there is no explicit condemnation of the events involving Lot and his daughters in the cave, an attentive reading would consider certain telling semantic and stylistic features; the prominent repetitive appearance of terms from the semantic fields of kinship and sexuality; the word-for-word repetition of the elder sister's proposal to sleep with the father; the frequent occurrence of the possessive suffixes ("our father," "their father"), and the accounts of the plan's implementations all contribute to awareness that this is an account of incest between father and daughters. The possessive suffixes underline the stark contrast between the roles commonly assigned to daughters, and their father's present objectification. The grounds for the act are put as a statement made by the elder sister, and this makes it possible to question her credibility and reliability. Together with that sister's general initiative and prominence, these stylistic aspects reveal a narrative pattern that diverges from the common Israelite pattern, which focuses on the younger siblings and their theological precedence. Significantly, the younger sister does not initiate the sexual act, and the elder sister did have to repeat her suggestion twice in order to bring the younger to act. In my opinion, the cumulative effect of these rhetorical means is to underscore the implicit portrayal of the violation of family relationships in this story. The larger context of this narrative makes it possible to deduce that Lot knew that the destruction was not the end of the world. This is with accordance to psychological analyses of Lot's character, which convey his unconscious attraction to his daughters, and suggest that he is to blame for this violation. However, in addition, and according to the findings shown in this paper, the narrator holds the elder sister as heavily responsible for initiating and performing sexual relations with her father. She may also to be blamed for persuading her younger sister to do what she has done. Thus, this narrative demonstrates how a detailed analysis of the syntax, semantics, and style of a textual unit may lead to conclusions regarding intent and meaning different from those based on the immediately apparent content, however explicit.