

The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures

ISSN 1203-1542

new purl address: www.purl.org/jhs



The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures participates in the ATLAS project. Articles are being indexed in the ATLA Religion Database and their abstracts appear in Religious and Theological Abstracts. The journal is archived by the National Library of Canada, and is accessible for consultation and research at the Electronic Collection site maintained by [The National Library of Canada](http://www.nlc.ca).

Volume 3: Article 7 (2001)

[John R. Huddleston, “Unveiling the Versions: The Tactics of Tamar in Genesis 38:15”](#)

Unveiling the Versions: The Tactics of Tamar in Genesis 38:15

John R. Huddleston
College of Charleston, SC

1. The MT of Genesis 38:15 reads as follows: וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לְזוֹנָה כִּי כִסְתָהּ פָנֶיהָ, “When Judah saw her (Tamar), he thought her to be a prostitute, for she had covered her face.” At first blush, the statement seems fairly straightforward: the veiled face of Tamar leads Judah to conclude that she is a common prostitute. But as Judah himself later discovers, appearances can be deceptive, and such is also the case as one delves into the exegetical history of this passage. Here the reader encounters a variety of interpretive expansions, all of which turn, implicitly or explicitly, on the causal relationship introduced by the כִּי clause of the second half of the verse. Previously (v. 14), we learn that Tamar had donned a veil (וַתִּכְסֵּם בַּצֵּעַ יָרֵךְ), covered herself up (וַתִּתְּעַלֶּף), and taken a roadside posture, but it is only the first of these acts that is mentioned in Judah’s inference in verse 15.¹ Thus it is with some warrant that biblical scholars, past and present, have associated the garment with the profession; that is, it was the veil of Tamar that signaled to Judah her status as a prostitute.² Others, however, have disputed this reading of the verse, citing biblical and ancient Near Eastern evidence to indicate that the veil itself was not diagnostic, but simply allowed Tamar to conceal her identity.³ Following this view, while it is reasonable to assume, at least from the biblical text, that prostitutes did in fact adorn themselves in a distinctive manner (e.g., Jer 4:30; Ezek 23:40), their identity as such appears not to be linked to a veil.⁴ In addition to the biblical passages, the most frequently

cited evidence are those Middle Assyrian laws governing the use of veils among various classes of women. Here prostitutes, female slaves, unmarried hierodules (*qadiltu*), and concubines unaccompanied by mistress--unlike married hierodules, widows, daughters, and accompanied concubines--are prohibited from appearing veiled in public.⁵ Others, however, have cautioned that customs may vary regionally and we should not assume that those of Assyria applied equally to ancient Israelite society.⁶ One thus encounters two plausible explanations of the verse in the scholarly literature (referenced in notes 2 and 3), the first more of a plain sense reading of the verse in isolation, the second more comparative in orientation, drawing upon other biblical texts and Middle Assyrian law. But there is yet another body of evidence, rarely mentioned in the literature on these verses, that bears directly on how one understands Tamar's actions.

2. It is somewhat surprising to find that the majority of commentaries of the last century (e.g., Driver, Westermann, Von Rad, Spieser, Vater, Wenham), as well as a recent major study of Genesis 38 in particular (Menn, *Judah and Tamar*, see note 3), fail to note the addition to 38:15 in the Septuagint and Vulgate (cited in the apparatus of Kittel's *Biblica Hebraica*, but omitted in *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia*).⁷ By way of extension at the end of the verse, the LXX adds καὶ οὐκ ἐπέγνω αὐτήν ("and he did not recognize her").⁸ The Vulgate follows with the passive *ne cognosceretur* ("she was not recognized"), while the *Vetus Latina* reflects the LXX more closely: *cooperuerat enim faciem suam et non cognovit eam* ("because she had covered her face and he did not recognize her" -

Codex Lugdunensis [Lyon] and the Latin text of Jubilees); compare *igitur ne cognoscatur, faciem velamine obscurat* (“therefore, in order not to be recognized, she covers [her] face with a veil” - Zeno, Bishop of Verona).⁹ The addition is absent in the Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac, and *Targum Onqelos*.¹⁰ With the LXX, the expanded verse then reads as follows: “When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a prostitute, for she had covered her face *and he did not recognize her*.” Here the **וַיִּכְסֶה** clause is explained: Tamar covered her face to conceal her identity. Presumably, had she not do so, Judah would have recognized her. Thus, following the LXX, the veil was not diagnostic of prostitution. But if not the veil, then what, one may ask, led Judah to consider her a prostitute? The success of Tamar’s stratagem, as described in unexpected, but necessary, detail in verse 14, hinged upon two interrelated components: cover-up and location. While the first concealed her identity, it was the second that conveyed her harlot status.¹¹ So concluded Rashi, who commented as follows: **וַתַּעֲלֶה** - “she covered her face so that he did not recognize her” . . . **וַיֵּשֶׁב לְצוֹנָה** - “because she was sitting at the crossroads”: **כִּי כִסְתָהּ פָנֶיהָ** - “and he was unable to see her (face) and (therefore could not) recognize her (**וְלֹא יָכֹל לִרְאוֹתָהּ וְלִהְיוֹתָהּ**)”.¹²

3. Prior to Rashi, a number of targumim and midrashim, in their attempts to explain Judah’s perception of Tamar in verse 15, disassociate the veil from harlotry, albeit in different ways and for different reasons. The focus shifts from Tamar’s roadside guise when she encountered Judah to her reserved habit of dress while in

his house.¹³ *Targum Neofiti* adds: "...thought her to be a prostitute, because she was veiled (lit. "covered of face") in the house of Judah and Judah had not known her."¹⁴ The translation, however, is not entirely consistent at this point. Verse 15 of *Neofiti* implies that Judah did see Tamar's face, apparently for the first time, but that he failed to recognize her because it was her custom to veil herself while in his house. By contrast, verse 14 states explicitly that she covered herself (בָּרָה וְאֶתֶּמַּטָּהּ). Leaving aside this inconsistency, while the gloss in v.15 provides a reason for Judah's inability to recognize Tamar, it does not correlate the veil with the attire of a prostitute, but with that of a modestly dressed widow in his household. A somewhat different explanation is offered in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*: "Judah saw her, and in his eyes he compared her to a harlot, because she was of sullen[?] appearance in the house of Judah and Judah had not loved her."¹⁵ But this explanation makes little sense contextually (how does it account for Judah's taking her to be a prostitute?) and is unique to *Pseudo-Jonathan*.¹⁶ While the targum explicitly describes how Tamar covered herself with a veil and subsequently removed it (vv.14, 19), the above rendering of v.15 fails to explain the relevance of her change of clothing. Are we to infer that prostitutes generally exhibited a sullen appearance (כַּעֲסָה אִפִּי), or does the targumist wish to convey that Judah's unfavorable attitude toward Tamar, formed while she lived in his house, caused him at this point (assuming of course that he recognized her when he saw her) to treat her as a common prostitute? A more plausible solution for the contextually problematic כַּעֲסָה may be textual corruption: instead of כַּעֲסָה "to be angry," others have suggested the verb כָּסַף "to

cover.”¹⁷ But even with the proposed emendation, the targum’s meaning is by no means obvious. Nevertheless, for our purpose it is significant that both *Neofiti* and *Pseudo-Jonathan* avoid the conclusion that Tamar’s donning of a veil was in some fashion indicative of her status as a prostitute. On the contrary, both assume, at least in v.15, that she was not veiled when she encountered Judah by the road.

4. *Genesis Rabbah* (85.8) provides two contrasting interpretations.¹⁸ The first echoes *Neofiti* in commenting that Tamar was not recognized because she had covered her face while in her father-in-law’s house (פנייה עד שהיא בבית חמיה). The midrash cites the expansion as an object lesson: a man should acquaint himself with female relations so as to avoid unintentional incest. The gloss in this case highlights Judah’s guilt in the matter for not having done so.¹⁹ The second interpretation explains that Judah initially took no notice of Tamar since she had covered her face, thus, he thought to himself, she could not be a prostitute (ויראה יהודה לא השגיח כיון שכסתה פניה).²⁰ This explanation assumes that prostitutes by definition were not veiled and clashes with the unambiguous biblical statement that Judah considered her to be one.²¹ Judah’s character remains unblemished insofar as he initially resists communication with a modestly dressed woman, not a prostitute.²² As the midrash continues, Judah’s noble unwillingness is overcome by an angel of desire (ממונה על התאוה), who compels him to turn aside and proposition Tamar, thus

insuring the birth of Perez and, more to the point, the emergence of the Davidic line.²³ Likewise, Sforzo (15th-16th cent. Italy) comments on 38:16 that Judah's inability to recognize Tamar is a turn of events brought about by God in order that the righteous messiah might emerge from Judah, a more worthy ancestor than Selah (in *Miqra'ot Gedolot* sub **כִּי לֹא יָדַע כִּי בָלְתָהּ הִיא**).

5. In his comments on 38:15, Ramban (13th cent. Spain) repeats, but takes issue with, the views of Rashi and the midrash: given that Tamar covered her face while in his house (so the targumim and midrash), how could Judah have recognized her even if she had been unveiled? Therefore, according to Ramban, the veil was not intended for concealment. Rather, the plain sense of the verse (**הַפֶּשֶׁט**) dictates that Judah concluded she was a prostitute because of her veiled face, and, furthermore, it was the custom of prostitutes to take their place by the roadside with the face partly veiled (**מִכְסָּה קָצַת הַפָּנִים**).²⁴ Thus, with respect to the two key acts of Tamar mentioned above, her veiled face and location, Ramban stands alone insofar as he accepts the diagnostic importance of both; each contributed to Judah's inference of harlotry.
6. If we move a bit further down to the Christian commentators of the Reformation period, while they did not mince words when it came to the proliferation of brothels in their time, neither Luther nor Calvin saw the veil of Tamar as a telltale sign of prostitution.²⁵ In his comments on Gen. 38:14, Luther explains the separate dress associated with the married woman, the virgin, and widows.²⁶ The **צַעֲרָה** of

Tamar is described by the reformer as a large cloth with which the woman would bind her hair and cover the head completely down to the shoulders, the same as that worn by Rebecca (Genesis 24) to signify her “reverence and modesty.” Luther then draws the reader’s attention to a contemporary parallel: “Even today, in some parts of Germany, head coverings which veil the neck and the mouth so that only the eyes appear are in use.”²⁷ In Genesis 38, Tamar exchanges her widow’s garments for more “festive garb,” apparently in keeping with the festive time of year (following his earlier comments on 38:12). She “not only covered her head with the honorable robe of a matron but also adorned her whole body elegantly and in festive manner”; in this fashion, she was “adorned and decked out to excite Judah,” but not as a whore.²⁸ So why then, Luther wonders, did Judah not recognize Tamar, at least from her voice or the exposed eyes? He is somewhat puzzled by this and attributes it to the focused imagination of Judah, which was blind to all else, or to the miraculous intervention of God--or the work of the Devil. Regardless, for him the costume of Tamar plays no role in Judah’s perception of her as a prostitute.

7. In his commentary on Genesis, Calvin contrasts the veil of Tamar with the dress of prostitutes of his time: “When it is said she veiled her face, we hence infer that the license of fornication was not so unbridled as that which, at this day, prevails in many places.” He implies that the whores of his day do not bother with a veil, unlike Tamar, who is fully aware of her sin and puts on a veil to hid her shame: “the veil of Tamar shows that fornication was not only a base and filthy thing in

the sight of God and the angels; but that it has always been condemned, even by those (i.e., Tamar) who have practised it.”²⁹ As for Judah’s inability to recognize Tamar, Calvin attributes this to the hand of God.³⁰

8. Thus far, I have highlighted some of the religious motivations behind the separation of the veil from prostitution (upholding Judah’s character, moral exhortation), and have touched upon other factors that appear to have influenced the above interpretations, for example, exegetical considerations (LXX) or contemporary practice (Ramban, Luther). It is to the last of these, contemporary custom, that I now turn in a more sustained way with a brief historical survey of the veil’s usage and meaning--from Assyria to Arles--particularly as it relates to social status and prostitution. Such contextualization of the interpretive life of Genesis 38:15 illuminates possible reasons for the lack of correlation between Tamar’s veil and prostitution in the exegetical tradition. First, a brief word on the veil is necessary.

9. In using the term veil, I do not assume that the face itself must necessarily have been covered. Over the centuries, one finds evidence for a wide variety of veils or coverings, whether one wished simply to cover the top of the head, conceal the hair, or all or a part of the face (note already Ramban or Luther above).³¹ Some veils were transparent (silk), and thus concealed little, while others masked the identity of the wearer.³² Moreover, modern analogies suggest that veils could be manipulated, depending on the company or other circumstances.³³ We of course

do not know how ancient readers or hearers of the Genesis story would have envisioned the veil of Tamar, but the text implies that it was substantial enough to conceal her identity. Additionally, the text also leads the reader to assume that Tamar retained some type of covering during intercourse, given Judah remained unaware of her identity until it was too late.

10. As mentioned above, Middle Assyrian law prohibits prostitutes, slave women, concubines unaccompanied by their mistress, and unmarried hierodules from appearing unveiled in public. Those who do so are subject to severe punishments, including fifty blows, pitch poured over the head, and the cutting off of one's ears.³⁴ The law, as Lerner observes (building on the conclusions of Miles and Driver), serves to institutionalize class distinction for women, here distinguished via their "sexual activities": "Domestic women, sexually serving one man and under his protection, are here designated as 'respectable' by being veiled; women not under one man's protection and sexual control are designated as 'public women,' hence unveiled."³⁵ Likewise, van der Toorn has identified appurtenance as the primary symbolic meaning associated with veiling.³⁶ The punishments are equally harsh for those men who fail to take the appropriate action against violators (fifty blows, pierced ears with thread drawn behind the back etc.). This, however, raises the issue of identification: how did one determine that a particular woman was illegally veiled? Lerner assumes that the veil must have covered the face, head, and figure, and thus, in the case of the female slave and slave concubine, would have hidden any visible distinguishing marks, but others

maintain that the veil in the ancient Near East only partially covered the face.³⁷

Regardless, the Mesopotamian prostitute would have been recognized by her dress, possibly hairstyle (thus no veil), and location.³⁸

11. Outside Mesopotamia, we have little evidence for the distinctive dress of prostitutes in the ancient Near East prior to the Greco-Roman period. Egyptian artistic convention represents them as covering less, not more. Women were not veiled in ancient Egypt and prostitutes, at least as depicted on a recently published New Kingdom papyrus (perhaps portraying scenes from a brothel) and ostraca (Deir el-Medina), wear little to nothing at all.³⁹ In Greek literary tradition, particularly Homer, the veil (κρήδεμνον) signified sexual chastity and purity, traits obviously not associated with the celebrated *heteraia* of literature or art.⁴⁰ With regard to the latter, mention must be made of the numerous examples of *heteraia*, usually naked, depicted on red-figure vase paintings and drinking cups (6th-5th centuries BCE). Other than catering to their male clients, the paintings depict *heteraia* engaged in various domestic activities, for example spinning or washing.⁴¹ Needless to say, veiling, or covering or any sort for that matter, plays no role in identification; in fact, precisely the opposite is the case. Their status as *heteraia*, where not obvious with clients, is signaled by their nudity and pose.⁴²
12. In Greco-Roman Egypt, prostitutes were recognized by their see-through garments, ornaments on the ankles or feet, or even messages such as “follow me” imprinted on the soles of their sandals.⁴³ The available evidence indicates that

Alexandria in particular was a major center for prostitutes in the Roman east, and the translators of the Greek Genesis were probably not oblivious to their presence or appearance.⁴⁴ Thus, without disputing the exegetical motivations isolated by Wevers (see note 10 above), the LXX expansion to Genesis 38:15 could reflect as well the translators' knowledge of current practice in that veils were not a part of the prostitute's dress; therefore, it was necessary to clarify that Tamar's veil was required only for concealment.

13. In Roman society, the social standing of the respectable and morally upright woman--the *mater familias* or *matrona*--stood in stark contrast to that of the disreputable prostitute (*meretrix*), a distinction reinforced in Roman law by way of the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* of Augustus (ca. 18 BCE).⁴⁵ The *lex Iulia* equates the status of the adulterous woman to that of a prostitute. The juxtaposition of *matrona/meretrix*, drawn also in literary contexts (e.g., Plautus, Cicero, Horace), focused especially on garments as markers of the respective positions. The *matrona* was identified by her *stola* (a long outer dress with decorated hem) and *vittae* (ribbons or bands worn in the hair), while the prostitute wore a *toga*. Those women convicted as adulterers were required to don the *toga* in order to differentiate them from respectable women.⁴⁶ The *lex Iulia* also addressed the problem of matrons appearing in public without their *stolae*, or even dressing outright as prostitutes.⁴⁷ Later, in the 6th century Code of Justinian (*Corpus iuris civilis*), we find a type of "enforced chastity" for the adulteress, and possibly the repentant prostitute as well, who were compelled to put on a veil.⁴⁸ In

the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, sufficient evidence exists to show that women generally were veiled in public and could be divorced or punished if they appeared otherwise.⁴⁹

14. Christianity as well followed current practice, albeit often with different justification. Paul's oft-cited admonition that women cover their heads (1 Corinthians 11:2-16) was in keeping with his own tradition, but he, like others to follow, felt the need to offer various theological reasons for the practice.⁵⁰ In his treatise on veiling (*De virginibus velandis*), the early Church father Tertullian (2d-3d cent.) recommended that all Christian women be fully veiled, not simply to accommodate custom, but because it is the will of Christ, their Espoused.⁵¹ Likewise, Athanasius (4th cent.) exhorted virgins to let their "face be veiled and downcast" in their encounter with others.⁵² In his *Apostolic Tradition*, Hippolytus (4th cent.) advised that men and women be segregated while in church, without greeting one another, and that the head of the women be covered completely.⁵³ These few representative citations allow us to place the expansions in the *Vetus Latina* and Vulgate in some perspective. If they were not simply following the LXX at that point, Jerome and the early translators could have been motivated by the need to clarify for their readers Tamar's use of a veil, for them a symbol of purity and chastity, not prostitution.

15. Rabbinic tradition offers no specific law stipulating that women should be veiled outside the home, but the rabbis appeal to traditional practice of the time. For

example, a husband may divorce his wife if she appears in public unveiled, a violation of Jewish practice (*M. Ketubot* 7.6.). In the gemara (*Bab. Ket.* 72a), the question is raised as to whether or not the prohibition is based on the Torah (implied in Numbers 5:18 according to the school of R. Ishmael) and, if so, the reason then for the appeal to Jewish practice alone. Other passages in the Talmud reinforce the importance of women going out with heads covered and we have no reason to doubt that the custom was prevalent in Jewish society, both east and west (Medieval manuscript illuminations, from the 13th to the 16th centuries, as a rule depict Jewish women with their heads covered).⁵⁴ In the light of this, the targumic expansion (*Neofiti*, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, and echoed in *Genesis Rabbah*) may have derived, in part, from uneasiness with the implication that Tamar's veil signaled anything other than a properly attired widow under the protection of her father-in-law, a widow whose modesty caused her to remain veiled even while not in public. The second interpretation in *Genesis Rabbah*--Judah did not consider her a prostitute *because of her veil*--appears to be an attempt not only to redeem Judah's character, but also to align the verse with contemporary practice. As for Rashi and Ramban, both refer to the dress of their time, although the former does not do so within the context of Genesis. In his commentary on the Talmud, Rashi explains פתית נשים (M. Ket. 2.1 with gemara in Bab. Ket. 17b) as "a veil on the woman's head which covers her eyes *just as is done in these parts*."⁵⁵ Thus, his comments on Tamar's veil as a means of concealment, not the sign of a prostitute, could reflect as well his knowledge of local custom in northern France of the 11th century. We saw above Ramban's opinion that the prostitute sat at the roadside

with face partly veiled. The larger context of his description is instructive: “The reason for the covering of the face is that it was the way of the harlot to sit at the crossroads wrapped up in a veil, with part of the face and hair uncovered, gesticulating with the eyes and lips, and baring the front of the throat and neck. Now since she would speak to the by-passer in an impudent manner, catching him and kissing him, she therefore veiled part of the face.”⁵⁶ One suspects that Ramban has in mind contemporary practice, and, indeed, his later comments regarding male prostitutes who still veil their faces in his day confirm this impression.⁵⁷

16. The institutional and civic need to maintain proper distance between classes via restrictions on dress arguably reached its zenith with the sumptuary laws in late Medieval and Renaissance Europe.⁵⁸ As with the Middle Assyrian and Roman legislation, the purpose of these laws was to provide clear demarcation of status, to address the issue of “women out of place, pretending to be what they are not.”⁵⁹ While applicable only to that segment of society that could afford such luxury items, particular statutes were aimed at regulating the dress of the well-to-do prostitute. These parallel similar requirements, often religiously sanctioned, imposed on Jewry under Christianity and Islam.⁶⁰ A survey of sumptuary laws in countries such as Italy, France, England, Spain, and Germany reveals a variety of restrictions (e.g., regulating furs, silk linings, colors, belts, types of fabrics, use of gold and silver in ornaments, buttons, *décolletage*, openings or slits in garments, jewelry, platform shoes, etc.).⁶¹ Prostitutes in particular were required to wear

certain garments or distinctive markings on their clothing as a means of identification (e.g., a cord or silk belt, striped hoods, a neckband or cloak of a particular color, a sleeve of different color/material or with a specific marking, special ornaments, bells, etc.).⁶² These laws varied widely from one region to the next, depending on local preference and the evolving styles of dress. In some cases (Arles, Siena, Venice, Ferrara), specific laws were enacted which banned the more elaborate and less transparent veils. Authorities feared that the anonymity afforded by these could hide or encourage inappropriate behavior.⁶³ It is not that one never encounters isolated cases where prostitutes could be veiled, but the garment in and of itself does not emerge as a sign of the profession. Rather, if covered at all, the prostitute would have been recognized as such by the color of or marking on her veil.

17. While the evidence is chronologically and geographically sporadic, the above necessarily brief overview of the veil's usage nevertheless highlights a number of recurring themes regarding its meaning and symbolism.⁶⁴ In fact, the Assyrian laws constitute the beginning of, or at least attest to, a socio-legal tradition that endures, *mutatis mutandis*, into the modern era wherein veiling may denote social status, ownership, decency, chastity, or modesty.⁶⁵ What is lacking is a clear or decisive link between the veil and the prostitute. This is not to say that prostitutes did not at various times or places wear veils, but they were certainly not alone in this.

18. We have observed how a number of ancient translators and later commentators puzzled over the events of 38:15--why didn't Judah know it was Tamar and what led him to believe she was a prostitute?--and sought to clarify the verse via expansion or commentary. While their answers to these questions differed, it is significant that in all but one case (Ramban), they avoided linking the veil to her guise as a prostitute. This interpretive tendency accords well with our conclusions regarding the veil and prostitution. Thus, the familiar interpretation of Tamar's tactics--Judah believed her to be a prostitute *because of* the veil--should, I believe, be reconsidered. Rather, the separation of shroud from profession in the exegetical tradition (long before the discovery of and current appeal to Assyrian law) and the absence of a link historically between the veil and prostitute provide compelling historical precedent for the reading that Tamar's shroud was not decisive for Judah's perception of her as a prostitute. In other words, the veil of Tamar concealed more than it revealed.

Endnotes

¹ For MT וַתִּכְסֵּם (Piel), BHS suggests emendation to וַתִּתְכַסֵּם (with some versional support; see also Gen 24:65), but compare its reflexive sense in Jonah 3:6 (וַיִּכְסֵּם שָׂקָא; see Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* [Minneapolis: Fortress and Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1992] 235).

² For examples of this interpretation, see John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (2d ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930), 453 ("She [Tamar] assumes the garb of a common prostitute" and further he explains the second half of the verse as follows: "This explains, not Judah's failure to recognize her, but his mistaking her for a harlot"); D. W. Wead, "Harlot; Play the Harlot," *ISBE* 2.616; George W. Coats, *Genesis, with and Introduction to Narrative Literature* (FTOL 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 274; Douglas R. Edwards, "Dress and Ornamentation," *ABD* 2.232-38, esp. 235

("Women used veils...to cover their faces on wedding days or if they were prostitutes," citing Genesis 38:14-15, 19); Athalya Brenner, *The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative* (The Biblical Seminar 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1985), 82 ("She [the prostitute] covers her face, so that she is recognized for what she is by her attire," here citing Genesis 38 and Prov. 7:10, although the latter does not specify what type of dress); Grace I. Emmerson, "Women in Ancient Israel," in *The World of Ancient Israel: Social, Anthropological, and Political Perspectives*, ed. R. E. Clements (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 371-94, esp. 387 (prostitutes are "recognizable by their dress (Gen 38:15; Prov 7:10)"); James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 63-64; Jan P. Fokkelman, "Genesis 37 and 38 at the Interface of Structural Analysis and Hermeneutics," in *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible*, eds. L. J. de Regt, J. de Waard, and J. P. Fokkelman (Assen: Van Gorcum and Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 152-187, esp. 170 ("The veil is probably a sign of the profession"); Susan Ackerman, *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen: Women in Judges and Biblical Israel* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 229 ("she trades her prostitute's veil for her widow's garb"); Marvin H. Pope, *Song of Songs* (AB 7C; New York: Doubleday, 1977), 331; and Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1-9* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 243 ("The only item of clothing that seems to have marked the prostitute was a heavy veil (*sa'ip*, Gen. 38:14)").

³ See, for example, Bruce Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 397-98 ("Tamar's 'disguise' as a harlot, on the contrary, consisted not in what she wore but in her displaying herself publicly by the wayside as a woman available for commerce"); Elaine Goodfriend, "Prostitution (OT)," *ABD* 5.505-10, esp. 506; Phyllis A. Bird, "The Harlot as Heroine: Narrative and Social Presupposition in Three Old Testament Texts," in her *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 197-218, esp. 200, n.5 and 203, n.15; Nahum Sarna, *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 268 ("From verses 15 and 19 it is clear that Tamar was not normally veiled and that she simply wanted to conceal her identity"); Joan G. Westenholz, "Tamar, *Q d'sh*, *Qadištu*, and Sacred Prostitution in Mesopotamia," *HTR* 82 (1989): 245-65, esp. 247 ("it cannot be the veiling that led Judah to assume that she was a prostitute"); Esther Marie Menn, *Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38) in Ancient Jewish Exegesis. Study in Literary Form and Hermeneutics* (JSJSupp 51; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 73-74; Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses. Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 257, n.38 ("The purpose of the veil in the Tamar story was not to identify her as a prostitute, but to hide her identity so that Judah would not recognize her"); and Karel van der Toorn, "The Significance of the Veil in the Ancient Near East," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells. Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, eds. David P. Wright, David Noel Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 327-39, esp. 330 (I thank Gary Rendsburg for calling my attention to this article).

⁴ For cases where the veil does not indicate harlotry, compare, for example, Rebecca in Gen 24:65, or the deception of Jacob in Genesis 29, which could not have succeeded had Leah not been veiled (a point made by Menn, Westenholz, Sarna, among others). For veiled brides in Israel and the ancient Near East, see Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel, Volume 1: Social Institutions* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965), 33-34; van der Toorn, "Significance of the Veil," 330-36; idem, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel. Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 7; Leiden and New York: Brill, 1996), 43-45.

⁵ See Middle Assyrian Laws, A ¶40, in Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (2d ed.; SBL Writings from the Ancient World 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 167-68. Compare Bird, "The Harlot as Heroine," 200, 204; Goodfriend, "Prostitution," 506; Menn, *Judah and Tamar*, 73; Westenholz, "Sacred Prostitution," 247, n.6; and Gerda Lerner, "The Origin of Prostitution in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 11.2 (1986): 236-54, esp. 247-52.

⁶ See Bird, “The Harlot as Heroine,” 204 n.17; Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea* (AB 24; New York: Doubleday, 1980), 225; also earlier reference cited in van der Toorn, “Significance of the Veil,” 329, n. 10. Pedersen was aware of the Assyrian evidence, but dismissed its relevance for the biblical text: “The Babylonians and Assyrians had definite rules for them [prostitutes] in the laws; thus in Assyria they are not allowed to go about veiled, this being the privilege of the married women; it is not likely that this has been the case in Israel, seeing that Tamar veils herself when playing the part of an hetæra (Gen. 38,15)”; Johs Pedersen, *Israel, its Life and Culture I-II* (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege and Copenhagen: Branner og Korch, 1926), 44-45.

⁷ Skinner notes, but does not discuss, the LXX addition (*Genesis*, 453). Procksch cites both LXX and Vulgate and comments that the veil covered the face and made Tamar unrecognizable (D. Otto Procksch, *Die Genesis, übersetzt und erklärt*. [KAT Bd. 1, 2d/3d edition; Leipzig and Erlangen: A. Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1924], 205, 210). Dillmann, the most significant exception, states that the veil was not the reason for Judah’s thinking her to be a prostitute, and notes that this interpretation is supported by the LXX and Vulgate (August Dillmann, *Die Genesis* [4th ed.; KHAT 11; Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1882], 380).

⁸ John W. Wevers, *Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum, I. Genesis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), 365.

⁹ For these and similar variants, see *Vetus Latina. Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel nach Petrus Sabatier neu gesammelt und herausgegeben von der Erzabtei Beuron, 2. Genesis*, ed. Bonifatius Fischer (Freiburg: Herder, 1949-54), 397.

¹⁰ Although one cannot rule out the possibility, I am assuming that the addition in LXX and Vulgate is exegetical and does not reflect a Hebrew *Vorlage* different from MT (the Syro-Hexaplar indicates its lack in the Hebrew text). The expansion in v.15 is consistent with the type of leveling that Wevers has isolated as characteristic of the Greek Genesis, here with καὶ οὐκ ἐπέγυνω αὐτήν echoing what is stated explicitly in the next verse, that Judah did not know she was his daughter-in-law. But by inserting the statement at this point in v.15, the LXX explains as well the purpose of the veil. See John W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis* (SBL Septuagint and Cognate Studies 35; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 639-40; and his “The Interpretive Character and Significance of the Septuagint Version,” in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of its Interpretation, Volume I: From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages (Until 1300)*, ed. Magne Sæbø (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 84-107, esp. 95-107. For a different estimation of the value of the Greek Genesis, see Ronald S. Hendel, *The Text of Genesis I-II: Textual Studies and Critical Edition* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), esp. 16-20.

¹¹ The impression of concealment or covering is reenforced in the use of the verbs כָּסָה and עָלָה with reference to Tamar’s change of clothing in v.14 (contrast the more common לָבַשׁ when she changes back in v.19). Furthermore, the description of Tamar’s transformation in v.14 lacks reference to actions characteristic of women who assume the role elsewhere in biblical texts (painting the face or ornaments). As for location in 38:14 (MT’s אֲשֶׁר עַל-דֶּרֶךְ; but see versions), compare Jer 3:2 (prostitute encountered עַל-דֶּרֶכַי), Ezek 16:31 (בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל-דֶּרֶךְ), and note interpretation of 38:14-15 in The Testament of Judah (12.2) where Tamar is dressed as a bride, but sits in public like a prostitute. For the problematic Ennaim, see J. A. Emerton, “Some Problems in Genesis XXXVIII” *VT* 25 (1975): 338-61, esp. 341-43, and Ira Robinson, “*bepetah* ‘*nayim* in Genesis 38:14” *JBL* 96 (1977), 569.

¹² See *Miqra’ot Gedolot* sub Rashi on 38:15. Compare the similar interpretation of Rashbam (Rabbi Shmuel ben Meir), commenting on כָּסָה פָּנֶיהָ שֶׁלָּא יִכְרְנָה יְהוּדָה in 38:14: וַתַּעֲלֶהּ .

¹³ See also the Babylonian Talmud (*Megillah* 10b and *Sota* 10b).

¹⁴ בַּר אַרוֹם כְּסִי יִתְּ אִפִּי הוֹת בְּבִי יִתִּיה דִּיהוּדָה וְלֹא הוּה יְהוּדָה חֲכָם יִתָּה. For the text, see Alejandro Díez Macho, *Neophyti 1: Targum Palestinense MS de la Biblioteca Vaticana, Tomo I: Génesis* (Textos y Estudios 7; Madrid and Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1968) 253. My parenthetical translation follows Golomb in reading כְּסִי יִתְּ as a passive participle (f.s.) in construct form. This I believe best accounts for the otherwise problematic הוֹת that follows (see David M. Golomb, *A Grammar of Targum Neofiti* [HSM 34; Chico: Scholars Press, 1985] 156; contrast Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* [Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University, 1990] 256). One should probably understand חֲכָם here in the sexual sense (see the end of v. 26, “and he did not know her again” [p. 255]); also Michael L. Klein, *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch According to their Extant Sources, Volume I: Texts, Indices and Introductory Essays* (Analecta Biblica 76; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980) 151 (MS Vatican Ebr. 440), and his *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (2 vols.; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1986) 1:99, lines 2-3 (Ms E = Bodleian Ms. Heb. E 43).

¹⁵ בְּרֵא אַרוֹם כְּעִיסָת אִפִּי הוֹת בְּבִי יִתִּיה דִּיהוּדָה וְלֹא הוּה יְהוּדָה רַחִים יִתָּה. The translation follows Michael Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis* (The Aramaic Bible 1B; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 128. For the text, see E. G. Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV, 1984), 47.

¹⁶ For Maher (*Pseudo-Jonathan*, 128 n. 13), the sullenness of Tamar accounts for why Judah did not love her (רַחִים, instead of חֲכָם).

¹⁷ See, for example, Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature* (reprint; New York: Judaica Press, 1972), 656. If one reads the verb כְּסִי (as passive participle?), the verse is nearly identical to that of *Neofiti* above. Note that כְּעִיסָת occurs only here in *Pseudo-Jonathan* (see Concordance in Clarke, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, p. 303), as opposed to multiple occurrences of כְּסִי (Clarke, 301-2 and, more generally, Sokoloff, *Dictionary*, 266). In justifying his exclusion of the targum from his dictionary, Sokoloff comments: “The general state of preservation of the text of *PsJ* known only from one manuscript [BM Aramaic Additional MS 27031] is very poor and contains a large number of corruptions. For these reasons, the unique words to be found are, in general, suspect, and their inclusion in this dictionary would add more uncertainty than solid lexical material” (*Dictionary*, 20, n.2). See further E. M. Cook, *Rewriting the Bible: The Text and Language of the Pseudo-Jonathan Targum* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1986). Note the variant rendering in the fragment targums (MS Vatican Ebr.): אַרוֹם צִמְצַמָּת אִפִּיהָ (Klein, *The Fragment-Targums*, 1:150).

¹⁸ In her analysis of *Genesis Rabbah*’s portrayal of Judah in Genesis 38, Menn identifies a “basic bifurcation between Judah the guilty and Judah the innocent” (Menn, *Judah and Tamar*, 292-310). She illustrates this phenomenon by way of two case studies focusing on Gen. 38:25-26 and 38:15-16a.

¹⁹ This interpretation is also present in *Yalqut Shim`oni* (Gen. 38:15) and *Tanhuma* (Wayyesheb 9:17; see Menn, *Judah and Tamar*, 306).

²⁰ For the full text, see Judah Theodor and Hanoch Albeck, *Midrash Bereshit Rabba. Critical Edition with Notes and Commentary* (Reprint with additional corrections by Albeck; Jerusalem: Wahrman Books, 1965), 1.1041-42.

²¹ Menn speculates that this more favorable view of Judah derives from a deliberate alteration of the text whereby לֹא זָנָה is read as זָנָה (Judah and Tamar, 306, n. 45).

²² Here following Menn, *Judah and Tamar*, 306, n.44.

²³ For royal and messianic themes in *Genesis Rabbah*'s commentary on chapter 38, see the excellent analysis of Menn, *Judah and Tamar*, 310-54, esp. 349-50.

²⁴ See his commentary in *Miqra'ot Gedolot* on Genesis 38:15, comments following וַיִּחַשְׁבֶּה לְזִוְנָה.

²⁵ For brothels in Luther's time and Reformation attempts to eradicate them, see Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 87-111, and his attitude toward prostitutes in Merry Wiesner, "Luther and Women: The Death of Two Marys," in *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics and Patriarchy*, eds. Jim Obelkevich, Lyndal Roper, and Raphael Samuel (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 295-308, esp. 301-2 (prostitutes, considered the "tools of the Devil," are "stinking, syphilitic, scabby, seedy and nasty. Such a whore can poison 10, 20, 30, 100 children of good people, and is therefore to be considered a murderer, worse than a poisoner," 301). Note that Luther refrains from using the Judah/Tamar episode as a springboard for a diatribe against prostitutes.

²⁶ For the summary that follows, see Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 38-44* (Luther's Works 7; ed. Jaroslav Pelikan; Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 25-31.

²⁷ Luther, *Lectures*, 26. Luther also compares the veil of Genesis to the student hoods of his day and to Turkish custom, knowledge of which he has obtained second hand from travelers there (25-26).

²⁸ *Lectures*, 26.

²⁹ John Calvin, *Genesis* (trans. John King; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 284.

³⁰ Calvin, *Genesis*, 285 ("indeed there is no doubt that God blinded Judah, as he deserved; for how did it happen that he did not know the voice of his daughter-in-law, with which he had been long familiar?").

³¹ Fadwa El Guindi, "Hijab," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 2:108-111, esp. 110. For pictorial evidence and discussion, see Alfred Rubens, *A History of Jewish Costume* (rev. and enlarged ed.; London: Peter Owen Limited, 1973), examples in plates 35, 42-46, 113, 157-58; and Thérèse and Mendel Metzger, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages: Illuminated Hebrew Manuscripts of the Thirteenth to the Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: Alpine Fine Arts Collection, 1982), pls. 165, 169, 186, 189, 238, 242, 292, 318, 160, and pp.121, 123-24, 129-30, 138, 146, 148.

³² Diane Owen Hughes, "Sumptuary Law and Social Relations in Renaissance Italy," in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. John Bossy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 69-99, esp 82; idem, "Regulating Women's Fashion," in *A History of Women in the West, II. Silences of the Middle Ages*, ed. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber (trans. from Italian, 1990; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 150-51.

³³ See, for example, Lila Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), esp. 159-67 and photo on 127.

³⁴ Roth, *Law Collections*, 168-69.

³⁵ Lerner, "Origin of Prostitution," 248.

³⁶ Van der Toorn, "Significance of the Veil," 332-34, 338-39.

³⁷ Lerner, "Origin of Prostitution," 250-51; contrast Van der Toorn, "Significance of the Veil," 328-29.

³⁸ Jean Bottero, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods* (trans. from French, 1987; Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 189-90; van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia*, 29; for dress and hairstyle, see W. G. Lambert, "Prostitution," in *Aussenseiter und Randgruppen: Beiträge zu einer Sozialgeschichte des Alten Orients*, ed. Volkert Haas (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1992), 127-57, esp. 130-32, 154, n. 6.

³⁹ Joseph A. Omlin, "Der Papyrus 55001 und seine satirisch-erotischen Zeichnungen und Inschriften" (*Catalogo del Museo Egizio di Torino*, vol. 3; Turino: Edizione d'Arte Fratelli Pozzo, 1973); Eugen Strouhal, *Life of the Ancient Egyptians* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 47-48; for Deir el Medina ostraca, see Lise Manniche, *Sexual Life in Ancient Egypt* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1987), 12-20; also general remarks in Christopher J. Eyre, "Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 70 (1984): 92-105, esp. 96.

⁴⁰ For Homer, see the superb study of Michael N. Nagler, *Spontaneity and Tradition: A Study in the Oral Art of Homer* (Berkeley: University of California, 1974), 45-61, and brief discussion in Anne Carson, "Putting Her in Her Place: Woman, Dirt, and Desire," in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, eds. David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler, and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 159-69, esp. 160-64.

⁴¹ See Dyfri Williams, "Women on Athenian Vases: Problems of Interpretation," in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, eds. A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1983), 92-106; and *Women in the Classical World: Image and Text*, eds. Elaine Fantham et al. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 115-118, 233 (fig. 7.6 of a matron), and 281 (fig. 10.1).

⁴² *Women in the Classical World*, 117-18, and Mary Beard, "Adopting an Approach II," in *Looking at Greek Vases*, eds. Tom Rasmussen and Nigel Spivey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 12-35, esp. 26.

⁴³ For the evidence, see Dominic Montserrat, *Sex and Society in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1996), 129-31. Sextus Empiricus remarks on prostitutes in Egypt, "women who have had the greatest number of lovers wear an ornamental ankle ring as a token of their exalted profession" (*Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, III.201; translation from Montserrat, 130.)

⁴⁴ For Alexandria, see Montserrat, *Sex and Society*, 120-23. Compare in this regard the talmudic story of two rabbis (R. Hanina and Oshaia in Israel) who lived and worked as cobblers in an area of town populated by prostitutes (*Bab. Pesahim* 113b). The story extols their virtue at not allowing themselves to be tempted by the women.

⁴⁵ For what follows, I draw upon the excellent study of Thomas A. J. McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), esp. 140-71, 209, 331-35.

⁴⁶ McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality*, 166.

⁴⁷ The problem is described by Tertullian: "The motivation for this was that certain women had diligently promoted the disuse of garments that serve as the tokens and guardians of social and moral rank, inasmuch as they are a hindrance to promiscuity. But now in prostituting themselves, in order that they may be more readily approached, they have sworn off their stola, scarf, shoes, and hat..." (*Pallio* 4.9; translation from McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality*, 161).

⁴⁸ McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality*, 171; see analysis in Fausto Gorla, "La Nov. 134.10, 12 di Giustiniano e l'assunzione coattiva dell'abito monastico," in *Studi in onore di Giuseppe Grosso* (vol. 6; Turin: G. Giappichelli, 1974), 55-76, esp. 58-61. For legislation regarding sexuality in Justinian's Code, see generally, James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago, 1987), 113-23.

⁴⁹ Ramsey MacMullen, "Women in Public in the Roman Empire," *Historia* 29 (1980): 208-18, esp. 208-9, n. 4. One does find exceptions. According to MacMullen, those more wealthy women who assumed a public role in society were apparently not always veiled, perhaps in imitation of changes in style at the imperial court in Rome ("Women in Public," 217-18).

⁵⁰ See Marna D. Hooker, "Authority on her Head: An Examination of 1 Cor. XI.10," *New Testament Studies* 10 (1963-64): 410-16; Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 227-30.

⁵¹ Tertullian cites the example of women in Arabia, "who cover not only the head, but the face also, so entirely, that they are content, with one eye free, to enjoy rather half the light than to prostitute the entire face" (*The Anti-Nicene Fathers. Translations of The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325, Volume IV: Tertullian, Part Fourth, Minucius Felix, Commodian, Origen, Parts First and Second*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956], 37).

⁵² See Gillian Clark, *Women in Late Antiquity: Pagan and Christian Life-styles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 106-118, and 116 for quote.

⁵³ Monique Alexandre, "Early Christian Women," in *A History of Women in the West, I. From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints*, ed. Pauline S. Pantel (trans. from Italian, 1990; Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1992), 409-44, esp. 433.

⁵⁴ See also *M. Nedarim* 3.8 with *Bab. Ned.* 30b; *Bab. San.* 58b; *Bab. Gittin* 90a-b; *M. Baba Qamma* 8.6; and *M. Shabbat* 6.6. For manuscript evidence, see illustrations throughout Metzger, *Jewish Life*, and comments on 146, 148.

⁵⁵ Italics added. The translation is from Ezra Shereshevsky, *Rashi: The Man and His World* (New York: Sepher-Hermon, 1982), 169; 161; also 167-72 for a useful collection of passages, largely from his Talmud commentary, on contemporary women's dress.

⁵⁶ From the *Miqra'ot Gedolot*, commentary on 38:15; translation follows Charles B. Chavel (trans.), *Ramban (Nachmanides): Commentary on the Torah. Genesis* (New York: Shilo Publishing House, 1971), 473.

⁵⁷ Hebrew בֵּן יַעֲשֹׂה הַקִּדְשִׁים גַּם הָיִם. The veiling, according to Ramban, allowed them to remain anonymous when they returned home.

⁵⁸ James A. Brundage, "Prostitution in the Medieval Canon Law," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1.4 (1975-6): 825-45; idem, "Sumptuary Laws and Prostitution in Late Medieval Italy," *Journal of Medieval History* 13 (1987): 343-55; Diane Owen Hughes, "Sumptuary Law"; idem, "Distinguishing Signs: Ear-Rings, Jews, and Franciscan Rhetoric in the Italian Renaissance City," *Past and Present* 112 (1986): 3-59; idem, "Regulating Women's Fashion," 136-58.

⁵⁹ Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 21.

⁶⁰ Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1979), see Index sub "sumptuary laws"; Robert Chazan, *Church, State, and Jew in the Middle Ages* (West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, 1980), 34, 39, 81, 177, 179-80, 186, 189, 195; Rubens, *Jewish Costume*, 80-100 and Appendix 2 ("Extracts from Jewish Sumptuary Laws and Dress Regulations"); Metzger, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, 143-46; Jacques Rossiaud, *Medieval Prostitution* (trans. From Italian, 1984; Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 56-59, 64; and Hughes, "Distinguishing Signs," esp. 16-24 and 29-30 (on Jews and prostitutes). A Papal Bull of 1257 (Avignon) specified that Jewish women were to wear a veil with two blue stripes, a requirement echoed by later Councils in Italy and Germany up to the mid-fifteenth century (Rubens, *Jewish Costume*, 91, 117-18, 121, and pl. 114; Metzger, *Jewish Life*, p. 146); Hughes ("Distinguishing Signs," 22) also refers to a yellow veil required for Jews.

⁶¹ Brundage "Sumptuary Laws," 346-50; and Hughes, "Sumptuary Law," 82-93.

⁶² Brundage "Sumptuary Laws," 351-52; Leah Lydia Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 80, 200; Hughes, "Sumptuary Law," 92-93; idem, "Regulating Women's Fashion," 147-51; Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women*, 20-22; idem, "Prostitution and the Question of Sexual Identity in Medieval Europe," *Journal of Women's History* 11.2 (1999): 159-77, esp. 164. This contrasts with our general lack of knowledge of the appearance of prostitutes in the Byzantine world (see Claudine Dauphin, "Brothels, Baths and Babes: Prostitution in the Byzantine Holy Land," *Classics Ireland* 3 [1996]; online at <http://www.ucd.ie/~classics/96/Dauphin96.html>). I am indebted to my colleague Zeff Bjerken for this reference.

⁶³ Hughes, "Sumptuary Law," 82, 91-92; idem, "Women's Fashion," 150-51; and Ruth Mazo Karras, "Prostitution and the Question of Sexual Identity" ("In twelfth-century Arles, prostitutes were prohibited from wearing a veil, the sign of a respectable woman, and anyone who saw an 'immoral' woman wearing one had the right and, indeed, the responsibility to take it from her," 164). Compare this with 13th century Siena, where prostitutes were excluded: "Veils that masked perverted the function of normal headcoverings, which were commonly worn by women . . . their purpose was to protect the honor and modesty of the wearer. The mask on the other hand, allowed a freedom akin to licence. In Siena, high platform shoes and veils fixed over the face to mask it were allowed only to one class of women—to prostitutes, women who lived outside the usual social categories" (Hughes, "Sumptuary Law," 92).

⁶⁴ See also Lerner, "Origin of Prostitution," 248.

⁶⁵ For a fascinating study of the complex relationship between veiling, sexuality, and status in a modern Egyptian Bedouin community, see Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments*, chap. 4 ("Modesty, Gender, and Sexuality"), esp. 159-67.