Women and Gender in the Bible and the Biblical World

Zanne Domoney-Lyttle*

Thinking Outside the Panel: Rewriting Rebekah in R. Crumb's *Book of Genesis*

https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2020-0135
received July 14, 2020; accepted September 15, 2020

Abstract: The rise in popularity of comic book Bibles has brought with it the opportunity to interrogate, challenge, reframe and reimagine difficult aspects of sacred scripture through text–image retellings. By their nature and format, comic books are uncontrollable vehicles of cultural expression, and in the case of biblical comic books, religious expression. As such, they can offer retellings of biblical narratives which challenge established practices of biblical interpretation normally rooted in patriarchal and conservative ideologies and may open the text up to more creative interpretations which are not restrained by those traditional approaches of reading the Bible. This article considers R. Crumb's *The Book of Genesis, Illustrated by R. Crumb* (2009) as a case study which focuses on the character of Rebekah (Gen. 24:15–67 and 25:19–28), demonstrating how the combination of text and image acts as a commentary to the biblical narrative as well as reframing Rebekah as a matriarchal leader, a move which is not reflected in the words but is depicted through accompanying images. The case study demonstrates how biblical comic books can move beyond the constraints of traditional biblical scholarship to reinterpret characters and stories from perspectives previously unvisited.

Keywords: genesis, Rebekah, comic books, visual criticism, reception history

1 Introduction

The rise in popularity of biblical comic books[1] has brought with it the opportunity to interrogate, challenge, reframe and reimagine difficult aspects of sacred scripture through text–image retellings. By their nature, comic books are "non-controllable" vehicles of cultural expression[2] which serve to "undercut the monopolisation of culture by the elite and privileged and to make room for culture that is not usually

1 For example, see: Crumb, *The Book of Genesis, Illustrated by R. Crumb*; Pillario, "The Word for Word Bible Comic;" Pearl et al., *The Kingstone Bible*; Mauss and Cariello, *The Action Bible: God's Redemptive Story*; Maddox and Anderson, *The Lion Graphic Bible: The Whole Story from Genesis to Revelation*; Wolverton, *The Wolverton Bible: The Old Testament & Book of Revelation Through the Pen of Basil Wolverton*; Gross and Millar, *American Jesus Volume One: Chosen*; Waid and Ross, *Kingdom Come*; Winschluss, *In God We Trust*; Bennett, *Outrageous Tales from the Old Testament*; and Siku, *The Manga Bible: From Genesis to Revelation*. This list is not exhaustive.

2 Carvalho, *Primer on Biblical Methods*, 72. My understanding of Carvalho's terming such cultural expressions "uncontrollable" or "non-controllable" is that such cultural products cannot or are not inhibited or restrained by traditional biblical–critical constraints and readings. It is not a reference to the product itself which is of course created in a controlled environment and in a controlled manner. Rather, it is that the content is free to be as expressive, creative and abstract as the creator so desires.

* **Corresponding author: Zanne Domoney-Lyttle,** Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Nothern Ireland, e-mail: zanne.domoney-lyttle@glasgow.ac.uk

the subject of elite study."[3] Biblical comic books and other alternative or non-traditional methods of retelling biblical stories can challenge established practices of biblical interpretation which are often rooted in patriarchal and conservative ideologies and may open the text up to more creative interpretations which are not restrained by those traditional approaches of reading the Bible. David M. Gunn suggests such cultural retellings of the Bible are an opportunity to investigate sociological and ideological enquiries about society, culture and religion more broadly, meaning the text of the Bible can be read and interpreted in a multitude of ways which can forefront marginalised groups who may otherwise be left out of the text.[4] This article considers one such comic book Bible, *The Book of Genesis, Illustrated by R. Crumb* as a case study to demonstrate how and why biblical comic books are well-positioned to reframe and in some cases rewrite biblical stories and characters in ways that encourage biblical scholars to view afresh those narratives.

From a literary perspective incorporating visual criticism, I focus on the character of Rebekah (Gen. 24:15–67 and 25:19–28) since Crumb has utilised the tools and resources of comic books to present Rebekah as a powerful woman hailing from a matriarchal society whose story and status, he argues, have since been diminished by later editors and redactors of the text. Crumb suggests that his representation of Rebekah is therefore a return to how her story would have been told prior to patriarchal strategising which has undermined her position and authority. However, Crumb's *Genesis, Illustrated* is a "word-for-word" version of Genesis, meaning Crumb incorporates every single word from the "original text."[5] Thus, there is an inherent tension between authority and medium, which exists when comic books seek to represent sacred texts in an alternative graphical format which does not comply with the history of the Bible as a "cultural icon of faith as black and white certainty."[6] The traditional text-only Bible will always claim authority over any alternative-media retellings which seek to reproduce those sacred texts. In relation to the figure of Rebekah then, this article demonstrates how the dimension of images in particular acts as a commentary to the "original" text, reframing Rebekah as a matriarchal leader in image only rather than word. First, I discuss the influence of Teubal's work on Crumb, and I then move to the retelling of Rebekah's story in both Gen. 24:15–67 and 25:19–28 of Crumb's version, before contextualising these narratives in biblical scholarship including feminist approaches. Such contextualisation and comparison demonstrate how biblical comic books can move beyond the constraints of traditional biblical criticism[7] to reinterpret characters and stories from perspectives previously unvisited or at least, under-visited, by emphasising cultural interaction with the Bible. Such an approach means there is scope for those marginalised communities to interact with and present the Bible in ways meaningful and representative of them since they are not bound to traditional approaches of finding meaning *in* the Bible.

3 Alderman and Alderman, "Graphically Depicted," 22.

4 Gunn, "Viewing the Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter," 225.

5 What Crumb understands to be the "original text" is unclear and, in any case, highly problematic since there is no single authoritative source of the Hebrew Bible. Furthermore, Crumb draws from many sources to shape his retelling, including the King James Version (KJV), Jewish Publication Society version (JPS), Robert Alter's translation and commentary of Genesis (1996) and Teubal, *Sarah the Priestess* among others. For more on this, see Domoney-Lyttle, "Drawing (non)Tradition", 5–6; 192–3.

6 Beal, *Rise and Fall*, 5.

7 By "traditional biblical criticism" I refer to the well-established practices of studying the Bible such as historical criticism, source criticism, literary criticism and so forth. Such approaches to studying the Bible tend to focus on discovering meaning *in* the Bible by asking questions of authorship, intention and what messages we can derive from the ancient text. Such studies make up an overwhelming majority of research conducted in Biblical Studies, though there is now a slight shift away from traditional approaches and towards critical readings which seek to understand how meaning is made *from* biblical texts in various cultural settings. This is one of those studies. See Beal, "Reception History and Beyond," 364.

2 R. Crumb, "Pro-Feminism" and Savina J. Teubal

Crumb has often been accused of producing sexist or misogynistic work throughout his career. His depictions of large, curvaceous woman are described as unflattering and unrealistic; and he is known for producing images of gratuitous sex scenes, many of which involve smaller, inferior men being dominated by strong females. Crumb describes these works as "all fantasy."[8] Many accuse him of being anti-women,[9] to which Crumb insists:

> When I started doing it in '68 or '69, the people who had loved my work before that, some of them were shocked and alienated by it – especially the women, of course. I lost all the women. I'm not antifeminist. I like strong, independent women, like the matriarchs of Genesis – they ordered the men around. The sex-fantasy thing was a whole other side of myself, and when that started coming out, I could no longer be America's best-loved hippie cartoonist.[10]

In an interview with National Public Radio, he explains that his depictions of sex have always been personal and fetishistic.[11] The conflict between depicting strong, independent women for his own sexual gratification is one of the main areas of concern for feminists reading his work since it relies upon female objectification and subservience as well as power associated with the male gaze. It is a conflict Crumb is aware of, as he has previously described himself as "pro-feminist" but with sexual fantasies which do not corroborate this and do not adhere him to feminist activists.[12]

It is unclear what Crumb understands "pro-feminism" to mean or how it applies to his work. It may be that he supports the general idea of feminism, but while he sympathises with many of the causes associated with feminism (e.g. challenging unequal status between men and women; regarding masculinity as oppressive to women), he is not active or involved in campaigns to further the feminist agenda.[13] According to Flood, it is normally men who identify as pro-feminist in contrast to women, since men argue that feminism is a movement created for and by women and to identify as feminist would be to take power from, or "colonise" a women's movement, something they wish to avoid.[14] This is problematic since there is no one form of feminism but many feminisms which reflect liberal, radical, black, queer, postmodern and other ideological approaches. However, one of the overarching viewpoints of pro-feminism is that the members are anti-sexist and anti-patriarchal, and it seems this is a point on which Crumb agrees and has apparently tried to incorporate into his version of Genesis.

One of the major influences in Crumb's research for *Genesis, Illustrated* is a work by Savina J. Teubal called *Sarah the Priestess: The First Matriarch of Genesis*.[15] Teubal hypothesises that the matriarch Sarah was descended from a line of, and assumed the position of, high priestess. She was borne of a matriarchal society, elements of which were reflected in her story in Genesis.[16] Teubal reads Sarah as being of equal status to Abraham because of this position. Moreover, she contends that it is the narrative of Sarah and later Rebekah, Rachel and Leah which propel the story forward rather than their male counterparts:

---

8 Arnold, "R. Crumb Speaks."

9 For example, Crumb cancelled a scheduled attendance at a comics/film festival in Australia in August 2011 after newspaper reports emerged in which Crumb was accused of being "sick and deranged" by several groups including sexual assault crisis groups, a case of what some may call representative of "cancel culture." For a fuller picture and an interview by Crumb on the incident, see Groth, "Robert Crumb – Live Online."

10 Widmer, "The Art of Comics No. 1."

11 NPR, "R. Crumb illustrates the Bible."

12 Hignite, *In the Studio*, 22.

13 Flood, "Pro-feminist men."

14 Ibid.

15 Crumb has confirmed his use of Teubal's work in several interviews, including in an interview with this author which was published in her PhD thesis: Domoney-Lyttle, "Drawing (non)Tradition," 196–7. See also, Teubal, *Sarah the Priestess*.

16 Teubal, *Sarah the Priestess*, xv.

> In the story of Abraham the narratives begin with an account concerning Sarah and Pharaoh and continue with this women's trials in securing progeny. Finally, a whole chapter is dedicated to her place of burial. Of the forty-eight years of Abraham's life after Sarah's death there is no detail whatever. In other words, it is Sarah's role that furthers the story.[17]

Teubal's overarching thesis is that the matriarchal narratives in Genesis have been eroded and overwritten over the last 2,000–3,000 years by editors, redactors and scribes writing in a patriarchal society. She suggests that the story of Sarah and her role as a high priestess and wife of Abraham would have been well known at one time, imparted orally in a society that was no stranger to matrilineal power structures. However, when they came to be written down (potentially in the late sixth-century BCE), they were written in a society more familiar with patriarchal rule and at a time when matriarchal society was being overtaken and diminished by men.[18] The ancient texts were then subject to millennia of redaction, editing, rewriting and retelling, which shaped them more and more into the mould of male-dominated cultures, eventually erasing any evidence of matriarchal power. Teubal concludes with the following statement:

> The narratives of the Sarah tradition represent a non-patriarchal system struggling for survival in isolation in a foreign land. Nevertheless, women of strength emerge from the pages of Genesis, women who are respected by men. Their function in life, though different from that of men, is regarded as equally important to society. Women's participation in society as described in the narratives presupposes a system in which women were able to maintain an elevated professional position into which were incorporated the roles of mother and educator. Just as significantly, these women were in control of their own bodies and their own spiritual heritage.[19]

It is this view of Sarah, which also affects the characters of Rebekah, Rachel and Leah, that has inspired Crumb in his remediation of Genesis. He believes that Teubal has unveiled a hidden truth to Genesis, that society at that time was female led rather than patriarchal and that "it needed a serious female scholar to root this ancient buried history out of the tangle of later redactions, distortions, corruptions, biased translations."[20] Applying a pro-feminist ideology to his work, then, is only in keeping with Teubal's theories and a return to what Crumb perceives as the way the text was meant to be read. I turn now to a visual–critical reading of his Rebekah to demonstrate how Crumb retains fidelity to the text of Genesis but uses the accompanying images to challenge overriding patriarchal strategies that oppose Crumb's "pro-feminist" ideology.

3 The story of Rebekah in Crumb's *Genesis, Illustrated*

3.1 Genesis 24:15–67[21]

Rebekah's introduction in the text is in Gen. 22:23a: "Bethuel became the father of Rebekah," but her first physical appearance is in 24:15.[22] Rebekah is rendered in typical Crumbian style with broad shoulders, a large chest, muscly arms and a beautiful face. Crumb has drawn her with a kind expression, which is a visual representation of the story of her helpfulness at the well (Gen. 18–20). She wears a simple robe gathered at the waist with two strings of beads around her neck and a shawl over her head.

17 Ibid., xv.
18 Ibid., 136–7.
19 Ibid., 139–40.
20 Ibid., 139–40.
21 See images 89–97 of "Read online The Book of Genesis Illustrated comic – Issue TPB (Part 1)," ZipComic.com, accessed 26 June 2020, https://www.zipcomic.com/the-book-of-genesis-illustrated-issue-tpb-part-1.
22 See panel 12 of Gen. 24 in Crumb's remediation. Unfortunately, Crumb has not numbered the pages of his book and so reference is made to panel number and chapter of Genesis for the reader.

Rebekah's first appearance shows her holding a rounded jug on her shoulder and on her way to fetch water from the well with the other women of the city. As she leaves the city, a shadowy figure lurks behind her to the left. In panel 13, Rebekah leans over the well to fetch the water; the servant of Abraham is revealed as the shadowy figure from panel 12, and he stands behind her to the right, watching. His facial features are in shadow and are indistinguishable. Crumb has drawn the scene in an unsettling way, which signals to the reader that this is an unusual situation. A strange man has encamped himself next to a well specifically to watch women approach the area, so that he can fulfil an oath to find another man a wife. The reader knows that this is a task set and endorsed by Abraham (Gen. 24:2–9) but that does not detract from the peculiar scenario, and Crumb's rendering is disturbing in its detail highlighting the strangeness of the text and, importantly, the vulnerability of Rebekah.

This disturbing sequence continues in panel 14 when the grinning (or is it grimacing?) servant approaches Rebekah asking "Pray, let me sip a bit of water from your jug!" as he gestures towards Rebekah's visible nipple. Whether this is an intentional decision by Crumb to further unsettle the reader is not clear. The servant has physically intruded into Rebekah's personal space across panels 12–14, moving from the shadows, to the background and then foregrounding himself in the narrative in front of Rebekah. More than an intrusion in Rebekah's physical space, the servant is taking space away from Rebekah across the panels indicating that he recognises his power as a man over women in a patriarchal setting. Panels 15 and 16 continue the theme as the servant grows in size, physically dominating Rebekah as he drinks from her water jug, further suggesting the idea of power play between the two sexes which is reinforced by the downward angle of his vision as Rebekah is forced to look up at him.[23]

Throughout the introductory panels of Rebekah watering the camels and the servant's other menfolk, Crumb has depicted her as always smiling (reflecting her beauty in appearance and nature), but more than that, as someone who, regardless of the intrusion on her personal and physical space, is happy at the news the servant brings. The pattern of panels across Rebekah's introduction reflects the demands of the story as well as Crumb's normal style of using larger panels to create depth and detail and smaller panels as a narrative tool to drive the story forward. For example, the top two panels on the third page of Gen. 24 (panels 15 and 16) depict a short moment in time of (1) Rebekah passing the jug to the servant and (2) the servant drinking. Panel 17 is panoramic, and Rebekah has moved from giving water to the servant, to watering all the camels. Crumb is relying on the reader's understanding of how comics work,[24] filling in the gaps between panels, so that the story makes sense. Panel 17 is rather static compared to the fleeting moment shown between panels 15 and 16 but is a prime example of the narrative-dominant, rhetorical use of frame patterns which Ann Miller discusses, wherein the composition of the panels reflects the demands of the story, so the reader understands the flow of the narrative from the style of the panels in the comic book.[25]

In panels 20 and 21 of Gen. 24, Rebekah's introduction to the servant is complete, and he first asks whether there is space for himself and his entourage of servants and animals to sleep in her father's house and then who her father is. Panel 20, which claims the suspense position of the page at the bottom right-hand corner, is a portrait of Rebekah surrounded by an aura of light, boldly claiming "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." The image combined with the text comes across as an epiphanic moment of self-realisation for Rebekah complete with light effects. Of course, the moment is revelatory for the servant, not Rebekah, who realises his luck of stumbling across a relative of Abraham in his search for a wife for Isaac. Because of its position on the page, the panel leaves the reader in a state of questioning – what does Rebekah's revealed identity mean for the story?

---

23 Of course, this sequence could be interpreted otherwise depending on the reader's understanding of the text and their concept of the function of the panels. However, to me, these details are immediately noticeable and an important aid to the discussion of visuality of gender in Genesis.

24 On the multiple ways in which readers understand and interpret text-image narratives like comics, see for example McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*; Miller, *Reading Bande Dessinée*; Groensteen, *The System of Comics*; Eisner, *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative*. This list is not exhaustive.

25 Miller, *Reading Bande Dessinée*, 86.

The answer is given across the page in panel 21. Crumb has zoomed out from the close-up portrait of Rebekah to a scene where she stands in front of the servant, grasping her rounded jug to her stomach. Crumb foreshadows her new status as wife, but, more importantly, as mother to Isaac's children. The very obvious iconic reference to the rounded fertility jug, which is repeated throughout Sarah's story, is an indicator to the reader that this woman is the new wife Abraham sent his servant to find, and the position across her stomach visually indicates she will bear children, thus helping to fulfil Abraham's covenant with God of countless descendants.

The rounded jug appears again throughout Rebekah's story and is again held at Rebekah's stomach in panel 41. Crumb ends Gen. 24 with a large panel depicting Isaac and Rebekah lying together in Sarah's tent. The moment is tender and full of emotion as the couple are entwined together in an embrace. The setting of the tent lends a gentleness to the scene, as the naked pair are surrounded by soft folds of fabric. The folds of fabric are also suggestive of female genitalia, further reinforcing the connection between the concept of motherhood and matriarchy in the story. Crumb interprets Isaac bringing Rebekah into the tent of the deceased Sarah as an act potentially designed to "place the mantle of Sarah's high-priestess position on to the shoulders of Rebekah,"[26] a move which transfers power from Sarah to Rebekah physically and literally.

4 Contextualising Crumb's remediation of Gen. 24:15–67 in biblical scholarship

Teubal's theory that Sarah hails from a matriarchal society, that she potentially assumes the role of high priestess within that community and that her story has been overshadowed and rewritten in accord with a Canaanite patriarchal society inhabited by Abraham is also reflected in his characterisation of Rebekah.

In the case of Rebekah, Teubal indicates matriarchal power and lineage using examples such as the appearance of Rebekah's mother in the betrothal scenes. Rebekah's mother is mentioned three times directly in 24:28, 53 and 55 and twice indirectly (24:57, 58)[27] and along with Laban; her mother is the one who Rebekah tells about the encounter with Abraham's servant. The mother is also the one to receive gifts from that servant.[28] Rebekah's mother remains nameless only because, in keeping with patriarchal traditions, her name has been edited out of the text; however, Teubal suggests her name is actually Bethuel,[29] the name given to Rebekah's father in the biblical text who plays a much smaller role. This movement of names, according to Teubal, is an attempt to "introduce a father figure into Rebekah's matrifocal community."[30] This implies Rebekah's mother is the dominant partner in her relationship and is an indication of a matriarchal society.

Furthermore, Teubal argues that the betrothal scene in Gen. 24 is so long and detailed because it describes a change from matrilocal to patrilocal residence, reflected in Abraham's order to his servant that Isaac must not leave Canaan. The order is reiterated twice. Teubal understands it to be an indication of a patriarchal society overcoming a matrifocal one, indicating a growth in patriarchal control.[31] Lastly, Teubal understands the scene of Isaac taking Rebekah into his mother's tent as a symbol of matrilocality, so that their marriage is consummated in the matriarchal tent.[32]

26 Crumb, commentary to chapter 24, *Genesis, Illustrated*.
27 Teubal, *Sarah the Priestess*, 61.
28 Ibid., 61–2.
29 Bethuel may translate to "House of God."
30 Teubal, *Sarah the Priestess*, 62.
31 Ibid., 63.
32 See the discussion on Sarah's tent as a sacred space in the section on contextualising Genesis 18:1–15, Domoney-Lyttle, "Drawing (non)Tradition," 130.

Does this mean that Rebekah also stems from the tradition of high priestesses attributed to Sarah by Teubal? There is no direct suggestion of this; only that Rebekah's homeland was, like Sarah's, a matriarchal community, and that she likely brought matriarchal customs and traditions with her to Canaan, some of which are reflected in the text. For example, Jacob is the favoured son as a result of the practice of ultimogeniture in matriarchal societies. As such, he must marry endogamously according to matrifocal custom.

Alter does not draw attention to Rebekah's mother in these scenes. Instead, he focuses on the role of Laban as a chief negotiator for Rebekah's betrothal. Alter notes that the inclusion of Bethuel is likely a later scribal insertion and that Bethuel was absent at this point.[33] From a patriarchal perspective, this explains why Rebekah runs home to tell her mother and not her father.[34] Alter does recognise that Rebekah must have some status since she is allowed to take her nurse with her to Canaan.[35] In his commentary to the JPS, Sarna notes that the Hebrew verb לָקַח (*la-kach*)[36] meaning "to take" used in 24:4 indicates the patriarchal perspective of the groom's family and "reflects the custom of the parent initiating the marriage transaction."[37] On the subject of Rebekah referring to home as her mother's household, Sarna suggests this to be the norm "in this society" citing Song of Solomon 3:4 and 8:2 as other examples of this usage.[38] However, whatever "this society" is, is unclear in Sarna's notes.

Crumb's sources are conflicted in their telling of Rebekah and Isaac's betrothal scene, in at least three points: the type of society Rebekah lived in, i.e. matriarchal/patriarchal, the role of Laban and Bethuel and the identity of the mother/father and status of Bethuel (i.e. dead or alive). Crumb's response to the latter point is to leave Bethuel out of the text entirely. Acting according to Alter's interpretation, Crumb believes Bethuel is probably deceased at this point in the narrative, and the inclusion of his name in Genesis was "just those later scribes trying to shore up the patriarchy!"[39] Crumb does not comment on Teubal's hypothesis that Bethuel may be Rebekah's mother, but his images of the mother do indicate a strong, matriarchal leader who could represent the head of the household. Notably though, it is Laban who is addressed by, and who responds to, the servant which is perhaps an indication of a patriarchal society where males are regarded as heads of the household.

As for the former point, scholarly readings on the subject point towards a patriarchal society and do not support Teubal's overarching thesis, but some acknowledge tropes within the Rebekah narratives that do not always support androcentric readings. For example, Fischer notes:

> Although in patrilineal societies genealogies are normally androcentric and in the ancestral narratives the line of promise is additionally represented in male succession, the genealogy of Milcah and Nahor points to Rebekah [...] Rebekah and the ancestral father are linked from the very beginning.[40]

Fischer argues that Rebekah acts as a successor to Abraham in place of Isaac, as elements of her leaving her home echo Abraham's willingness to leave for Canaan, for example. Gunkel notes Rebekah was taken home by Isaac, in a manner contrary to traditional customs.[41] Kissileff notes that it is Rebekah who, by controlling her presentation to Isaac, signals she will be in control of determining her role and function in her marriage to Isaac.[42] Rebekah's willingness to leave for Canaan (thus, a patriarchal society, from a matriarchal society in Haran) may also indicate that she has some power.

---

33 Speiser, and many other textual critics, have also drawn this conclusion concerning Bethuel. See Speiser, "Genesis," 80.
34 Alter, *Genesis*, 120.
35 Ibid., 121.
36 Translation of Hebrew is taken from Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon.
37 Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary*, 162.
38 Ibid., 362.
39 Ibid., 362.
40 Fischer, On the Significance of the "Women Texts," 275.
41 Gunkel, *Stories of Genesis*, 87.
42 Kissileff, "The Matter is from God," 157.

However, control or power does not equal dominance or even equality of treatment between genders. Rebekah is merely controlling the parts of her identity that she can control: her appearance, her maids and nurse and when she wants to depart. By agreeing to a move to patriarchal Canaan, this signifies a departure from Rebekah's power at home. Indeed, as Exum notes:

> The story of how Isaac acquired the correct wife serves to affirm patrilocal marriage over uxorilocal marriage, and by uprooting the woman from her family, privileges the husband's line of descent, or Abraham's side of the family, into whose genealogy the woman will be absorbed.[43]

As usual, the texts can be read in a multiplicity of ways. However, Teubal's perspective is still notably absent from most scholarship since it has been widely disparaged. To an extent, Crumb has achieved a rendering of Gen. 24:15–67 which is neither rooted in a matriarchal setting nor overtly patriarchal. Instead, it is rooted in characterisations of biblical figures, and it represents what Crumb reads in the text. Rebekah is strong, decisive, in control and is beautiful. Crumb knows this and uses it. On the other hand, Isaac is passive, somewhat marginalised (both literally and figuratively in the panels) and seemingly content to allow others to control his future.

4.1 Genesis 25:19–28[44]

The first two pages of Gen. 25 depict the genealogies of Abraham. The first page contains only three large panels: the first panel is of Abraham's second wife, Keturah, and their children; the second panoramic panel shows Abraham sending his new family away to the land of the East, so that only Isaac will inherit Abraham's will; and the third panel is an image of Abraham's burial in the Machpelah cave where Sarah was buried. This first page covers the text of Gen. 25:1–11. The second page contains a series of twelve portraits, each containing a descendant of Ishmael. These are followed by the burial scene of Ishmael, where a large group of people watch a funeral pyre burning. The final panel on this page is of Isaac offering a burnt sacrifice to God, and there are striking iconic correspondences between the panel of Ishmael's funeral and Isaac's burnt offering.

These pages visually contextualise the forthcoming narrative of Rebekah's motherhood. Similar to Sarah's story of infertility juxtaposed against scenes of family and Abraham's covenant with God promising countless descendants, Rebekah's story of motherhood, which begins with problems conceiving, is juxtaposed against scenes of family and descendants. Crumb's decision to portray each of Ishmael's sons directly opposite the page containing Rebekah's story is especially poignant. Ishmael is Isaac's half-brother but stands to inherit nothing from Abraham even though he has continued Abraham's lineage where Isaac has not, thus fulfilling God's promise to Abraham. Furthermore, this visual representation of each son of Ishmael, "twelve chieftains according to their clans" (25:16) confirms the promise God makes to Hagar in Gen. 16:10 and later in 21:17.

Crumb offers a new interpretation of the relationship between Ishmael and Isaac in the pairing of panels 16 and 17 due in part to the composition of panels, panel subject/content and his awareness of the perifield. These visual decisions affect the forthcoming tale of Rebekah's experience with motherhood. The iconic correspondence between the funeral pyre and the burnt sacrifice is undeniable: each are built upon a bed of rocks, each with a pile of burning wood on top, with black smoke billowing towards the heavens. The funerary image shows a large gathering of people, presumably Ishmael's kinfolk, but the burnt offering image has only Isaac praying to God on behalf of Rebekah that she might conceive. One is an image of the death of a man who has a large family, the other is an image of a man who prays for one.

---

43 Exum, *Fragmented Women*, 87.

44 See images 98–100 of "Read online The Book of Genesis Illustrated comic – Issue TPB (Part 1)," ZipComic.com, accessed 26 June 2020, https://www.zipcomic.com/the-book-of-genesis-illustrated-issue-tpb-part-1.

While Crumb has not strayed from the text, his graphical interpretation of these passages is visually witty. Despite becoming an outcast, Ishmael has bettered Isaac and the panels are Crumb's way of restoring justice on what he saw as an unfair situation in Gen. 21.

The third page of Gen. 25 opens with one of the more beautiful and ethereal images in *Genesis, Illustrated*, presenting Rebekah in the light of a goddess, surrounded by an aura of light and stars with her knees crossed in the lotus position; she is heavily pregnant so Isaac's offering to God in the previous panel has worked. Though Rebekah is described as עָקָר (a'kar) meaning "barren" or "sterile" in 25:21 which was the same description given to Sarah (Gen. 11:29–30), the text suggests that her infertility is solved with one ritual sacrifice and prayers to God. Unlike Sarah who had to wait a long time and then consider alternative choices before eventually conceiving Isaac, Rebekah's problem is treated differently. Again, Crumb attributes Rebekah's barrenness to her status as a high priestess, arguing she would not be allowed to have a child until her duties as high priestess were fulfilled.[45] The swift resolution of her infertility, however, does not corroborate with this, nor does Crumb's rendering of the episode, which is, like the text, lacking in detail or answers.

No time is spent on the issue of Rebekah's infertility implying in the narrative that it is less of a problem than Sarah's. However, Rebekah's problem comes both during and after her pregnancy. As Gen. 25:21–26 tells, Rebekah experiences a difficult pregnancy. Crumb's word choice is both significant and confusing in this verse. In panel 18, the second half of the narrative caption reads "and the children clashed together within her, and she said […] '[…] Then why *am* I […]??'" Alter's version translates the text as "Then why me?," the King James Version (KJV) uses "If it be so, why am I thus?," and the Jewish Publication Society (JPS) translates it as "If so, why do I exist?."[46]

First, by acknowledging that there are "children" implies the narrator is inviting the reader into a secret that the character does not know yet,[47] imbuing the reader with a status of omniscience on par with the character of God.[48] Second, Rebekah's dialogue is incomplete in every version. Sarna's commentary to the JPS suggests that the text should be read along the lines of "Why then did I yearn and pray to become pregnant," as if the difficult, uncomfortable pregnancy makes Rebekah regret wanting to become pregnant.[49] Alternatively, Sarna also notes that it could be read as "Why do I go on living," in reference to a Syriac version of this text.[50] Alter comments that Rebekah's speech is a "cry of perplexity and anguish" over the pain of her difficult pregnancy but does not offer further ruminations on the text, other than that it "might be construed as a broken-off sentence."[51]

Crumb's accompanying image is his own commentary on Rebekah's broken speech. As described, she sits with her legs crossed, hands on her pregnant stomach, surrounded by stars and an aura of white light against a featureless, dark background. The stars have a dual function: first, they give a sense of a heavenly presence, either indicating God's involvement in granting Rebekah a child or even perhaps her status as a priestess in an ethereal, divine setting. Second, stars drawn around a character in comics normally indicates pain or an injury, and in this case, they serve as a visual indicator of Rebekah's pain.

The speech bubble visually intrudes upon Rebekah's physical space, dipping behind her head as if it is a response issued from her body rather than her mind. The fact that it *is* a speech bubble rather than a thought bubble indicates a raw, guttural and internal cry. The use of ellipses before and after her words adds a sense that something is missing in her words. Crumb has emphasised "am": "[…] then why *am* I […]??" and used two question marks, so that the reader first understands that the sentence is incomplete

45 Crumb, commentary to chapter 25, *Genesis, Illustrated*.

46 Teubal uses the JPS version but notes that it is difficult to ascertain a clear Hebrew translation. Teubal prefers Speiser's translation: "If this is how it is to be, why do I go on living?" Teubal, *Sarah the Priestess*, 43.

47 Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary*, 179.

48 Sarna posits it as the narrator taking the reader into his confidence rather than the reader enjoying the same all-knowing status of God.

49 Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary*, 179.

50 Ibid., 179.

51 Alter, *Genesis*, 127.

probably due to the pain Rebekah is in, and second that it is an anguished cry. Typical of his style throughout *Genesis, Illustrated*, Crumb's rendering of the single panel is a dichotomous image, showing both a fertile, goddess-like Rebekah, whose plea to have a child has been granted, but also a woman who is confused and in pain. There is also the potential that Rebekah is regretful of her wish to bear children.

Rebekah seeks answers from God with regard to her struggle. God explains that her difficult pregnancy is because she is carrying two children – which the reader already knows – who are destined to struggle with one another in one way or another (25:23). Compared with the serene-like panel before it, panel 19 emphasises Rebekah's struggle by depicting her on her hands and knees before the face of God who appears like a sun above her. She is on top of a rocky outcrop, or mountain, which is often the site of a meeting between God and humans. Juxtaposing the goddess-like image of Rebekah with the image of her on her hands and knees, unable to stand (either because she is before the face of God or because she is in pain – it is unclear which) is Crumb's attempt to paint Rebekah in the light of both high priestess in accordance with Teubal's thesis and a matriarch who must endure some sort of suffering before she can call herself a mother. Again, Crumb saturates his depictions of the matriarchs with dual identities, representing conflicting characteristic qualities.

Panel 20 is a pay-off for both the reader and Rebekah. The design of the grid on the page (i.e. the multistage–multiframe) is 3 rows by 2 panels, resulting in 6 panels. This means each panel is given more space than Crumb's more usual 3 × 3 grid pattern. Each scene is a detailed snapshot of a moment rather than a quick succession of narrative propulsion: panel 18 is Rebekah pregnant, panel 19 is Rebekah learning she will have twins and panel 20 is Rebekah giving birth. There is no narrative between the panels, because the biblical text does not support it. Therefore, the reader must input their own knowledge (not necessarily of the Bible but of pregnancy) to fill in the gaps of the story, using the function of the gutters as suggested by McCloud and Eisner.[52]

Until this point, Isaac has not appeared in a scene with Rebekah since he first takes her as a wife at the end of Gen. 24. There is no reason that Crumb could not have included him in any of the panels concerning Rebekah's pregnancy, but his decision not to is perhaps another proclamation of Rebekah's strength and status as opposed to a comment that childbearing is an activity for women only, while the men wait outside, proverbial cigars at the ready. The key panel that supports my reading of this is panel 19 where Rebekah appears before the face of God. Without Isaac, and without any other visible support, Rebekah has sought out a meeting with God to question her physical state, and it is to her that the secret of two nations within her womb is revealed. Had Crumb shown Isaac with her, it would have lessened the remarkable encounter and potentially recast Isaac as the one with the power to converse with God, as per patriarchal norms. As it is, Rebekah is the powerful one which is perhaps reflective of a Teubalian reading of the narrative.

5 Contextualising Crumb's remediation of Gen. 25:19–28 in biblical scholarship

Concerning the scenes of Rebekah and Isaac becoming parents, Sarna considers the text from a patriarchal perspective, casting Rebekah as a secondary character in Isaac's story. Of Rebekah, Sarna notes her age is omitted in the biblical text because, unlike Sarah, she is not past the age of childbearing.[53] This casts her fertility problem in a different light to Sarah's as Rebekah's issue of barrenness is solved in the space of one verse which potentially encapsulates twenty years of waiting for children. This is reflected in Crumb's text. Of her inability to bear children, Sarna notes that the situation is ironic, given the blessing Rebekah

52 McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 57; Eisner, *Sequential Art*, 13.
53 Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary*, 179.

received as she left her family home: "O sister! May you grow into thousands of myriads,"[54] and also that Rebekah and Isaac do not resort to using a concubine but rather "maintain their faith in God's word and rely on the power of prayer."[55] I argue that this, too, is the dominating theme in Crumb's narrative, especially in the pairing of the panel of Isaac's burnt offering with the image of Rebekah's pregnancy, which is a suggestion of divine intervention after prayer.

Divine intervention is also a running theme in Alter's reading of Gen. 25. Alter suggests that 25:19, "the lineage of Isaac" implies a "false symmetry" with the lineage of Ishmael earlier in the chapter (25:12), because it highlights Ishmael's success in creating a long line of descendants against a lack of descendants for Isaac. Similar to the Abraham cycle, Isaac requires God's intervention.[56] I argue this is also replicated in Crumb's remediation, most significantly in the design of the multistage–multiframe incorporating panels 4–17, which sets the lone figure of Isaac against panels of Ishmael's descendants. This has the effect of emphasising Isaac's lack of progeny and why that is an issue.

Teubal also notes the matter of God's intervention, but more importantly argues that the childlessness of Rebekah was proof that she too heralded from a priestess tradition: "it seems highly unlikely that three generations of women married to patriarchs would be barren," and even more unlikely, according to Teubal, that the husbands of barren wives would continue to be married to them without taking some course of action to ensure progeny.[57] Marrying for love is not an argument to which Teubal gives thought. For Teubal, this signifies that the women were treated differently by their husbands and that potentially, their status overrode their childbearing abilities. Lastly, Teubal suggests that the text represents both Sarah and Rachel as "anxious" to fall pregnant, but that Rebekah's desire or otherwise for a child is not expressed by her, but by Isaac in his prayer to God.[58]

I argue this interpretation is represented by Crumb's visual and textual choices. Rebekah's story, in comparison to Sarah or Rachel, has none of the tension or confused emotion portrayed in the other matriarchal narratives, nor does it seem to span a lengthy amount of time. The six-panel grid in the multistage–multiframe of Rebekah's motherhood arc allows for a time to pass slower for the reader than a nine-panel grid would, because the reader must absorb more information in the larger panels. However, in the first four panels alone, Rebekah has endured a painful pregnancy, spoken with God, given birth and presented the children to their father. Her issue of infertility, if there is one, is resolved quickly and with minimum effort unlike Sarah and Rachel's stories. By Crumb visually depicting Isaac's prayer to God, it is Isaac who is depicted as anxious. Rebekah's absence in the panel suggests an absence of emotion on the matter, which is then replaced by frustration and pain when her pregnancy encounters complications in the next panel. Alternatively, it could also represent the silencing of her voice in the text, but Crumb's images do not depict this. Rather, they show emotion and struggle within Rebekah's experience.

Rebekah's visit to God also marks her as different to Sarah or Rachel, neither of whom speak directly with the deity.[59] The result of the visit is that Rebekah learns that she is carrying twins who will be two nations destined to struggle with each other for supremacy.[60] The fact that this is not shared with Isaac serves to emphasise Rebekah's role and status over her husband, further casting him in a role submissive or perhaps less involved than his wife.[61] However, the tension here is that it is only through Isaac's prayer (and in Crumb's remediation, burnt offering) that Rebekah even falls pregnant, so his role is significant

54 Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary*, 179.
55 Ibid., 179.
56 Alter, *Genesis*, 126.
57 Teubal, *Sarah the Priestess*, 102.
58 Ibid., 103.
59 Both Fischer, in "On the Significance of 'Women Texts'" (277), and Sarna, in *Understanding Genesis* (182), discuss the possibility that Rebekah was associated with a local cult which may suggest she spoke with an oracle or priest rather than God directly. However, the text does not suggest this, and neither does Crumb's remediation as he draws God's face bearing down on Rebekah like the sun.
60 Fischer, "On the Significance of the Women Texts," 277.
61 On centrality of Rebekah in a narratological reading of Genesis, see White, *Narration and Discourse*, 206–7.

nonetheless. Crumb's remediation, although focused on Rebekah, presenting her as strong enough to speak to God's face, does give equal pictorial space to Isaac to signify this. Furthermore, by situating the panel of Isaac's prayer/offering to God beside the funeral of Ishmael and before the panel of Rebekah pregnant, Crumb is connecting the theme of brothers, family and progeny through the figure of Isaac.

Crumb's use of Isaac as a visual connective tool in these panels is also representative of Esther Fuchs' argument that the matriarchs are contingent upon their husbands' relationships with God to fall pregnant, rather than the actions or character of the wife. In this sense, the patriarch is key to Rebekah's motherhood narrative. However, Fuchs also contends that Rebekah is also central to the story, which can be seen in her interaction with God and the fact that both parents name their children, rather than Isaac alone.[62] This is not a case then, of either the patriarch or the matriarch being the dominant partner, but rather of a partnership where each subject brings their own strengths to the relationship. Though Crumb's remediation leans towards Rebekah as a central figure, Isaac's role is not downplayed. There is a visual difference here with the narrative of Sarah and Abraham, where Abraham is continuously portrayed as a quiet, passive and secondary character.

Other feminist scholars such as Exum do not read the story of Rebekah, or the matriarchs, in this light. Instead, Exum argues that the matriarchs are bound to play a secondary role to their husbands by the patriarchal setting, and the patriarchally skewed scribes and redactors who tell their stories.[63] Exum has highlighted stories between Gen. 11 and 35 to show where the matriarchs appear and where their function as characters progresses the narrative; however, she notes that their inclusion in the narrative is not to be read as evidence of their importance to the text: "[r]ather, the matriarchs step forward in the service of an androcentric agenda, and once they have served their purpose, they disappear until such time, if any, they might again prove useful."[64] In Rebekah's case in Gen. 25, the only highlighted portion concerns her infertility, falling pregnant, enquiry to God and giving birth. Her love for Jacob is also noted. The rest of the narrative concerns her husband or sons, and so is in line with Exum.

Seeing the portions of the text associated with Rebekah highlighted in this way (itself a form of text–image narrative, where the emboldening of the text acts as a visual code to the reader)[65] is persuasive. However, while the secondary role/status of the matriarchs in Genesis can be attributed to both patriarchal scribes, and centuries of patriarchal-based scholarship further obscuring their roles, I do not fully agree with Exum's analysis on Rebekah's story. While it is true that Rebekah's character is used to further Isaac's role as patriarch by providing him with children, and that God's intervention in her fertility issue is a narrative tool to mark her children in the same trope as the hero (thus casting her in the role of the hero's mother),[66] there is evidence of autonomy in the story which cannot be overlooked. Rebekah's decision to visit with God and enquire of him is one such example in her pregnancy narrative; other examples are apparent in the role she plays as mother to Jacob and Esau, ensuring her favourite Jacob receives the blessing from Isaac (27:1–40), for example, and the way in which she dictates the terms of Jacob's future marriage (27:46–28:3).

Most scholarship on Rebekah is less concerned with the problem of her infertility than her eventual giving birth to "two nations." In this respect, Rebekah is a vessel for narratives concerning Jacob and Esau, but mostly the former who inherits the role of patriarch in Genesis. Her role of mother is important, but mostly because it is Rebekah who takes control of Jacob's destiny, encouraging him to trick Isaac and take the blessing from Esau. The Jacob/Esau blessing narrative is an example of ultimogeniture, which, Teubal argues, is a principle followed in matriarchal traditions. While emphasis is mostly on the sons in Rebekah's narrative in biblical scholarship, scholars do identify the following three points as important in the narratives of Gen. 25:19–28: (1) narratively speaking, less time is spent on the issue of Rebekah's

62 Fuchs, "Literary Characterisations of Mothers," 130.
63 Exum, *Fragmented Women*, 70–5.
64 Ibid., 71.
65 Saraceni, *The Language of Comics*, 18–21.
66 See: Campbell, *Hero with a Thousand Faces*; Brenner-Idan, *The Israelite Women*, 92–8.

fertility than Sarah, Rachel and Leah; (2) unlike Sarah, Rachel and Leah, Rebekah does not resort to concubinage to overcome the problem of barrenness; and (3) God intercedes quickly after Isaac prays for a resolution, granting his prayer. Again, little attention is paid to the potential of Rebekah as high priestess, in the manner of Teubal since it has been widely disparaged.

While her procreative role is the main function of Rebekah's character in the Genesis narratives (as with Sarah and Rachel/Leah), Crumb has chosen to broaden their functions while simultaneously emphasising their biological roles as mothers. As with Sarah in Gen. 18:1–15 and 21:1–12, Crumb has presented Rebekah as an autonomous, controlling woman who, in the text–image, is equal to, if not more important than, her husband. However, unlike Sarah, Rebekah is not presented as desperate for children. That is Isaac's role in *Genesis, Illustrated*, and highlighted by Crumb's composition of panels, textual choices and graphic design.

6 Summary and conclusions

The overriding portrayal of Rebekah in Crumb's remediation of Genesis is, like Sarah, a woman who is dominant, powerful and in control. Visual and textual analyses of her story in relation to motherhood and of her role as wife present her as a character who is strong-willed (e.g. her confidence in leaving the family home to meet and marry Isaac) but also confident in her relationship with God. Though it is Isaac who prays to God on Rebekah's behalf, it is Rebekah who seeks advice from God, and it is Rebekah who hears she is carrying twins, not Isaac.

Isaac is portrayed as a passive character in the panels of Crumb's remediation. Though he intercedes on his wife's behalf, he is not part of the panels where Rebekah seeks advice from God, nor the panels where she gives birth to their sons (though this is perhaps not particularly significant since Crumb has not included any men in scenes of childbirth throughout the rest of the comic book). His introduction to his newborn sons takes place with him on the ground, eating food, while Rebekah and her midwife maintain a position elevated above him. The juxtaposition of Isaac's passivity with Rebekah's activity in seeking help, and in her physical state of pregnancy and birth against his passive seated position, emphasise the strength and power of Rebekah and diminish Isaac's status in the eyes of the reader.

The issue of infertility is treated differently in these panels compared to Sarah. Rebekah, though barren, is never shown to be emotionally or physically upset by her infertility and that is because the text does not allow for such an exegesis. Instead, the reader is expected to fill in the gap between Isaac's prayer to God and the consecutive panel of Rebekah heavily pregnant. That she appears alone, surrounded by stars which have the dual purpose of acting as a cartoon indicator of pain and which give the image an ethereal quality, is poignant. I argue that this single panel is the strongest indication in the entirety of Crumb's *Genesis, Illustrated* of the influence of Teubal's hypothesis that Rebekah, like Sarah, came from a high priestess, matriarchal tradition.[67] At the very least, when this panel is read with the next panel of Rebekah speaking with the divine, the visual coding and language implies Rebekah was of important status.

However, we must remember the claim that Crumb's *Genesis, Illustrated* is a "word-for-word" illustration of Genesis. The text alone does not support the idea that Rebekah is a matriarchal leader in her society; rather, the accompanying images forefront that narrative as described above. The visual commentary is then a modern exegesis on the text of the Bible which incorporates external sources as well as the biblical text which challenge traditional interpretations more broadly. The marriage of text and

67 In an interview which appeared as an appendix of this author's PhD thesis, Crumb states that Teubal's hypothesis is in his eyes, irrefutable and that therefore it was natural to him to depict the matriarchs of Genesis in the manner in which he did, "I believe that I simply portrayed them [the matriarchs] as they are in the original text. They are very dominant personalities." See Domoney-Lyttle, "Appendix A: Interview with R. Crumb," 196–7.

image is key to contextualising biblical characters like Rebekah and Isaac in different lights, and as such, comic books as a medium are well placed to reframe and, in some cases, rewrite biblical stories which can encourage scholars and other readers to view stories afresh. In this example, that means Rebekah is represented to the reader as a leader in her narrative, a figure intrinsic to the propulsion and direction of the story rather than a secondary character to her husband as some scholars might suggest.

Furthermore, the very nature of comic books as "low" culture, as unworthy of serious and rigorous study (until recently) means they are well-positioned to "undercut the monopolisation" of traditional scholarship.[68] As noted in the introduction, biblical comic books and other alternative or non-traditional methods of retelling biblical stories can challenge established practices of biblical interpretation and may therefore open the text up to more creative interpretations which are not so restrained by traditional approaches of reading the Bible. However, it should be noted that this is not true *only* of comic books and that other media exist which have both attempted and achieved similar challenges to traditional biblical criticism, and comic books have certainly drawn from a varied history of such subversion and challenge to the Bible. This short case study of Rebekah's story has demonstrated how, even when showing fidelity to the text in the case of Crumb, the inclusion of images can encourage readers to draw different conclusions about characters and narratives than text alone allows. In this respect, biblical comic books can and do open the text to fresh interpretations, representations of identity and, ultimately, challenge traditional, androcentric, conservative and hierarchical readings of the Bible.

References

Alderman, Isaac M., and Alderman, Christina L. "Graphically Depicted: Biblical Texts in Comic Form." *ARTS: The Arts in Religious and Theological Studies* 22:4 (2011), 22–36. Accessed June 20, 2020. https://www.academia.edu/1499853/Graphically_Depicted_Biblical_texts_in_comic_form.

Alter, Robert. *Genesis: Translation and Commentary*. London: W. W. Norton, 1996.

Arnold, Andrew D. "R. Crumb Speaks." TIME. Accessed June 19, 2020. http://content.time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,1055105-1,00.html.

Beal, Timothy. "Reception History and Beyond: Towards the Cultural History of Scriptures." *Biblical Interpretation* 19 (2011): 367–72.

Beal, Timothy. *The Rise and Fall of the Bible: The Unexpected History of an Accidental Book*. New York: Mariner Books, 2012.

Bennett, Tony, ed. *Outrageous Tales from the Old Testament*. London: Knockabout Comics, 1987.

Brenner-Idan, Athalya. *The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative*. London: T&T Clark/Bloomsbury, 2015.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. London: Fontana Press, 1993.

Carvalho, Corrine. *Primer on Biblical Methods*. Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2009.

Crumb, Robert. *The Book of Genesis, Illustrated*. London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009.

Domoney-Lyttle, Zanne. "Drawing (non)Tradition: Matriarchs, Motherhood and the Presentation of Sacred Text in *The Book of Genesis, Illustrated by R. Crumb*. PhD Dissertation, University of Glasgow, 2018.

Eisner, Will. *Comics and Sequential Art: Principles and Practices from the Legendary Cartoonist*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2008.

Exum, J. Cheryl. *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)versions of Biblical Narratives*. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016.

Flood, Michael. "Pro-feminist men and pro-feminist men's politics". Accessed May 16, 2020. http://xyonline.net/content/frequently-asked-questions-about-pro-feminist-men-and-pro-feminist-mens-politics.

Fuchs, Esther. "Literary Characterization of Mothers and Sexual Politics in the Hebrew Bible." In *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader*, edited by Alice Bach, 127–40. London: Routledge, 1999.

Gross, Peter, and Millar, Mark. *American Jesus Volume One: Chosen*. Berkeley: Image Comics, 2009.

Groth, Gary. "Robert Crumb – Live Online: The Interview That Didn't Happen." The Comics Journal. Accessed June 28, 2020. http://www.tcj.com/crumb-and-groth-live-online/.

Gunkel, Hermann. *The Stories of Genesis*. Oakland, CA: BIBal Press, 1994.

Gunn, David M. "Cultural Criticism: Viewing the Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter." In *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, 2nd edn, edited by Gale A. Yee, 202–36. Minneapolis MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2007.

68 Alderman and Alderman, "Graphically Depicted," 22.

Hignite, Todd. *In The Studio: Visits with Contemporary Cartoonists*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.
Kissileff, Beth. "The Matter is from God": Retold Narrative and the Mistakes of Certainty." In *Reading Genesis: Beginnings*, edited by Beth Kissileff, 151–68. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.
Maddox, Mike, and Anderson, Jeff. *The Lion Graphic Bible: The Whole Story from Genesis to Revelation*. Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2004.
Mauss, Doug and Cariello, Sergio. *The Action Bible: God's Redemptive Story*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.
McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1993.
Miller, Ann. *Reading Bande Dessinée: Critical Approaches to French-language Comic Strip*. Chicago: Intellect Books, 2007.
NPR. "Genesis: R. Crumb illustrates the Bible." Accessed May 30, 2020. http://www.npr.org/2009/11/02/120022241/genesis-r-crumb-illustrates-the-bible.
Pearl, Michael, Avery, Ben, Ayris, Art, and Bulanadi, Danny. *The Kingstone Bible*. Fruitland Park: Kingstone Media, 2011.
Pillario, Simon Amadeus. "The Word for Word Bible Comic". Accessed May 11, 2020. http://www.wordforwordbiblecomic.com.
Saraceni, Mario. *The Language of Comics*. London: Routledge, 2003.
Speiser, E. A. "Genesis." In *The Anchor Bible*. New York: Doubleday, 1964.
Teubal, Savina J. *Sarah the Priestess: The First Matriarch of Genesis*. Ohio: Swallow Press, 1984.
Waid, Mark, and Ross, Alex. *Kingdom Come*. Burbank: DC Comics, 1996.
White, Hugh C. *Narration and Discourse in the Book of Genesis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
Widmer, Ted. "R. Crumb, The Art of Comics No. 1." The Paris Review. Accessed June 21, 2020. http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/6017/the-art-of-comics-no-1-r-crumb.
Winschluss. *In God We Trust*. London: Knockabout, 2014.
Wolverton, Basil. *The Wolverton Bible: The Old Testament & Book of Revelation Through the Pen of Basil Wolverton*, compiled by Monte Wolverton. Washington: Fantagraphic Books, 2010.
ZipComic.com. "Read Online the Book of Genesis Illustrated Comic – Issue TPB (Part 1)". Accessed June 26, 2020, https://www.zipcomic.com/the-book-of-genesis-illustrated-issue-tpb-part-1.