

NARRATIVES ABOUT RAPED AND ABDUCTED WOMEN IN THE BIBLE AS A SOURCE FOR RESEARCH ON RAPTUS PUELLAE IN POLISH LITERATURE FROM THE 16TH TO 18TH CENTURIES¹

Monika **Szymańska**, University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland,
monika.szafranska@us.edu.pl

Original scientific paper
DOI: 10.31902/fil.54.2026.5

Apstrakt: Rape is a phenomenon present in many discourses: legal, social, psychological, religious, and artistic. We can also observe it from a philological perspective. It is also a theme deeply rooted in culture, dating back to classical and biblical traditions. Representations of rape and abduction in the Bible and Greek and Roman literature become a literary-cultural background for research on *raptus puellae* theme in European literature of the Early Modern Age. Researching Polish literature from the 16th to 18th century, the paper focuses on the Polish translations of the Bible from the 16th to 17th century (Leopolita, Brzeska, Jakub Wujek, Gdańska). The analysis raises questions as to whether and how the narratives of rape or abduction have changed in individual translations of the Bible, how abduction and rape are presented in these narratives, and whether it has any connection with later representations of this theme in Old Polish literature. We can also see how the descriptions of individual rape cases in the Bible are influenced by the “meeting” of the concept of rape, language, and literary conventions.

Keywords: *Raptus puellae*, rape, abduction, rape and abduction in the Bible, violence against women, rape in old-Polish literature

1. Introduction – Various Research Perspectives, References, and Introductory Remarks on the Rape in the Bible

Since the dawn of European culture, rape has always been one of its essential phenomena. This topic is widely known, and we have become accustomed to it. Rape remains a subject of interest for many branches

¹ This paper has been written under the research project Preludium 37 (entitled “*Raptus puellae* – between life and literature. An unknown poem from a *silva rerum* by Alexander Minor, Cupbearer of Chelm, as a new source to the literary tradition of rape”), no. 2020/37/N/HS2/03660 financed from the funds of the National Science Centre, Poland.

of academic study: law, social science, religion, and psychology, as well as for art and literature. Reflection on the literature of the past gives us an insight into the contemporary world, its problems, culture, and history. It lets us think about current issues concerning the past and its paradigms. In my PhD dissertation, *Raptus puellae in the 16th–18th-century Polish literature. Between life and literature* (Szafrńska, 2025), I focus exclusively on the issue of Polish “rapt”, a term which derives from the Latin *raptus puellae* and refers to the abduction of a maiden. However, to be specific, the definitions of Latin *raptus* and *rapio*, -ere include various kinds of sexual violence against women, not only abduction but also rape (*Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 1573–1574). The European culture offers a wide range of representations of rape, but the tradition defines the smallest sample of literary text about it, and it is a part of it. Rape is a theme deeply rooted in culture, dating back to the classical and biblical traditions.

In this paper, I will outline the issue of rape, limiting myself to the Bible. In my analysis, I use the principal Polish translations of the Bible from the 16th to 17th centuries: Leopolita’s Bible (1561), catholic translation; the Brzeska Bible (1563), evangelical translation; the Jakub Wujek Bible (1599), catholic translation; and the Gdańska Bible (1632), evangelical translation. Polish translations differ slightly in the moments describing the rape and the victim, which seems interesting; however, I just point it out in the notes, as a linguistic perspective is not the subject of my paper. Being aware of these slight differences in nomenclature – for instance, in one of the passages discussed, the main female character may be called a wife or a concubine – allows us to better find our way around the studies on rape in the Bible, which usually give a single, up-to-date version of the record. It also allows us to notice how the ways of talking about rape have changed, what attention has been paid to, and what has been omitted while translating the passages.

The interest of English-speaking scholars (this topic is not yet recognised in Polish literary studies) while analysing biblical narratives of rape focuses on three representations – the story of Dinah (Gen 34), the concubine of the Levite (Judg 19-20) and Tamar (2 Sam 13). Scholars read the passages from a multi-methodological perspective, for instance, gynocentric hermeneutic, intertextuality, and narrative criticism, but mainly from a literary-feminist perspective (See, e.g., Tribble, 1984; Freedman, 1990; Bechtel, 1994; Washington et al., 1998; Fuchs, 2000; Frymer-Kensky, 2002; Bader, 2006; Yamada, 2008; Blyth, 2010; Cooper-White, 2012; Feinstein, 2014; Scholz, 2010, 2017; Rediger Schulte, 2017). A careful and critical reading of the literature on rape in the Bible leads to an important conclusion that the literary-feminist

perspective can, at times, lead to particular dangers for analysis and interpretation:

[...] feminist interpreters have tended to focus on the experience of women within these texts, rising issues that revolve around the lives of women. [...] Modern understandings of rape emphasize that it is an act of power and sexual violence done against the will of another. Such an understanding has affected the ways in which biblical scholars, especially feminist biblical scholars, have understood rape in the Bible (Yamada, 12).

A woman-centred approach is valid, but we should take care not to allow the today's perspective and understanding of sexual violence to obscure the perception of sexual violence by society in biblical times when such events occurred. As far as my research is concerned, Leah Rediger Schulte's study is significant, as she is the only one who distinguishes common elements of biblical rape narratives:

The four elements of biblical rape include: the *absence* of God; the *presence* of a foreigner or outsider as rapist, victim, or collaborator; and a *persistent problem* throughout each book that is *resolved incorrectly* with increased violence (Rediger Schulte, 69).

As a common element of the passages discussed in this article, one can certainly also mention, for example, that the assault was always preceded by the victim leaving her safe place. This detail is equally important in the case of research on the *raptus puellae* literary texts of various literary genres, such as romance.² If we consider the Bible from the point of view of the *raptus puellae* tradition in the sense of both rape and abduction, it turns out that there are more such passages, not only the three narratives discussed by scholars.

2. Abduction and Rape in the Bible – An Overview of Examples

When we think about the Old Testament in terms of rape and abduction, the fundamental question is: How many and what examples can the reader find? Biblical references to the rape – with one exception from Acts 8:3 – appear only in the books of the Old Testament.³ Of the

² In my dissertation, I observe it on the example of Polish Baroque romances from the 16th to the 1st half of the 18th century.

³ Gen 31:26, Gen 34, Ex 21:16, Deut 20:14, Deut 21:10-14, Deut 22:23-29, Judg 19-20:6, Judg 21, 1Sam 30:3-6, 2Sam 13, 2Chr 28:8 and 29:9, Jdt 4:12 and 9:4,

twenty-eight such passages in the entire Bible,⁴ sixteen refer in general to the war slavery, collective abduction into slavery.⁵ For instance, in the First Book of Maccabees 1:32, we read that women and children were taken captive and cattle were requisitioned; in Genesis 31:26, we learn about the abduction of daughters as prisoners of war, whereas in Judith 4:12, the people of Israel begged God not to allow their children to be abducted. Their wives were not to be treated as spoils of war. Rapes, like those described in the verses above, tend to be merely mentioned in the Bible as one of the elements of battles and wars but never described in detail. These examples relate to yet another broad topic, present both in literature and in other fields: rape and abduction as committed by a soldier. There are about a few to a dozen verses on the topic that generally refer to the actions of the Israelites, including the law, its observance or breaking, as well as presenting rape as a sin, for example, in Deuteronomy 21:10-14, describing how to deal in a case of bride abduction, and then in Deuteronomy 22:13-29, where the issue of adultery is discussed. The nature of the actions against the victim's will is what verses from Deuteronomy have in common. The specific consequences for the guilty party result from the circumstances in which the kidnapping/abduction and rape take place – while a rapist can dismiss war slavery, he cannot abandon a virgin married as a result of rape. Elements such as screaming as the victim's protest against the violator's intentions and an attempt to call for help, as well as the field as a place far from home and dangerous for a woman exposed to violence from a man, are also characteristic of the second example. These details prove to be important when analysing examples relating to the abduction and rape of a woman.

Among the Old Testament passages, there are also four that present specific stories of violence against women. These are the stories of Dinah (Gen 34), the wife of the Levite (Judg 19-20), the virgins of the tribe of Shiloh (Judg 21), and Tamar (2 Sam 13). The story of Dinah is part of Genesis, representing the earliest stage of Israel's history and the

Est 7:8, 1Macc 1:32, 1Macc 5:13, 1Macc 8:10, Ps 106:46, Isa 13:16, Isa 49:21, Jer 50:33, Jer 52:27-28, Lam 5:11, Ezek 22:10-11, Dan 13, Obad 1:11.

⁴ Gen 31:26, Gen 34, Ex 21:16, Deut 20:14, Deut 21:10-14, Deut 22:23-29, Judg 19-20:6, Judg 21, 1Sam 30:3-6, 2Sam 13, 2Chr 28:8 and 29:9, Jdt 4:12 and 9:4, Est 7:8, 1Macc 1:32, 1Macc 5:13, 1Macc 8:10, Ps 106:46, Isa 13:16, Isa 49:21 Jer 50:33, Jer 52:27-28, Lam 5:11, Ezek 22:10-11, Dan 13, Obad 1:11, Acts 8:3.

⁵ Gen 31:26, Deut 20:14, Deut 21:10-14, 1Sam 30:3-6, 2Chr 28:8, 2Chr 29:9, Jdt 4:12, Jdt 9:4, 1Macc 1:32, 1Macc 5:13, 1Macc 8:10, Ps 106:46 Isa 49:21, Jer 50:33, Jer 52:27-28, Obad 1:11, Acts 8:3.

formation of law (*Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu...*, 17). The passages about the Levite's wife and the girls of Shiloh are included in the appendix to Judges, which contains two examples relating to the internal history of the Danites and Benjamites tribes. According to the book's assumptions, they present a picture of the religious-political relations of the Israelite community – moral decay, superstition, and intertribal conflicts (*Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu...*, 228–229). It is a society which has fallen into chaos and violence. Women are vulnerable and unprotected (Rediger Schulte, 50). The narrative of Tamar is part of the Second Book of Samuel, which reconstructs the history of the early monarchy and presents the impact of David's reign on the theocratic structure of the Israelite community, its religiosity, and transformations (*Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu...*, 257). The background for the examples is selected moments in the history of the Israelites and their relationship with Yahweh, which remains in a deepening crisis. The abduction and rape of Dina are meant to draw the reader's attention to the relationship between firstly, the girl and her relatives (especially male relatives); secondly, her family and those of her rapist; thirdly, men; fourthly, the rapists and victims, and finally the communities of Israelites and non-Israelites. On the other hand, passages from Judges 19–21 conclude the cycles of alternating believers turning away from God, defeats and failures they experienced due to rejecting Him, and finally, the Israelites' pleas for forgiveness, ending with God's mercy and help (Rediger Schulte, 50).

In these narratives, violence against women is one of the concrete signs of a deteriorating relationship with God. It manifests itself in various ways: the maidens of Shiloh were abducted, the Levite wife and Tamar were raped, and Dinah was abducted and raped. Among the fragments, the one about the virgins from the tribe of Shiloh stands out because it is the only one that implements the assumptions of *raptus puellae* – it is abduction for marriage. The Old Testament examples of violence against women take on a narrative form in which assault is one of the following elements of the cause-and-effect chain. Although sexual violence against women is not the subject of the narrative, it turns out to be a critical point in any story, bringing out and emphasising its meaning. When rape and abduction are at the centre of the story, we can divide them into three parts – before, during, and after the assault, and they differ in length depending on when the theme of violence appears. The first part has an introductory function – the narrator presents the individual characters, explains their relationships, and places them in a specific situational context (Bader, 123). At this point, the pursuit of the narrative's climax – the act of violence – begins. The

second part consists of a story about the moment of the assault and the circumstances in which it occurred. The third part of the narrative consists of: the reaction of the characters to the abduction and rape and the direct consequences of the assault, presented from two perspectives: a narrow perspective (immediate, concerning the characters, especially the victim and the rapist) and a broad perspective (long-term, showing the impact of the act on the history of the Israelites).

3. Narratives about Rape and Abduction – Characteristic Elements

The absence of Yahweh remains common to the presented narratives, especially since, in the remaining chapters of the books, he may be an active or a passive hero (his name is invoked). The absence of God allows the other characters to come to the fore – their actions show the state of the Israelites' relationship with the Creator. Of all the heroines, only Dina and Tamar are introduced by name. The victims – the maiden is not just the Levite's wife – are introduced at various points in the narrative. The story of Dinah is recounted from the viewpoints of society and family (Frymer-Kensky, 179). It begins *in medias res* when Jacob and his household reach the city of Shechem in the land of Canaan from Paddan-Aram and settle nearby, buying a field belonging to the sons of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of that land (Gen 34:2-4). Shechem, the son of Hamor and a prince fell in love with Dinah, abducted her, and raped her. Was the event described in Genesis 34 a rape, as some scholars ask, or was it love? The Vulgate provides a clear answer: "Shechem [...] adamavit eam: et rapuit, et dormivit cum illa, vi opprimens virginem" (*Biblia Sacra juxta Vulgatam Clementiam*, 31); we can translate it: Shechem fell in love with Dinah, abducted her, and raped her. *Opprimo*, -ere refers to violence. It may denote "crush, strangle, take by surprise, attack or conquer." The Vulgate also says his soul bonded with her and soothed her sadness. Then, we can learn of his plan to marry her.⁶ Dina significantly disappears from the narrative

⁶ The narration about Dinah appears in each of the old Polish translations. In the catholic translations, Dinah is depicted as the daughter of Leah, while in the evangelical translations, Dinah is the daughter of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob. In fact, Jacob is an active protagonist in the narrative. The mother does not make an appearance and her name appears only at the beginning for informative purposes. In each of the translations, it is indicated in different words that Dinah had been raped (*he slept with her; he had raped the maiden; abused her; he had raped their sister*). In the translations, the reader may notice

immediately after the rape, becoming only a character recalled in the background – not by name, but as a sister or daughter. Her feelings about the situation and the prince are also unknown, while Shechem's feelings and intentions remain public. As a result of the rape, Dina's father loses her virginity, which is the only asset that would allow her daughter to marry correctly. The perspective of the raped woman turns out to be irrelevant to the narrative because, in society's understanding, she is not the real victim:

The fact that rape was a serious violation of the woman's bodily and sexual integrity [...] appears to have been of little concern within the world view of biblical Israel; women [...] had no legal claim to sexual self-determination and consequently no right to consent or withhold consent to sexual intercourse (Blyth, 113).

Sexually assaulting an unmarried woman is a crime seen as a violation of her father's property. In Bible times, virginity was treated as a valuable "commodity/good" owned by a male relative. The "theft" of this commodity, even if replaced by some form of reparation, would not erase the disgrace because the undermined authority of male relatives can no longer be restored – they are seen as those who cannot effectively protect the integrity of the women in their care (Blyth, 112–113). Shechem leads to the extreme by abduction and rape – the maiden remains at his mercy, and the only reasonable solution is for her guardian to agree to the marriage. In this case, marriage would be the act of uniting two different groups and forming a covenant, but there is no marriage.

The reader also meets the Levite's wife at the beginning of the narrative, when her husband takes her away from her father's house (Judg 19:1-2). He is portrayed as a man who married a native of Bethlehem. However, his wife, guilty of adultery, left him and returned to live with her father for four months. The Levite comes for her after four months because only after this time is it possible to determine

that Shechem first saw the maiden. Hence, we may analyse the case, taking into account the presence of *quinque gradus amoris* topos, according to which the first step to love (perhaps to love understood in a different way) is a gaze. There is also a difference between the translations – in the catholic translations, the sequence of events is presented as follows: Shechem sees Dinah, falls in love with her, kidnaps her, and rapes her. Then he falls in love again and tries to arouse love in Dinah. In the evangelical translations, the information that Shechem fell in love appears only after the rape of the maiden.

whether a woman is pregnant after committing adultery. This symbolic, tiring journey and the abandonment of her husband can also refer to the entire Judges – they remind us of the struggles of the Israelites who rejected God and tried to control their destiny, ultimately plunging into chaos and crime. The wife's previous actions, morally fallen (like the entire nation of Israel) and guilty of adultery, set in motion a course of events that ultimately leads to rape, death, and, more broadly, war.

Tamar begins a new episode in David's story (2 Sam 13:1-2).⁷ The narrator introduces the main characters, outlines their relationship, and explains why they triggered the events. Tamar is David's daughter, Absalom's sister, and Amnon's half-sister (by another mother). From the beginning, the reader's attention is directed to Amnon's character. The reader can observe the unfolding of events from the perspective of the rapist, which is a unique narrative strategy. A man first looks at a girl and then falls in love with her. The narrator tries to see Tamar through the eyes of her half-brother – he describes her as beautiful, but her beauty puts her in danger. Chaos introduces the emerging motif of illness and madness out of love, which indicates the sexual context. Amnon plans to get closer to his sister but runs into an obstacle. Tamar is a protected property, inaccessible to men, and as a virgin, she lives in a house intended exclusively for women. It can be said that the heroine is between two brothers, Absalom, who protects her, and Amnon, David's firstborn, who plans to rape her.

The most minor information about the rape victims appears in the narrative of the virgins of Shiloh – the story does not need such detail, especially since there are four hundred virgins. The only thing that remains relevant in this case is the cause, as mentioned above, and the purpose of the abduction – an extension of the dying tribe.

The abduction and rape of Dina occur in the very first sentences of the fragment and becomes the actual beginning of the plot. Essential for the narrative's development are the woman's male relatives. Jacob, Dina's father, is a passive and mute character throughout the narrative, allowing events to occur beyond him (Blyth, 110–111). When he learns that his daughter has been raped, he does not react in any way, waiting for his sons to return from the field and then wholly surrender to their actions. The narrator presents Jacob's character in such a way that it is as if he is not interested in his daughter's situation but only in his reputation (Blyth, 117). He speaks only once, at the very end of the

⁷ Although the story of Tamar does not appear in the Leopolita's Bible, the other translations remain consistent, regarding the sequence of events as well as the protagonists' names.

story, accusing his sons of having brought misfortune upon him – the hatred of the Canaanites, who at any moment could attack him and kill Jacob's family. The only active characters whose decisions lead to defeat are Dina's brothers. Hamor, Shechem's father, and his sons respond to Shechem's request with a proposal to resolve the problematic situation (Gen 34:8-12). He asks that Dinah be given to be Shechem's wife because he loves her. He also wants to unite the two peoples by giving each other women as wives and thus sharing land ownership and other opportunities that may arise from this type of exchange and union of tribes, e.g., trade. Dinah's brothers are emotionally acting protagonists (Blyth, 120), from the beginning, very moved by the disgrace that has befallen their family, especially since Shechem is not an Israelite ("uncircumcised"), so in the act of revenge, they commit a ruse that ends up leading to tragedy. Most likely, they are also acting in their self-interest, not wanting to allow intermarriage with non-Israelite women. They understand the idea of exchange in the opposite way to Hamor, which is why they deceive the Shechemites and make a false covenant, asking that all the men of Shechem be circumcised. When Hamor fulfils his contract, they raid the city, kill all the men, take the women and children into slavery, and rob the houses. Dina, Shechem, and Hamor are open toward outsiders, while the heroine's brothers are oriented toward their closed group. Whether there was rape or not, premarital sex disrupted the functioning of both groups and violated their boundaries.

Other acts of violence are introduced at the peak of the development of the presented narratives – the Levite and his wife are forced to spend the night in a strange, lawless city during their journey. At the same time, Tamar and the maidens of Shiloh fall into a trap set by the rapist according to the plan known to the reader. Perhaps the rapes would not have happened if the men had not made bad decisions. The Levite sets out on her journey in the evening instead of in the morning, rejecting the offer of the woman's father, who tries to delay the departure by offering another overnight stay. In the course of the journey, the servant asks to stop for the night in the city of Jebus, but the Levite also refuses (Judg 19:12). This is a clear signal to the reader because it is in the city of Israel, which is supposed to be a safe place, where rape will take place. When they finally reach Gibeah, where the Benjamites live, they stop at the home of another newcomer, who, like the Levite, comes from the south, from Mount Ephraim. However, the Benjamites knock on the door of the house with a demand to "know" the Levite, which translates in the context of a desire for sexual violence. The older man refuses to let his guest get hurt, so he offers his virgin

daughter and the Levite's wife in return. He describes the very possibility of male-male rape as an indignity – it would be a disgrace if a man visiting someone's home were raped like a woman (Rediger Schulte, 43). He also excludes the young servant from possible sacrifices. The Levite and the farmer lead the women outside, each for whom he is responsible, but the narrator directs the reader's attention solely to his wife. The gang rape of the Levite's wife and the farmer's daughter takes place throughout the night, which is a perilous time when help is hard to come by (Judg 19:25-27). The situation was as follows: The attackers did not want to listen to the man, so he took his concubine/wife outside, gave her into their hands, and let them do whatever they wanted with her. The men raped the woman all night and left at sunrise, leaving her behind. She came to the farmer's house and fell. As the Levite went out to continue his journey, he found a woman lying with her hands on the threshold of the door. The threshold separating the interior from the square could symbolise the space between the safety of the home and the danger of the outside. The narrator does not indicate whether the woman is still alive when her husband, refreshed and rested, unlike her, finds her in the morning.⁸ Her hands, resting on the threshold, could suggest, however, that at the beginning of the day, she crossed the line between life and death, and from that moment on, she is safe in the house of God (Rediger Schulte, 44–45). It is worth taking a closer look at the figure of the Levite – he is a member belonging to the Israelite tribe

⁸ In the catholic translations, the chapter begins with a verse depicting the figure of a Levite, that here was a man, Levite, whose home was deep in the highlands of Ephraim. In the evangelical translations, this sequence is preceded by information about the time and place of the events – the interregnum period in Israel. We also learn a bit more about the female protagonist of the story by comparing the catholic and evangelical translations. In the catholic one, information is provided according to which Levite took a wife who later left him and returned to his father's house. In the evangelical ones, he married a concubine who later committed adultery and returned to his father's house. The Levite (living in the north) goes to reconcile with his unnamed wife to Bethlehem (in the south), to her father's house. Further translation divergences appear at a critical moment of the action when a resident of Gibeath offers accommodation to the protagonists. In the catholic translations, the men demand that the guest should go out because they want to assault and rape him or do whatever they want with him. The host calls it madness and a shameful act. However, according to the evangelical translations, the men demanded that the Levite be released in front of the house because they wanted to get to know him. The host sees anger, inconsistency and lewdness in their intentions.

of priests – his ancestors avenged the rape of Dinah. Meanwhile, the protagonist of the narrative not only lies but also does not prevent rape, he allows it. When he discovers that his wife is dead,⁹ he puts her on a donkey and continues his journey, then cuts the woman's body into twelve pieces, sending them to all parts of Israel (Rediger Schulte, 35). He conceals his involvement when the Israelites ask him what happened at Gibeah. At last, he says that the people of Gibeah came at night to kill him and that they raped his wife so brutally that she died. So, the Levite cut her body into pieces, which he sent to all the lands of Israel, showing what a shameful thing those men had done (Judg 20:5-6). This leads not only to war but also to the destruction of the four hundred virgins of Shiloh. The Israelites, having conquered the Benjamites, swear to Jahweh that none of them would give his daughter as a wife to the Benjamite. However, lest the tribe of Benjamin is extinct, they attack the inhabitants of Jabesh, taking the virgins captive and giving them as wives to the Benjamites. There are too few women, so during the Feast of Tabernacles, more of the maidens of Shiloh are abducted. They commanded the Benjamites to hide in the vineyards and watch, and when the virgins of Shiloh gathered to dance, they kidnapped them. In this way, each would have one wife for himself, with whom he would return to the land of Benjamin. They also decreed that when their fathers or brothers came for the virgins, they were to answer them that these women were neither war captives nor maidens given as wives by their guardians. Thus, the guardians of the abductees would not be guilty of failing to take care of them. The Benjamites did as they were told—they abducted the virgins, returned to their land, built cities, and dwelt in them (Judg 21:20-23). As it is the closest to the meaning of *raptus puellae*, this narrative remains the story of the Abduction of the Sabine Women by the Romans. Both the Romans and the Benjaminites abducted the virgins to become their wives. The goal was

⁹ Researchers raise questions about the woman's precarious condition and debate whether or not she was found alive by the Levite. The catholic translations indicate the following sequence of events: the woman falls to the floor by the door, the Levite finds her and thinks she is asleep, he asks her to get up, she does not answer, he realises that she is dead, he takes her home on a donkey and then cuts her body into twelve parts. The evangelical translations omit the element indicating the death of the woman: she collapses by the door, he finds her, and asks her to get up she does not answer, so the Levite carries her on a donkey and dismembers her body. The condition of Levite's wife is not described.

obvious: for the lack of women, their tribes would not have survived otherwise as no children were born.

A key element in the narrative of Tamar is Amnon's acceptance of the bad advice of Jonadab, David's nephew described as a cunning friend and made the fateful decision to deceive both his father and Tamar and lure her straight into the rapist's chamber. The manipulations of Amnon, pretending to be ill, lead the father and sister to act according to his wishes – King David sends Tamar to prepare a meal for him in his presence. The fact that the characters believe in the possible improvement of the prince's health after eating a meal prepared and served by his sister indicates their naivety. However, obedient to her father, the girl leaves the safety of the space – the home she shared with the other women – and goes to Amnon, falling into an ambush. The narrator presents the reader with a range of elements that immediately precede the rape – the prince asks for possible witnesses while remaining alone with his sister and asks her to serve a meal in the bedroom. When Tamar gives her brother food, he grabs her and tells her to "lie down" with him. When the sister refuses and asks him not to do such violence to her and to give up this madness, she asks how she could remove the shame of a raped woman and tells Amnon that he will be seen as insane in Israel. She asks him to speak to King David first, as he would not refuse her hand. However, Amnon does not listen to Tamar and decides to rape her against her will. Immediately after the rape, he feels more disgust and hatred for his sister than affection. He orders her to get up and throws her out the door. She says that Amnon is doing even worse by getting rid of her after being raped, but he does not react. He orders the servant to throw the woman out and close the door behind her. The servant does as Amnon commands and throws Tamar out. She sprinkles dust on her head, tears her royal dress, puts her hands on her head, and walks screaming (2 Sam 13:10-19).

A characteristic behaviour of women who are to be raped is that they leave their home – a safe place: Dina goes to the field. The Levite's wife and the host's daughter spend the night on the streets of a crime-ridden city because of the guardians' decision; Tamar finds herself in Amnon's bedroom. Victims at the time of the assault and after are passive. Their screams will not be heard because either the time or the place of the attack is not conducive to rescue. Only Tamar tries but makes unsuccessful attempts to influence her situation and, to avoid being raped, offers Amnon possible solutions. Only in this narrative does the reader listen to a conversation between the violator and the victim, in which the violator is in a superior relationship. If Amnon had listened to Tamar, he would have had a chance to choose the right solution and

change the course of events. After useless attempts to save her, Tamar's voice finally falls silent, and the woman is powerless. Tamar, shown against her brother's background, remains mute, weak, and disgraced; he is strong, brutal, and aggressive. Unlike Amnon, however, she is shown as a wise heroine, aware of the consequences and her situation. She defies her brother twice, once in the rape case and the other when Amnon orders her to be banished to the streets. However, her refusals and requests remain disrespected – the woman speaks but is not listened to. When the prince orders to banish his sister, the narrator directs the reader's attention to her physical appearance and behaviour – Tamar tears the sleeves of the royal robe, sprinkles gunpowder on her head, and walks away in grief. No one wants to hear her voice; not even her father, David, reacts to what happened. Only Absalom intercedes for his sister and accuses Amnon of rape. Later, he also arranges the murder of the rapist. The biblical heroines lack subjectivity – in the eyes of rapists, they are the only object that can be used (actually abused) to satisfy the need for domination, control, and possession (Blyth, 87). The rapist always "robs" the guardian of the bride both of the possibility of a future dowry, which she would receive as a result of a good marriage, as well as of increasing the social status of the family (Rediger Schulte, 11). The only way out for the victim is to remain at the mercy of the violator, as the disgraced woman no longer has a real chance of getting married (Rediger Schulte, 15). When raped, they become damaged, incomplete, and disgraced, not with themselves, but with their families and male relatives, treated by society as real victims (Blyth, 94–96).

4. Conclusions

Each of the narratives could be discussed in great detail, but even in such a brief analysis, it is possible to observe that the active protagonists are men (in Tamar's case, she tries to be active, but her voice is ignored after all). The women appear only at the crucial moment of the stories as victims of abduction or rape. These narratives do not present women as subjects. The female protagonists are shown as mute, invisible, transparent, and passive. However, they play a vital role in highlighting the conventions and social structure and describing relationships between fathers and household members, between different tribes, between men and women, between the woman and the male world, and finally, between the Israelites and God. We may say that these stories are not about a "violation of the rights of the victim but instead [...] a violation of the property rights of the one who acts as owner/protector of the victim's sexuality" (Rediger Schulte, 11).

Although the translations may differ slightly, the narratives tell the same stories and have some common elements. The first element is the absence of a deity. These rape cases are part of a bigger story about the relationship between the Israelites and God. All the chaos and violence (rapes, abductions, and murders) that took place did not happen because God had abandoned the Israelites but because they were the ones who had turned their backs on Him. Without God, the Israelites tend to make wrong choices. The second element is the appearance of an outsider or a foreigner. Shechem, a non-Israelite and foreign prince, raped Dinah. An unnamed woman from Judges was a victim of a gang rape committed by the Benjaminites from the city of Gibeah. Tamar's rapist was Amnon, her brother from another mother. The last common element is related to the attempt to live without God. All these present ill-advised decisions, constantly made by the people of Israel, which indicate the failure of the community, with the act of rape being one of the manifestations of this failure.

Re-reading the subject of rape while keeping the female perspective in mind reminds us that it is an act of violence. However, the old culture fails to acknowledge the deed as violence in the name of higher goals: creating the hero himself and a marriage subordinated to the patriarchal order. This is also shown by the following three long biblical narratives: the story of Dinah (Genesis 34), the story of the Levite's wife (Judges 19), and the story of Tamar (2 Samuel 13). While these stories have female protagonists, and these narratives probably would not make sense without them, they are not just about women. The rapes described there constitute a part of a larger biblical story – the story about the Israelites and the story about men. Since rape belongs to the male world, it is possible to overlook these women, who play the role of silent victims, not only because of rape but also because of their place in the world of men.

Although the issue of rape discussed in the article refers only to the Bible, it should be emphasised that the Bible, the mythology, and literature of ancient Greece and Rome are rich sources of research on the functioning of *raptus puellae* in Polish literature from the 16th to the 18th century. However, the rape presented by these representations, apart from the stories about the maidens of Shiloh and the Sabine women, differs from the representation of *raptus puellae* in the old-Polish literature. Examples located at the foot of the European tradition in Polish literature function as an exemplum in poetry, showing a rich reservoir of literary possibilities and erudition of the lyrical subject. Among them, however, there are no references to biblical heroines and plenty of mythological examples, e.g., the abduction of Europa, Helen,

or Persephone. The lack of examples of Dinah, the wife of the Levite, and Tamar in old Polish literature can probably be found in the difference in Catholic treatment of the Bible as a sacred story, as opposed to profane mythology. In the 16th to 18th-century epic, of which romance is a prime example, the narratives of the adventures of the abducted heroines share some standard features with the biblical women, especially when it comes to the critical elements of the narration about the abduction, which include a secluded place, characteristics of the abductor (outsider) and the victim (weak, the lack of woman's will), etc.

However, a characteristic feature of the old Polish examples of *raptus puellae* is the lack of rape. *Raptus puellae*, in Polish history, customs, and literature, is an abduction for marriage. This clearly distinguishes Polish literary examples. It should be noted, however, that among the literary texts, there are works such as Jan Kochanowski's *Song 5*, which tells the story of the devastation of Podolia (Kochanowski, 178–182). In the poem, the *raptus puellae* is one of many examples constituting a permanent element of old Polish works dealing with Tatar-Turkish captivity (Ryba, 2014). War abductions, which immediately bring to mind the war rape, are also a characteristic element of the entire epic. Nevertheless, the development of the functioning of *raptus puellae* in the literary tradition, as well as the rootedness of biblical and mythological stories and our awareness of it, allows us to ask a question about the shape of the narrative preserved in the Bible and ancient literature, including the narrative scheme, which could be a potential point of reference for the stories told in Polish literature, which, after all, grew out of the rich and diverse European tradition.

Bible Translations:

Biblia to jest Księgi Starego i Nowego Przymierza według łacińskiego przekładu starego, w Kościele powszechnym przyjętego, na polski język znowu z pilnością przełożone, z dokładaniem tekstu żydowskiego i greckiego, i z wykładem katolickim trudniejszych miejsc do obrony wiary świętej powszechnej przeciw kacerstwom tych czasów należących, przez D. Jakuba Wujka z Wągrowca, Theologa Societatis Jesu. Kraków, 1599.

Biblia Święta to jest Księgi Starego i Nowego Przymierza z żydowskiego i greckiego języka na polski pilnie i wiernie przetłumaczone. Cum Gratia & Privilegio S. R. M. Gdańsk, 1632.

Biblia to jest Księgi Starego i Nowego Zakonu na Polski język z pilnością według łacińskiej Biblicy od Kościoła Krześcijańskiego powszechnego przyjętej nowo wyłożona. Cum Gratia & Privilegio S. R. M. Kraków, 1561.

Biblia Święta to jest Księgi Starego i Nowego Zakonu właśnie z żydowskiego, greckiego i łacińskiego na nowo na polski język z pilnością i wiernie wyłożone. Brześć Litewski, 1563.

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**ERZÄHLUNGEN ÜBER VERGEWALTIGTE UND ENTFÜHRTE FRAUEN IN
POLNISCHEN BIBELÜBERSETZUNGEN ALS QUELLE FÜR DIE FORSCHUNG ZU
RAPTUS PUELLAE IN DER POLNISCHEN LITERATUR DES 16. BIS 18.
JAHRHUNDERTS**

Vergewaltigung ist ein Phänomen, das in vielen Diskursen präsent ist: rechtliche, soziale, psychologische, religiöse und künstlerische. Wir können es auch aus philologischer Perspektive betrachten. Es ist auch ein Thema, das tief in der Kultur verwurzelt ist und auf die klassischen und biblischen Traditionen zurückgeht. Darstellungen von Vergewaltigung und Entführung in der Bibel sowie in der griechischen und römischen Literatur werden zu einem literarisch-kulturellen Hintergrund für die Erforschung des Themas *raptus puellae* in der europäischen Literatur der Neuzeit. Bei der Untersuchung der polnischen Literatur des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts konzentriert sich die Autorin auf polnischen Bibelübersetzungen des 16. bis 17. Jahrhunderts (Leopolita, Brzeska, Jakub Wujek, Gdańska). Die Analyse wirft die Frage auf, ob und wie sich die Erzählungen von Vergewaltigung oder Entführung in einzelnen Bibelübersetzungen verändert haben, wie Entführung und Vergewaltigung in Erzählungen dargestellt werden und ob sie einen Zusammenhang mit späteren Darstellungen des Themas in der altpolnischen Literatur haben. Wir können auch sehen, wie die Beschreibungen einzelner Vergewaltigungsfälle in der Bibel durch das "Zusammentreffen" von Vergewaltigungsbegriff, Sprache und literarischen Konventionen beeinflusst werden.

Keywords: *Raptus puellae*, Entführung, Vergewaltigung, Entführung und Vergewaltigung in der Bibel, Gewalt gegen Frauen, *raptus puellae* in der altpolnischen Literatur