




Reading the Story of Dinah in Context and in the Age of #MeToo

Tuesday, February 9
12:00PM – 1:00PM
RSVP for Online Access

Dinah, the only (mentioned) daughter of the patriarch Jacob, emerges in Genesis 34, only to disappear from the text. Dinah goes out to visit the women of the land. She is seen by Shechem, the prince of the local village, also named Shechem, who takes her and has sex with her (Gen 34:2). He then wants to marry her. Her brothers, Jacob's sons, insist that Shechem and his people be circumcised. They consent, and while they are recovering from their circumcision, Simeon and Levi massacre them, while the other brothers plunder the town. Feminist scholars have debated what happens to Dinah in Genesis 34:2. Was she raped? Abducted? Something else? How can we read sexual violence in the Hebrew Bible and within the context of ancient Israel? When reading the Hebrew Bible, with attention to linguistic and historical realities, how do we also read in our contemporary context?

This talk will address the questions of what happens to Dinah, what's at stake in the reading of this story, and how can we deal with this biblical story and others like it in the age of #MeToo?



Alison L. Joseph is Senior Editor of The Posen Library of Jewish Civilization and Culture. She earned her PhD in Hebrew Bible and Jewish Studies from the University of California, Berkeley. Her research explores the processes by which the Hebrew Bible was produced, bringing together historiographical, literary, and gender criticism as it illuminates the author/redactor's role in interpreting and rewriting earlier texts. Her current project, *Damning Dinah: The Priestly Battle against Intermarriage*, looks at intermarriage and women's sexuality in the Hebrew Bible and explores how late authorial voices reflect a growing concern with foreign infiltration. Her first book, *Portrait of the Kings: The Davidic Prototype in Deuteronomistic Poetics* (Fortress, 2015), received the 2016 Manfred Lautenschlaeger Award for Theological Promise. She is co-editor of the recently published *Reading Other Peoples' Texts: Social Identity and the Reception of Authoritative Traditions* (Bloomsbury, 2020).