

# Grounding the anthropology of the Hebrew Bible in embodied practices

## *Sexuality and food as case studies*

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Despite the extensive research on the body in the Hebrew Bible, embodied practices such as sexuality have yet to be fully incorporated into the construction of its anthropology, and in particular into the discussion of the concept of *the self*. This article offers a methodological discussion on how to outline an “Anthropology of the Hebrew Bible based on embodied practices”, drawing on sensory studies and cultural anthropology. Two exemplary generative anthropological themes, sexuality and food, are used as case studies. Both link the embodied self to the world, emphasizing the materiality of our human existence and overcoming a dualistic subject-object divide. The final section of the article will outline the implications for the anthropology of the Hebrew Bible, especially for the (un)making of the self as embodied. Identity as a part of personhood has thus to be unfolded as an embodied, material, performative, gendered and relational concept in Hebrew Bible studies and especially in our anthropological research.

When grounding the anthropology of the Hebrew Bible in embodied practices, we have to face a multitude of bodies: lived, experienced, and gendered bodies next to and interrelated with symbolic, as well as discursive bodies.<sup>1</sup> It all begins with the body that relates humans to the world and constitutes the self. The very observation that our body relates us to the world implies a threefold relationality: (1) to one’s own embodiment and the corporality of the self; (2) to the body of the other; and (3) to the material(ity of the) world that relates to and shapes our body. This relational understanding rules out a dichotomy of so-called “inner” and “outer” worlds. Likewise, it implies an embodied mind concept. This will turn out crucial for the grounding of the anthropology of the Hebrew Bible and in particular, the conception of the self.

The experiences and (symbolic) conceptions of human bodies have been investigated in various disciplines since the 1990s. This has been done most prominently in historical studies,<sup>2</sup> cultural anthropology,<sup>3</sup> and phenomenology, and such studies are often stimulated by feminist scholarship,<sup>4</sup> which recalls the messy materiality of the body, gendered embodiment, and the discursive construction of bodies. The body therefore seems to be not only the object of investigation, but also the subject and even (the determinant of) the method.<sup>5</sup> Cultural anthropology, together with historical anthropology and material studies, manifest specific historical and

cultural factors that contribute to the history of the body. Within phenomenological philosophical approaches, the starting point is the embodied self and the distinction and relationship between the body we have (*Körper haben*) and the body we are and live by – the living body (*Leib sein*).<sup>6</sup> The German language reflects this distinction through the two different terms *Körper* (deriving from lat. corpus) and *Leib* deriving from the noun *Leben* “life”. Hence the living body, “*Leib*”, comes close to the concept of embodiment. “Embodiment” seems a helpful notion, as it is a “far less fixed and idealised concept than body, [...] encompassing moments of encounter and interpretation, agency and resistance.”<sup>7</sup> The introduction of the term marks a shift in anthropological studies, which risked understanding the body as an isolated object, but have now begun to investigate the implications of embodied existence as a way of inhabiting the world and as an expression of the self. Bodies are constituted through practices and practices as the vast array of human activities are embodied. There is also a growing awareness that our embodied human senses play a significant role in mediating between the world and the self. This is highlighted by sensory approaches, which show that physical, emotional, and intellectual perceptions of the world are interrelated. Sensory anthropology combines phenomenological and cultural anthropological approaches to explore how the senses function within a given culture.<sup>8</sup>

These seemingly divergent approaches converge in their interest in human bodily experiences and the relation of human beings to the world. On these two approaches, the quest for the senses and the embodied self, I shall rely to develop the methodological discussion on how to outline an “Anthropology of the Hebrew Bible grounded in embodied practices”. To demonstrate this, two exemplary generative anthropological themes, sexuality and food, shall serve as case studies. They are very apt, among other things because both food and sexuality link the embodied self and the world,<sup>9</sup> underlining the very materiality of our human existence and overcoming a dualistic subject-object divide. In the article’s final section, I discuss the implications of these insights for further research in anthropology, especially the (un)making of the self as embodied and the conception of the material world. I argue that the body serves as a contact zone for both the human and the more-than-human world, elements from nature in particular. First, a brief overview of prior research on the “discovery” of the body in Hebrew Bible studies is given, which demonstrates the ongoing struggle with dualistic conceptions and the need to reconsider embodiment as a paradigm for anthropology.

### *Researching the body in Hebrew Bible studies*

There has been revived interest in the body among (Hebrew) Bible scholars in the last decades.<sup>10</sup> To a certain degree, the multiple new approaches in Hebrew Bible scholarship, such as sensory studies or material studies, could be reckoned as well to this trend. Hans Walter Wolff’s *Anthropologische Sprachlehre* (1973) was one of the first works by German-speaking biblical scholars to consider the body in anthropological research.<sup>11</sup> Wolff developed his theory by tracing the way bodily organs are described in the Hebrew Bible. He began with *nəpəš* (“throat”), which is traditionally translated as “soul.” The *nəpəš* embodies the longing for breath, water, and food (Mic 7:1; Prov 13:25; Lam 2:13), for God (Ps 42:2), and for enjoyment of love (Song 1:7; 3:1). Thus, *nəpəš* stands for the vitality of the self and its vulnerability. In the second

creation story in the book of Genesis, the deity is imagined as a potter with hands that mould the dry dust from the earth to form the earthling and with breath that gives the earthling life (Gen 2:7):

Then YHWH Elohim formed the earthling (*ādām*) from dust from the ground (*ādāmāh*) and blew into his nostrils the breath of life. Then the earthling became a living being (*l'napəš hayyāh*).<sup>12</sup>

Hence, humans do not have a *napəš*; they are *napəš*, as Hans Walter Wolff stated it concisely.<sup>13</sup> The embodied God instigates the embodiment of humans as *napəš hayyāh* – vital selves in their vulnerability and jouissance. According to this creation text, there is no dichotomy between body and soul. The substantial and long-lasting insight of this so-called synthetic understanding of the body (*synthetische Körperauffassung*)<sup>14</sup> has been that each bodily organ stands in the Hebrew Bible for specific functions in perceiving the world and acting in it. Body parts are conceived as relational and dynamic. The heart (*leb/lebāb*), for example, has been labelled as a relational organ par excellence<sup>15</sup> in its physiological, emotive, and cognitive aspects. From this synthetic and relational conception of the heart as an organ of perception and thinking, I infer the nondualist embodied mind, where the inner and outer worlds are bound together through embodied experiences.

The virulent quest for the inner self, or inner depths, and individuality in the Hebrew Bible which has gained momentum, however, still often operates with the dichotomy of inner and outer worlds, body and mind. Christian Frevel has outlined how late exilic texts increasingly treat the act of thinking as an expression of the inner self.<sup>16</sup> Thinking is conceived of as an inner speech act.<sup>17</sup> Proverbs 14:10, for example, describes an inner communication between the heart (*leb/lebāb*) and the *napəš*: “The heart knows the bitterness of its own *napəš* (inner self) and in one’s joy no stranger may mingle.” This verse elucidates the process of self-reflection as an embodied cognitive act in which bodily sensation and intellectual emotion converge: the heart, as the place of insight, knows and deciphers the bitterness of the embodied self (*napəš*). The self-reflective perception of the vulnerable self (*napəš*) is located in the relational body organ. The experienced body and the experiencing body thus interact. This implies the concept of an embodied mind in the Hebrew Bible. And, as Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher and Marianne Grohmann have noted, it likewise suggests that the suffering and processing of traumatic experiences evoked in biblical lament play a role in the conception of the self.<sup>18</sup> Lament is a way to negotiate with norms, with social identity. Psalms of lament attest how the body reacts to a dramatic situation and seems to dissolve.<sup>19</sup> The inner organs are the seismographs for the outer world.<sup>20</sup> Contrary to Robert de Vitos assertion, embodiment is therefore no hindrance to inner depth.<sup>21</sup> Quite the opposite, depicting the suffering of human bodies (and body parts) in texts of lament gives expression to an embodied individuality related to the outer social world.

The endeavour to reconceptualize the anthropology of the Hebrew Bible starts from the insight that the embodied self is relational and deeply embedded in the social life.<sup>22</sup> That is, embodied self and social sphere are interrelated.<sup>23</sup> This pivotal interrelatedness between the inner self and the outer world is guaranteed by the bodily organs that function as senses and as the seats of emotions. Emotion studies have investigated the social and cultural constructedness of emotions, as well as their universal dimensions.<sup>24</sup> The Hebrew Bible’s conception of the senses and how the ancient

Israelites perceived the world<sup>25</sup> have been areas of growing interest for biblical scholars, as attested in Yael Avrahami's monograph *The Senses of Scripture*. Linguistic and philological analyses have considered the specific cultural notions of the senses in the Hebrew Bible, including its seeming assumptions that sensory experiences transmit embodied knowledge and that the sensory organs play a major role in acquiring insight. These findings, although widely shared, tend to fall out of sight or are not (fully) implemented in biblical scholarship on issues such as sexuality, suffering, and conceptions of the mind, or inner self. The body has mattered mostly in an abstract generalized sense. The observation that the body relates us to the world, as phenomenological approaches underline, questions the tendency to understand many biblical references to the body as metaphorical. The notion of the body has sometimes even undergirded longstanding dualistic frameworks, which imply an evolutionary model in search of less embodied conceptions of the mind.

Recently, affect theory<sup>26</sup> has likewise brought the materiality of all bodies to the forefront. Francesca Stavrakopoulou addresses this in her article "Making Bodies: On Body Modification and Religious Materiality in the Hebrew Bible," which reminds us that the body itself is not a fixed, natural given. She seeks to "interrogate the fundamental role the body's own materiality plays in the construction of religious meaning."<sup>27</sup> Cultural anthropology and material studies have led also others to reconsider the role archaeology<sup>28</sup> – and in particular iconography<sup>29</sup> – plays in conceptualizing the lived experienced of the ancient Israelites. For example, the very materiality of seals influences selfhood and embodiment in the act of wearing them.<sup>30</sup> These studies may give helpful trajectories to ask how the ancient Israelites conceptualized human embodiment because biblical scholarship has, by virtue of its genesis and its self-understanding, long been only textual scholarship.

Hence, how can we rethink an anthropology of the Hebrew Bible while taking the body as subject and method? For a material-cultural and phenomenological approach, topics such as food, work and technology, death, birth, and suffering become important. In this vein, I shall explore the conceptions of body and embodiment in the Hebrew Bible along two exemplary generative anthropological themes: sexuality and food. Both are prime fields to reveal the relational concept of the human self and both topics have almost been neglected so far in anthropological studies of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>31</sup>

Sexuality is an essential human practice and experience. Food is a human prerequisite – a social and ecological given. The two have several common denominators: both sustain humans, both are about the transgression of boundaries and incorporation. It is through the body and its desire (to survive) that we relate to the world. On a methodological level, one has to consider the vast variety of texts, their historicity, and their literary specificity (most prominently, their narrative, rhetorical, and poetical structure). Biblical texts narrate bodies that matter. Therefore, I shall analyse these two generative themes across different genres and investigate their semantics as part of the system indigenous to biblical texts to consider the body, taking insights from cultural and sensory anthropology into consideration.

### *Conceptualizing embodied anthropology: sexuality and food*

Sexuality is a fundamental expression of human life<sup>32</sup> that encompasses corporeal, material, emotional, social, and cultural-religious dimensions: the embodiment of

sexuality and social relationships overlap. Hence so-called *Leib*- and *Sozialsphäre* converge in sexuality, to use the concept which has been influential and helpful in describing the concept of personhood in antiquity.<sup>33</sup> Sexuality has different functions, such as procreation, the execution of social and corporeal relations, the exercise of power and domination, the sense of pleasure and happiness, the experience of corporeality (embodiment), and, last but not least, the construction of gender identities and hierarchies (or, eventually, their undoing). Sexuality is therefore not an autonomous realm. This holds true especially in ancient cultures, where social norms are crucial in structuring daily life.

As corporeal beings, humans experience and recognize the world through (among other ways) sexual contact with the other. Ways of knowing and sexuality are overlapping, which implies a relationship between sexuality and such senses as seeing and touching. For that reason, Meir Malul argues that sexuality is part of the human sensory system through which we have access to the world.<sup>34</sup> This is expressed succinctly in one of the Hebrew formulations for sexual contact: “to know, to experience” (*yd'*, with 't or an accusative, e.g. Gen 4:1.17.25; 24:16; 38:26). The first man, Adam, “knows” Eve, his wife (Gen 4:1). Rebekah is described as a *bt'wlh* (“virgin”), as “no man had experienced [or known] her” (Gen 24:16).

This first semantic insight makes clear that, in order to grasp how sexuality is historically and culturally shaped, we have to look for categories that are “indigenous”<sup>35</sup> to biblical texts. Often Hebrew terms reflect the embodied human existence; therefore, as Ingrid Lilly has argued, we should move towards a “corporeal philology”.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, the categories used to describe sexuality depend on the genre of the texts, the literary source, and their social backgrounds. I will demonstrate this shortly in my study of two genres: first, a strand of legislative texts, the purity laws in Leviticus, because sexuality is a system of power and often categorized along the lines of licit and illicit sexual practices; and second, at the other end, the erotic poetry in Song of Songs, which transgresses norms and give voice to the lovers' sexual desires.

### Semantic classifications of sexuality

In her seminal work *The Intercourse of Knowledge*, Athalya Brenner unravels how the biblical terms for sexuality and desire establish gender norms and conceptions of the body.<sup>37</sup> Besides *yd'* (“to know/experience”), other common biblical Hebrew euphemisms for sex include *bw' 'l* (“to come into/enter”),<sup>38</sup> *qrb 'l* (“to approach to”), and *škb 't' m* (“to lie with”).<sup>39</sup> The verb “to lie” always stands with a particle (“with”) when describing a sexual/relational act. Sexuality as embodiment and as social norm manifests the interrelatedness of individual and collective identity. These verb phrases designate movement in space,<sup>40</sup> and typically involve a male verbal subject sexually penetrating a passive female object (with a male subject and object in Gen 19:5; Judg 19:22).

The fact that intercourse is almost exclusively described as a male activity is reflected in the themes that are often treated in these texts: “paternity/genealogy, suitable bride, male transgression; male impotence.”<sup>41</sup> This textual trend to focus on the male perspective reflects sexual conventions within an androcentric setting. That being the case, one may ask how sexuality has been experienced differently

by women and men and how their agency (or lack thereof) has influenced their embodiment.

However, biblical women can, on occasion, be the subject of *yd'* in a sexual sense, notably in the context of describing virginity. Jephthah's virgin daughter is portrayed as not having "experienced a man" (Judg 11:39), thus attributing sexual agency to her (via negationis). Likewise, the nominal expression *miškab*, "lying in the sense of 'experience intercourse' is used of male as well as female agents."<sup>42</sup> According to Lev 18:22, "lying with a male [as with] the lying of a woman" is an abomination. In other texts, women's sexual status is determined by their (lack of) knowledge or experience of "lying" (with) a male. Numbers 31:17–18 describes female non-virgins as "women who know a man from/by lying [with/of] a male" and young women as those who "have not known the lying [with/of] a male." The phrases are not a true pair.<sup>43</sup> A woman experiences the lying with/of a male (*miškab zākār*) as "male penetration". Her sexual knowledge of the other stems from the male sexual act she undergoes. This, however, is not understood as her embodied knowledge, as it is dependent on the agency of the male. Males are supposed to act as agents, rather than passive recipients, of the sexual act:<sup>44</sup> sexually penetrating a man is prohibited according to the regulations in Lev 18:22: "with a male never lie in the manner of lying of a woman."<sup>45</sup> Hence, the roles cannot be reversed and the gendered (hierarchical) practice of sexuality as penetration impregnates the embodiment of both genders.

In a semantic sense, then, "love, desire, lust, sexual intercourse and sexuality are differently constructed for males and females."<sup>46</sup> Different terms are also used to portray male and female sex organs or the sexual body: thigh/limb, sides, knees, and flesh are used as euphemisms for the male sex organ, while opening, womb, breasts, and flesh describe the female sexual body.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, the laws about genital fluids in Leviticus 15 unfold a so-called "one gender model" that designates the nongendered body as a whole with the Hebrew term *bāsār* ("flesh," vv. 7, 16), but also uses this same word to reference both the male (vv. 3, 16) and female (v. 19) sexual organs.<sup>48</sup> I shall now have a closer look at the conception of the body and sexuality in this strand of prescriptive texts.

### The priestly system, sexual practices, and cultic im/purity

Sexual practices reinforce social norms and serve as a boundary marker on different levels among humans, between genders, between humans and animals, and between humans and God. Accordingly, legislative texts try to regulate forbidden, reprehended, or culturally dangerous sexual practices. The regulations in Lev 11–15 are concerned with cultic purity. Reading these chapters against the backdrop of cultural anthropologist Mary Douglas's work helps to sketch the relation between the body and the sacred. She understands the human body as a microcosm that reflects the macrocosm – the social, ethnic, and religious community. Leviticus 12 and 15 focus on secretions related to sexuality, reproduction, and childbirth, whereby the female body plays a prominent role. Sexual contact as such is addressed in Leviticus 15 on men's and women's genital emissions, both regular and irregular. The chapter explains what should be done in the event that contact with these emissions occurs

and leads to cultic impurity. According to Lev 15:18, sexual intercourse between a man and a non-menstruating woman causes both parties to be cultically impure until the evening. But if the woman is menstruating, the state of impurity after intercourse lasts longer. Leviticus 15:24 states that, like the woman in her state of menstruation (*ndh*), the man then also becomes impure for seven days, since, as the formulation states, “her *ndh* shall come upon him.” “The gender specific impurities of ejaculation and menstruation thus become contagious and have the power to treat the opposite sex, at least cultically, in the same way as the source. [...] in intercourse the distinction between male and female becomes blurred.”<sup>49</sup> These two verses on sexual contact capture the general gendered and embodied notion of (sexual) impurities that’s at play in the chapters. Thus, instead of using the classic definition of Lev 11–15 as “purity regulations,” I have suggested labelling these chapters as “body regulations”,<sup>50</sup> since the regulations define and create the body through their normative and performative discourse. The term “body regulations” tries to capture the complex relationship between body, practices, and text in Leviticus: the ritual regulations define the body, and the body is the defining concept of the regulations.<sup>51</sup> Sexuality and the gendered body matter to the cult.

### Love poetry as embodied sexual experience

In order to reconstruct (discourses on) embodied sexual practices in ancient Israel, the Song of Songs seems a more fruitful source than the body regulations in Lev 15, even if it gives an idealized picture. The erotic poem is often appraised as a counterimage to hierarchical conceptions, as it is full of reciprocal descriptions of fluid gendered bodies. Sexuality is an embodied experience for both the male and female voices, as both are focused upon. The descriptions of desire and sexuality draw on a plenitude of sensory images from the natural world, including animals, fruits, and agricultural products such as myrrh (Song 1:13; 3:6; 4:6.14; 5:1.5.13), wine (Song 5:1; 8:2), balm, apples (Song 2:5; 7:9), dates, and honey. These are mentioned frequently to describe the couple’s love for each other and the sexual pleasures they share. Our cultural anthropological and embodied approach investigates the materiality and sensuality of the so-called conceptual metaphors of sexual desire. For example, the male voice in Song 5:1 refers to the smell and taste of liquids and scents to capture his sexual encounter with his beloved:

I come into my garden, my sister, my bride,  
 I pick my myrrh and balsam,  
 I eat my honeycomb with my honey,  
 I drink my wine and my milk.  
 Eat, friends, drink yourselves drunk on caresses.

Here, consumption is overlaid with erotic overtones. Wine, milk, and honey evoke the female lover who is consumed and imbibed by her beloved. Wine is a high-risk and labour-intensive product (see Gen 9:20; Isa 5:1–7), which has specific effects on body and mind, most prominently the senses, due to its alcohol content.<sup>52</sup> Milk (Song 4:11; 5:1.12) and honey (Song 4:11.12; 5:1.2) are used only to refer to the female body

in this poem. In other texts, they are combined to allude to the fruitfulness of the land that is “flowing with milk and honey” (e.g. Exod 3:8; Deut 8:8; 26:9), and they may also connote maternal care and sexual pleasures associated with the female body, thus implying both nourishment and *jouissance*. Fruits like pomegranates and dates are also only used for the female body. This gendered relationship between love/desire and consumption of food and drink is noted by Brenner, who observes that, in the Song of Songs, the terms for food and drink, as well as the places for food production (such as the garden) are mostly female gendered.<sup>53</sup> The female lover is milk and honey, thus associated with the land – a place of fertility and abundance; in contrast, the male lover is “never a locus of food growth.”<sup>54</sup>

The man’s voice in Song 5:1 is answering the woman’s invitation to come to her garden (Song 4:16). His words signal his intent to take possession of her garden, and thus her body, through the verbs “come,” “pick,” “eat,” and “drink,” as well as the repetitious reflexive pronoun in the first-person singular. At the same time, the lovers “are encouraged in their mutual intoxication and satiation”<sup>55</sup> through the invitation at the end of 5:1: “Eat, friends, drink yourselves drunk on caresses!”<sup>56</sup> The power relations in Song of Songs are dynamic, which leads to different and ambivalent evaluations of the text in feminist and queer scholarship. Yael Almog,<sup>57</sup> Jean-Jacques Lavoie, and Anne Létourneau<sup>58</sup> point to the abundance of sweet and dripping liquids, regardless of gender. This has encouraged readings that observe the fluidity of sexual practices and the “blurring of sexual boundaries.”<sup>59</sup> As described in Song 5:1, the female body itself becomes fluid and is then absorbed and ingested by the lover. When the woman responds in Song 5:5, her voice takes up the image of flowing myrrh to describe herself as well as her lover: “I got up to open to my lover and my hands dripped myrrh, my fingers flowing myrrh on the handles of the lock.” Myrrh (deriving from the Hebrew word *môr*) is a dried reddish-yellow gum resin with a warm earthy fragrance, which is used in perfumes. During the biblical period, it was a luxury item imported from Southern Arabia. But the woman seems to have an abundance of it; her hands are oily and sticky as she has probably anointed herself with myrrh-scented oil (hence why it is dripping Song 5:5). Elsewhere in Song of Songs, myrrh unites both male and female voices and bodies. The woman describes her lover as a “bag of myrrh” lying between her breasts (1:13), and speaks of his lips “dripping liquid myrrh” (5:13), perhaps alluding to him kissing her myrrh-anointed body.<sup>60</sup> Their scents melt with each other. Next to the female voice’s use of “myrrh” about the male body, we find the reverse. The man describes her garden as being filled with plants, including myrrh trees (4:14; cf. 5.1). It is also used by the female voice in self-description (5:5).<sup>61</sup> The very materiality of myrrh and of other natural products influence their mutual bodily experiences. This leads to a melding of their identities and a relational embodied experience of the self in sexual arousal. Linking these findings with sensory approaches and emotion studies, the stimulating effect of such descriptions becomes obvious by evoking the scent of myrrh.<sup>62</sup>

To summarize the findings on sexuality and embodiment, I would like to single out three facets which shall be highlighted further in the final remarks. First, it is possible to identify male as well as female perspectives, agencies and expressions of embodiment in androcentric texts. There are both gender differences and commonalities present in the descriptions of sexual embodiment. As Christine Mitchell explains, “Men, women, and even animals know sexual experience in an embodied

way, and all of their perspectives are available. For men and women, it is *knowing* (ידע), for men it is *sleeping with* (שכב עם), for women it is someone *coming into* (בוא אל) her.<sup>63</sup> Second, sexuality can be understood as the intercourse of knowledge, while taking into account the role of the senses in it. The realm of sexuality pushes us to rethink selfhood as an embodied and relational social concept. In other words, in the Hebrew Bible, identity overrides an individuated sense of selfhood. Finally, in the love poems, honey and myrrh are vibrant matter, dissolving bodies and identities in their fluid sweetness and scent, evoking reciprocal longing. The body is porous and in constant exchange with the more-than-human world. Hence person- and selfhood are understood as permeable, partible, dynamic and relational.<sup>64</sup> The consumption and experience of agricultural products is linked to the senses and sexuality. As Elaine James observes, “Kisses and lovemaking are described as good wine, which are intoxicating and offer delight to the lips, palate, and throat (1:2, 4; 5:1; 7:10), and raisins signal sustenance and satisfaction (2:4; 4:10; 8:2).”<sup>65</sup> This literary act of superimposing food on sexual practices and descriptions of the beloved brings us to our second case study: food.

## Food

In her phenomenological philosophical discussion of nourishment, Corine Pelluchon avers that “to nurture and to be nurtured” lies at the heart of human existence.<sup>66</sup> Eating is living. Through our meals, we nurture ourselves and our symbolic system. We depend on food to live. Eating is a fundamental embodied expression. Foodstuffs in their materiality are a given; however, they are only declared edible and processed into actual food through social acts. Hence, food, as well as its production, ingestion, and consumption, is a pivotal generative cultural anthropological theme. Food interrelates humans to the more-than-human in a deep embodied sense. This is reflected in the two creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2–3, where food is a key vehicle for describing human existence and the relationship to God and the earth. The earth brings forth seed, fruit trees and green pasture which are given as food to humans and animals, whereas the green pasture is restricted for animals (Gen 1:12.29.30). In Gen 2–3, to eat is a *leitmotif* as we shall see below.

Food and food practices such as meals reinscribe our understanding of ourselves, our community, the more-than-human world and our lived embodiment. Food is also linked to other aspects of society, such as work, economics, social justice, religion and cult, culture, and identity (formation). Food therefore focuses on the mundane.<sup>67</sup> Humans incorporate social and religious norms through food practices such as production and consumption; at the same time, specific foods and food practices depend foremost on economic, historical, and geographical factors. Gender also plays a prominent role in food. Regarding ancient Israel, Carol Meyers has been pioneering in her use of archaeology to make visible the importance of female agency and work in food processing.<sup>68</sup> In the last two decades, the field of food studies in biblical research has highlighted the centrality of food, including its production and consumption, in biblical texts and their contexts.<sup>69</sup> In light of its pervasive socio-anthropological, narrative, and theological role, food can be taken as a hermeneutical lens for the interpretation of biblical texts. In what follows, I highlight

two genres: the creation narrative in Genesis 2–3 and the dietary laws, especially those in Leviticus 11. Curiously, both texts circle around the ambivalent relationship between *Himmelsk føde og forbuden frugt*<sup>70</sup> (“Heavenly food or forbidden fruit”), to quote the title of Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme’s monograph. Through food, both texts highlight the interrelatedness of bodily and social practices, embodied and social identity, human embodiment and the more-than-human world. And each text serves its own purpose, due to its genre and socio-religious background.

### Incorporation of knowledge in Gen 2–3

In Gen 2–3 the root ‘*kl* (“to eat”) actually appears twenty-one times in relation to human consumption; this makes it the second most commonly used word in this narrative after ‘*adam*.<sup>71</sup> Eating is a *leitmotif* in this dramatic narrative, and, accordingly, it explains human existence. It drives the plot, which unfolds in a garden planted by God, and it reflects the sapiential utopian world of the garden and the ambiguity of human agrarian life. The fruits of all its trees are good to eat (Gen 2:7), except for one: the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:16–17). This tree, with its attractive fruit, triggers the story of humankind and their search for insight into good and evil. After the dialogue between the woman and the serpent about the tree of knowledge (Gen 3:1–5), the story focuses on the woman’s perceptions:

The woman saw that the tree was good for eating, and a delight for the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a source of insight. And she took of its fruit and ate; she gave also some to her man who was with her, and he ate. (Gen 3:6)

The word *ṭwb*, which is used twice to refer to the tree of knowledge, carries a dual meaning: in Gen 3:6, it has the sense of “appropriate” (“good for eating”), and in Gen 2:9, it conveys an ethical and epistemological sense through its juxtaposition with “bad/evil” (“the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”). Different senses are addressed: hearing, sight and taste, perhaps smell, too. The story also mentions touching, as the woman seizes the fruit once she decides to eat it. The text primarily makes use of verbal expressions for the senses. One sensory organ is explicitly named: the eyes, which are linked to the act of seeing inasmuch as organs in the Hebrew Bible actually stand for their function. Because of the stimulus of these different senses, the woman picks the attractive fruit. The stress on the senses goes along with pleasure and longing. Fruit is rare in the dietary regime of ancient Israel; only the fig and grape figure prominently, so it is a special and luxurious consumption that is described here in v. 6.

The woman, and the man next to her, acquire knowledge through eating the fruit. Curiously, their sense of sight is altered or even seems to be awakened: “Their eyes were opened” (Gen 3:7).<sup>72</sup> Taste and ingestion turn into discernment.<sup>73</sup> For some interpreters, the acquisition of knowledge by this corporal act stands for sexuality. The woman hands the fruit to her man, who also touches it and eats from it. It gives a glimpse of the first shared meal. It is the woman who provides her counterpart with food and hence knowledge of the world. This goes along with women’s role in Israelite society of having the largest share in food processing.

The garden story reflects life conditions in general as indebted to and expressed in humans' relation to the land. The relationship between humans and the land is captured in their generic name: the earthling (*ādām*) is formed out of the earth (arable ground, *adāmā*) and has to till it in order to survive (see Gen 2:5.7; 3:17–19). As Meyers has shown in her archaeological and cultural anthropological readings of the Genesis 2–3 story, the pre-creation state described in Gen 2:5 lacks the three basic requirements for the subsistence system in the rocky hill country during the Iron Age: “Vegetation, for both pasturage and food, rainfall, and human labor.”<sup>74</sup> In Gen 2:7–15, God plants a garden, which is irrigated by underground streams, and places *ādām* in this garden “to till it and keep it” (v. 15). Hence, the narrative conveys the central conditions of human life in settlements: food and survival require fertile land and the toiling of humans.

After discovering the couple have eaten from the forbidden tree, God describes to *ādām* the difficulties of human existence outside the garden:

By hard labour you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you. But your food shall be the grasses of the field: by the sweat of your face you shall eat your bread, until you return to the dust. (Gen 3:17b–19)

This is the first time that crops are mentioned as a source of food, and the text underlines the cultivation of cultivable arable land as laborious work. On the one hand, the story responds to the needs and problems of agrarian life and on the other hand, it transcends it with the luxurious garden Eden.<sup>75</sup> In this narrative, for the first time, a human, the first woman, makes use of her senses in order to ingest food and, by doing so, to also acquire knowledge.<sup>76</sup> The longing for food is therefore interwoven with the longing for wisdom.<sup>77</sup> The story thereby affirms that human life is inconceivable, both impossible and not conceive-able, without food. Therefore, according to my analysis, tasting the attractive fruit in the myth is not understood as the origin of sin, as the longstanding doctrinal reading holds, but as the origin of the senses and hence the origin of the capability of humans to grasp the good and, eventually, the evil.

This conception of selfhood and food, pushes us to think beyond the dichotomy of human and nonhuman, as it establishes a continuum between both. The garden story in Genesis 3 highlights the vibrant matter of the fruit, including its beauty, tastefulness, smell, and knowledge. Food studies in conjunction with sensory approaches and material studies may serve as a contact zone to develop a more-than human anthropology, a relational anthropology. The fruit is part of the production of knowledge. As a powerful subject, it transforms the body, its identity, and its knowledge.<sup>78</sup>

### Food prohibitions: from body as symbol system to embodied practice of food

Food issues in the biblical food prohibitions and in ritual texts concerning sacrifice have been investigated long before the rise of food studies, but predominantly, despite the cultural anthropological influence by the work of Mary Douglas on the food prohibitions, with a theological concern. The late, probably postexilic,

regulations in Leviticus 11 discuss nutrition deriving from animals as a cultic matter, for the consumption of animal flesh is related to the priestly idea of purity and holiness. The chapter encompasses the “instruction pertaining to land animals and birds and every creature that moves through the waters and every creature that swarms upon the earth” (v. 46) in order “to make a distinction between the impure and the pure, between the creatures that may be eaten and the creatures that may not be eaten” (v. 47).

According to Douglas, food serves as a social boundary marker. David Sutton suggests that this is “perhaps because it [food] provides a potent symbol of the ability to transform the outside into the inside. In more current terminology, food is about identity creation and maintenance, whether that identity be national, ethnic, class or gender-based.”<sup>79</sup> Following this route, scholarly interest in the food prohibitions in Leviticus 11 has been predominantly focused on their symbolic cultic system rather than their materiality.<sup>80</sup> The prohibition of pork has played a pivotal role as evidence of religious and cultural boundaries in the interpretation history of these texts. However, recent insights mainly stemming from zooarchaeology reveal that the presence or absence of pig bones at sites in the southern Levant cannot easily be taken as an approval or disapproval of the biblical food prohibitions.<sup>81</sup> The zooarchaeological findings have shifted the structuralist and theological concerns from trying to find a rationale behind the prohibitions to their practices and their implications for daily life. Applying this approach, my own quest extends first of all to the materiality of food. Insights into the zoological, agrarian, cultural, and economic factors of diet and food intake allow one to outline the role of the body in embodied religious and ethnic practices. This involves correlating “Thinking and Performing Dietary Prohibitions”, as Peter Altmann and Anna Angelini phrase it.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, underlining this connectedness, I argue that both discursive acts – thinking and performing – are implemented through and on the body. The discursive practice of the text (thinking) defines and constructs the body in a performative act. Likewise, the daily practice of dietary prohibitions (whether messy, variable, or rigid) defines and performs the embodied self through nourishment by food and the associated symbolic interpretations.

Therefore, it seems important to consider the dietary laws in a twofold way: as bodily practices of the individual and the community alike and as a symbolic system; or to put it more aptly, as symbolic embodied discursive practice. As a common trait, we can observe that, through the body and embodied practices, the purity regulations establish cultic purity. Leviticus 11:43ff. refers to the body as embodied self by using a central anthropological term that applies to the human self in its vitality: the Israelites shall not pollute their *nepes̄š* (“throat/being/self”) by eating unclean foods. The text thus underlines – here even reflected in the linguistic use of *nepes̄š* – that eating is constitutive for the embodied self. The priestly writers recognize eating as a decisive cultural act. They incorporate daily practices such as food intake into the purity system they try to establish through the body. It is likely that these regulations were reworked to become ever more decisive from the exile onwards into the Second Temple period, when food served as an identity marker.

Let me summarize the insights from the second generative theme before outlining my conclusions. First, food intake is a practice of the embodied self, which represents the site where discourses and physical phenomena come together to reciprocally construct individual and collective identity. Second, applying a hermeneutics of

food to interpret biblical texts pushes us to redefine the relationship between humans, the divine, animals, nature, and the land.<sup>83</sup> To put it differently, selfhood is not restricted to the physical self, but is also constituted and related to the material world (the more than human) as perceived by the senses.

*Towards an anthropology of the Hebrew Bible grounded in embodiment*

My investigation has demonstrated the importance of incorporating the two generative themes of sexuality and food into the anthropological quest. This has structural and methodological implications for the establishment of an anthropology of the Hebrew Bible and, last but not least, for the virulent quest of human selfhood. First of all, each topic, sexuality and food, needs an “entry” or treatment of its own.<sup>84</sup> This implies that neglected texts, such as the erotic Song of Songs, will be taken into account for their contribution to the anthropology of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>85</sup> Second, beyond the general change in the set-up, it also affects issues such as the conception of individuality. Taking into account the realm of sexuality, the discussion on the concept of selfhood has to rethink it from the relational and porous body. This involves gender not being relegated to an issue of marginal interest worthy only a footnote or a few lines in a paragraph. Embodiment is all-encompassing, and it shapes the structure and language<sup>86</sup> of biblical texts, as well as the meanings they convey. Third, and as a result, the methods and epistemology used to study the anthropology of the Hebrew Bible will be challenged through the consideration of the body in a twofold way: inasmuch as we have to reflect self-critically on our embodied perspective, we have to include embodiment in our method and overcome the dichotomous mind–body distinction. Scholars and readers interpret the Hebrew Bible through their bodies, just as the ancient biblical writers and their audiences used their bodies to create and make sense of these texts. The body thus serves as a common denominator in the meaning-making process,<sup>87</sup> despite the hugely different bodily experiences encountered across space and time. Images of the body stimulate the reader and listener to engage with the text and to develop an embodied anthropology of the Hebrew Bible. This endeavour is especially fruitful when an interdisciplinary approach is adopted that fully incorporates material studies and cultural anthropology to likewise highlight the culturally specific traits.

My fourth and final point is that this interdisciplinary approach will result in a revaluation of the so-called “mundane”, often labelled as “female gendered topics”, such as the body, food processing, its technological, material, economic and ecological aspects, and along with it, on a methodological level, an appraisal of material studies and archaeology. This goes along with a methodological turn in evaluating the so-called “conceptual” metaphors of love referring to food and the more-than-human world in general. In terms of metaphor theory, the sensory and material approach examines the so-called “source domain”, food and nature in its materiality.<sup>88</sup> Food is an embodied practice which deeply structured daily life in ancient Israel. The inclusion of food into the anthropological quest alters the concept of the body as natural and transhistorical. Food studies relate us to the material conditions of the socio-historical milieu that produced the biblical texts. Its focus shifts attention from the monumental history depicted in these texts to the events shaping that history in every ancient Israelite household. The importance of using interdisciplinary approaches to study the significance of the mundane also

holds true with regard to sexuality. Cultural anthropological studies, archaeology/ iconography, and feminist approaches all stress the embodiment, lived experiences, and materiality of sexuality.

These two last points contribute to my goal of developing a methodology for outlining the anthropology of the Hebrew Bible in embodied practices. Therefore, I would like to close by affirming the advantages and challenges of such an embodied approach to the two crucial anthropological issues I have addressed in this article, namely, the conception of the self and the conception of the so-called human – non-human (more-than-human) relationship.

When we consider sexuality as an embodied social discourse and practice in our endeavours to sketch an anthropology of the Hebrew Bible, this has repercussions for the conception of the self and the Western preoccupation with individuality. The old quest to discover whether the ancient Israelites knew about individuality, and whether the biblical texts attest to an inner self and self-reflection (as discussed in the beginning of this article) has to be reformulated against the backdrop of embodied experiences and practices such as sexuality. Once cultural phenomenological approaches, such as research on emotions and senses, are taken fully into consideration, topics relating to lived experience and the embodiment of socio-cultural ideals in sexual practices become more important. That the body is constantly being made up and reshaped by practices, beliefs, and discourses has yet to be fully realized in the study of biblical texts. Sexuality is a fundamental embodied practice to explore oneself, the body of the other, and the materiality of the world and to rethink and redefine the self. This holds true for food as well. As embodied practices of the self and the community, food and meals are the site where discourses and material phenomena come together to construct individual and collective identity. Studying embodied practices highlights the interrelatedness of subjects and objects. As a result, the incorporation of food (studies) and sexuality challenges our androcentric and anthropocentric set-up of anthropologies of the Hebrew Bible. Sexuality as depicted in the love poems depicts selfhood as permeable, fluid, relational and embodied. Food as vibrant matter transforms, genders, and constitutes the human body and the self.<sup>89</sup> Personhood has thus to be unfolded as an embodied, material, performative, gendered and relational concept in Hebrew Bible studies and in particular in our anthropological research.

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### *Notes*

1. The article goes back to the 2023 Mowinckel Lecture at the University of Oslo. The original title of the lecture was: "In the Beginning There is the Body: Rethinking the Anthropology of the Hebrew Bible." I

would like to express my gratitude to Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme and the entire Faculty of Theology at the University of Oslo for their trust and warm hospitality on the occasion of the Mowinckel Lecture. It has been an honour and a pleasure to return to Oslo, where my scholarly investigation on body began with "Gender Trouble in the Old Testament" at IOSOT 1998 and to return to Sigmund Mowinckel and his insights into Psalm 34, which he aptly labelled "wisdom poetry", for the Mowinckel Seminar on "Taste and See the Goodness of JHWH (Ps 34:9): From Reception Aesthetics to Po/et(h)ics."

2. For a recent overview of the field, see Meister and Borsch, *Idealisiert, sexualisiert*.
3. See Synnott and Howes, "From Measurement to Meaning."
4. See Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*.
5. This holds true for many approaches in feminist theology and hermeneutics; for an early critical reflection and outline from within historical gender studies, see Canning, "The Body as Method."
6. Merleau-Ponty (*Phenomenology of Perception*) calls this "corps propre" our own lived embodiment.
7. Canning, "The Body as Method," 505.
8. See Howes, *Varieties of Sensory Experience*.
9. For an earlier discussion, see Erbele-Küster, "Food in the Tetrateuch"; Erbele-Küster, "Biblical Hermeneutics of Food."
10. See, for example, Lorenzen and de Hemmer Gudme, *Kroppen*; Schroer and Staubli, *Die Körpersymbolik*; Hedwig-Jahnow-Forschungsprojekt, *Körperkonzepte im Ersten Testament*; for studies on the body in the Ancient Near East, see Asher-Greve, "The Essential Body."
11. Wolff, *Anthropologie*. Within the two different scholarly traditions of understanding anthropology, the Germanophone scholarship understands the term "anthropology" as *Menschenkunde* and the anglophone tradition is much more influenced by social anthropology and is less exegetically oriented. Slowly they are starting to be developed in dialogue with each other.
12. Translation of biblical texts are by the author if not otherwise stated.
13. Wolff, *Anthropologie*, 26: "Dabei hat der Mensch nicht n., sondern er ist n., er lebt als n."
14. Wagner, "Körperbegriffe," 309–11.
15. Janowski, "Das Herz – ein Beziehungsorgan"; Smith, "Heart and Innards."
16. Frevel, "Von der Selbstbeobachtung" and "Never Mind."
17. Frevel, "Never Mind," 99–101.
18. Grohmann, "Individualität und Selbstreflexion"; Gillmayr-Bucher, "Ich wachte."
19. Gillmayr-Bucher, "Ich wachte," 286f; Móricz, *Wie die Verwundeten*.
20. Grohmann, "Individualität und Selbstreflexion."
21. Di Vito, "Old Testament Anthropology," 221: The biblical person is "relatively transparent, socialized, and embodied (in other words, is altogether lacking in a sense of 'inner depths')"; for a critique of his concept, cf. Frevel, "Von der Selbstbeobachtung."
22. Dietrich, "Sozialanthropologie" unfolds the implications for social anthropology in the role of memory, social norms, habitus, honour, and shame.
23. Schroer and Staubli, "Bodily and Embodied." For an investigation of the body to express identity in Judeo-Hellenistic literature, see Mirguet, "Introductory Reflections on Embodiment." For an early statement, see Krieg: "Der Mensch ist ein durchaus relationales Wesen. Ausdrucksrahmen dieser Relationalität ist seine Leiblichkeit" ("Leiblichkeit im Alten Testament," 9).
24. For an overview, see Gillmayr-Bucher, "Emotion und Kommunikation" and Mirguet, "What is an Emotion?"
25. Avrahami, "The Study."
26. See Kotrosits, *How Things Feel*.
27. Stavropoulou, "Making Bodies," 533.
28. Crossland, "Materiality and Embodiment."
29. For a methodological reflection of the "use" of iconography (in anthropology), see Berlejung, "The Anthropology of Iconography." On the iconography of food, see Fu, "Iconography of Food and Drink." For further insights into iconographic methods, see Erbele-Küster, "Bilder unterrichten."
30. See the approach by Biermann, "Wearing a Seal."
31. In the recent *T&T Clark Handbook of Anthropology and the Hebrew Bible*, one finds only nine mentions of the term "sexuality" across four of the volume's twenty-six chapters. Food has an entry on its own by Cynthia Shaffer-Elliott. In the volume on *Individualität in Literaturen*, sexuality is almost disregarded. The recent reference book by Bernd Janowski, *Anthropologie des Alten Testaments* has a subsection on eroticism and sexuality in the chapter on gender and generations; the issue of food is treated in the

- chapter on work. The most recent *Handbuch Alttestamentliche Anthropologie* has an entry called “Sexuality” in the section on personhood and an entry labelled “Food” in the section on social and ethical aspects.
32. Against this backdrop, it becomes obvious why the debate on whether there was sexuality/sex in Eden is so passionate (cf. Fischer, *Liebe*).
  33. The terms to describe the interrelatedness of embodiment (Leib) and society have been introduced into Germanophone Old Testament scholarship by Bernd Janowski (for example, *Der Mensch im Alten Testament; Anthropologie des Alten Testaments*), drawing on the work by the Egyptologist Jan Assmann.
  34. Malul, *Knowledge, Control and Sex*. For a discussion of his arguments, see Avrahmi, *The Senses of Scripture*, 10ff.
  35. Stewart, “Categories of Sexuality.”
  36. Lilly, “The Fertility of Bones.”
  37. Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, especially 21–28.
  38. According to Mitchell, “But this experience of sexuality described by  $\text{בוא אל}$  is never used of sexual intercourse legitimized by a (first) marriage” (“Coming, Going, and Knowing,” 108). But cf. Gen 6:4; 16:2, 4; 19:31; 30:3, 4; 38:8, 9; one could also add to the list Ps 51:1.
  39. Mitchell, “Coming, Going, and Knowing,” 111.
  40. Avrahmi, *Senses of Scripture*, labels it as “sensorium” (kinaesthesia acquiring knowledge); cf. Mitchell, “Coming, Going, and Knowing,” 99f.
  41. Mitchell, “Coming, Going, and Knowing,” 99.
  42. Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 24.
  43. *Ibid.*, 24–5; Erbele-Küster, *Body, Gender and Purity*, 109–111, Mitchell, “Coming, Going, and Knowing,” 100, 104; Olyan, “And with a Male,” 185.
  44. On the issue of passivity and agency, see the classical study by Olyan, “And with a Male,” and more recently Töyräänvuori, “Homosexuality.”
  45. Translation follows Mitchell, “Coming, Going, and Knowing,” 104. Töyräänvuori, “Homosexuality,” 239 suggests as a literal translation: “And with a male you will not lie down the bed(ding)s of a woman.”
  46. Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 29.
  47. *Ibid.*, 31–41. Avrahmi, also lists “mouth” as referring to the female sexual organ (*Senses of Scripture*, 111).
  48. Erbele-Küster, “Gender Trouble” and *Body, Gender and Purity*, 89–91.
  49. Ruane, *Sacrifice and Gender*, 182.
  50. Erbele-Küster, “Körperbestimmungen in Lev 11–15.”
  51. Erbele-Küster, “The Ritual Texts.” Feder speaks of an “embodied rationality,” implying that the conception of impurity is grounded in emotional and bodily experience (“Contagion and Cognition,” 72, 151–167).
  52. As Hamilakis underlines, wine is not an abstract and timeless item of the so-called Mediterranean regime; also, the social and ritual contexts where wine is consumed have to be considered, as well as how it is produced (“Food Technologies,” esp. 44f, 49); cf. Welton, “Eating upon the Mountains.”
  53. Brenner, “Food of Love,” esp. 108–110.
  54. *Ibid.*, 108.
  55. Exum, *Song of Songs*, 182.
  56. Translation follows Exum, who understands the verse as spoken by the women in Jerusalem who are addressing the lovers and the audience at large (*Song of Songs*, 153, 155, 182f).
  57. Almog, “Flowing Myrrh.”
  58. Lavoie and Létourneau, “Herméneutique queer,” 503–528.
  59. *Ibid.*, 515f (translation by author).
  60. Murphy, *Song of Songs*, 165.
  61. Case proposes that “the myrrh can be understood as the lubricating fluid which a woman’s vagina produces upon sexual arousal” (“Cunning Linguists,” 181).
  62. Peetz, “Esst, Freunde, trinkt,” 167–168.
  63. Mitchell, “Coming, Going, and Knowing,” 110–11. Mitchell goes on to say that, for virgins and victims of rape, it is different: “They do not know and they are not come into. They are disembodied, incorporeal.” (111). Her distinction lies in whether males or females are focused on. I have added other features, such as sensing, sexual pleasure, and agency.

64. For this conception of personhood in cultural anthropology and archaeology, see Crossland, "Materiality and Embodiment," esp. 391ff.
65. James, *Landscapes of the Song of Songs*, 51.
66. Pelluchon, *Nourishment*.
67. Shaffer-Elliott, "The Anthropology of Food," 434.
68. For a recent overview, see Meyers, "Food and Gender," 385–387.
69. See, for example, Fu, Shafer-Elliott and Meyers, *T&T Clark Handbook*.
70. Gudme, *Himmelsk føde*.
71. Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, 78.
72. Stordalen, "The God," 5.
73. According to Tilford (*Sensing World*, 123), the cognitive linguistics metaphor by Lakoff ("cognition is ingestion") is rarely used in ancient wisdom literature.
74. Meyers, "Food," 144.
75. James, *Landscapes*, 61: "Eden" means "luxury" or "delight."
76. Cf. the criteria proposed by cultural anthropologists Howes and Classen: "How are the senses of the first human beings portrayed? If there is a fall from grace, does this come about through the misuse of any particular sense?" ("Conclusion," 280).
77. Erbele-Küster, *Verführung zum Guten*, 151, 155–56.
78. Mol ("I Eat an Apple") reflects on incorporating food as part of theorizing on subjecthood and asks questions such as whether the apple (food) becomes part of the body and hence part of the person or whether it remains an agent.
79. Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts*, 5.
80. Altmann et al., *Food Taboos*, 1.
81. Greer, "Prohibited Pigs."
82. Altmann and Angelini, "Purity, Taboo and Food," 18.
83. Welton ("Ritual") attributes agency to animals in the sacrifice.
84. See note 31 above.
85. The plea by Lavoie and Létourneau, "Herméneutique queer," 512. See the article in the recent handbook *Handbuch Alttestamentliche Anthropologie* by Schellenberg, "Anthropologie des Hohenliedes."
86. Lilly, "The Fertility of Bones," 447 pleads for exploring "how linguistic features related to embodiment reveal how cultures 'think with' or 'through' the materiality of bodies, using embodiment, its material conceptions, its relations, and its perceptual, sensory, and affective states to construct epistemologies about a wide range of cultural domains."
87. See the phenomenological approach by Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst*, 9: "Der Leib ist mit im Spiel, auch wenn wir über ihn sprechen."
88. In a similar way, James, *Landscapes*, 16.35–37.57.
89. Tilford underlines that ingesting focuses on internal subjective processes: "Food transfers its inherent qualities onto the perceiver as it is broken down and absorbed into the body, moral food transfers its essential character onto the one who eats it" (*Sensing World*, 134).

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