

Daughter Zion, Mother Zion, Witch Zion

Sexual Violence and Jewish Persecution in Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*

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Abstract

“Witch-hunt” is a phrase that has become increasingly present within current political and popular discourse, and is often exploited to delegitimize political and sexual allegations. This contemporary trend inverts and reframes historical witch-hunt narratives, exemplified by the Spanish Inquisition’s persecution of heretics and the early modern witch craze in Europe. Nevertheless, as with its traditional usage, modern applications of the “witch-hunt” trope still enable men in power to victimize the powerless, predominately women and/or religious minorities. A novel that embodies the enduring appeal of witch-hunt narratives is Walter Scott’s nineteenth-century novel *Ivanhoe* (1819) and his portrayal of the central character Rebecca. Through her subjection to Jewish persecution and the threat of sexual violence, Rebecca’s story encapsulates the witch-hunt narrative, but her capture, near martyrdom, and eventual rescue also parallels the biblical Zion traditions. This article explores Rebecca as a personified Zion figure within Scott’s novel and its subsequent film and TV adaptations, interrogating the use of witch-hunt narratives to identify Rebecca as “whore” and “witch.” The author also considers the ways in which Rebecca is transformed from the divinely cherished Daughter Zion to the redemptive and nurturing Mother Zion.

Key Words

Zion; *Ivanhoe*; Sir Walter Scott; witch; witch-hunt, persecution

Introduction

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live (Exod. 22:18)

The Hebrew witch, therefore, or she who communicated, or attempted to communicate with an evil spirit, was justly punished with death, though her communication with the spiritual world might either not exist at all, or be of a nature much less intimate than has been ascribed to the witches of later days. (Scott [1830] 1884, 52)

In the era of #MeToo, and with Donald Trump and Brexit defining the political landscapes of the United States and United Kingdom respectively, one phrase is persistently exploited to delegitimize allegations of political or sexual misconduct: witch-hunts. Appealing to the notion that these allegations are unfounded and the accused are therefore innocent, this trope has been seized upon by celebrities, politicians, and other high-profile individuals. There are too many to list here, but some of the people employing this trope, or who have had it invoked by supporters on their behalf, include: Harvey Weinstein, former film producer and co-founder of

Miramax, against whom allegations of sexual abuse inspired the relaunch of the #MeToo movement; singer-songwriter R Kelly, who faces allegations spanning back to the 1990s of sexual abuse, possessing child pornography, and entrapping women in a sex cult; Arron Banks, a major Brexit donor to the Leave Campaign, who is being investigated for claims that his funding came from Russia; Boris Johnson, whose comments regarding burqas triggered a formal probe; and, of course, Donald Trump. The allegations of sexual, financial, and political abuse against Trump are innumerable, but the special counsel investigation led by Robert Mueller into these allegations has become almost synonymous among Trump's supporters with the term "witch-hunt."¹ These examples offer but a small snapshot into this phenomenon, focusing on individuals who are linked by allegations that they have committed either sexual abuse or financial or political misconduct. Notably, all of these figures are men in positions of power. This contemporary phenomenon thus inverts the traditional and historical narrative of witch-hunts exemplified during both the Spanish Inquisition's persecution of heretics (starting in the late-fifteenth century) and the peak period of witch-hunts in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe. As Henry Kamen (2014, 22) observes, the Inquisition was initially established as "a body whose entire concern was with judaizers" and "conversos" (Jewish converts to Catholicism), while the early modern witch-hunts in England were characterized by the Pendle witch trials and the Essex witch-hunts led by the now infamous Witchfinder General, Matthew Hopkins. These historical examples both involved those in power making accusations against those who possessed no power themselves. Moreover, the victims were predominantly women or religious minorities; as Kamen notes, in most regions across Europe, women made up more than three-fourths of those accused of witchcraft (291). Contemporary uses (or abuses) of the witch-hunt trope thus reframe the traditional narrative, evoking it to allow powerful men to maintain their power, and to hide their perpetration of political corruption, religious oppression, and gendered violence behind discourses of persecution.

A novel that embodies the enduring appeal of witch-hunt narratives is *Ivanhoe*, published in 1819 by celebrated Scottish novelist, poet, and historian Walter Scott.² Renowned for its portrayal of the Jewess Rebecca just as much as for the novel's eponymous hero, *Ivanhoe* is a historical novel about the union of Normans and Saxons, and thus the creation of an English national identity through the marriage of the Normanized Ivanhoe and the Saxon Rowena (Ragussis 1995, 104). It also details Jewish persecution in England during the twelfth century. In the preface to the 1830 edition, Scott declares *Ivanhoe* to be "an experiment on a subject purely English" (2008, 5), but, as Michael Ragussis has noted, Scott's experiment not only revises English history but "rewrites" it as "Anglo-Jewish history" (1995, 113). Specifically, this rewriting focuses on the novel's two main Jewish characters, Isaac of York and his daughter Rebecca. While both characters face persecution

¹ This term has not only been used by Trump's supporters to pronounce his innocence, but also by his opponents who use the witch-hunt narrative to assert that Mueller is finding a lot of "witches," and therefore Trump and his associates are guilty of the allegations. More recently, this term has been used to describe the Ukraine scandal that contributed to the Democrats launching a formal impeachment inquiry into Trump. See, for example, Tucker, Jalonick, and Balsamo (2019); Bowden (2019); McCarthy and Smith (2019).

² Although *Ivanhoe* was first published in 1819, all first editions carry the date 1820.

throughout the novel, it is Rebecca's story that encapsulates the witch-hunt narrative through her subjection to Jewish persecution and threats of sexual violence. Taken prisoner by a group of Templar Knights along with *Ivanhoe* and her father, Rebecca is then kept as the sole captive of Templar Brian de Bois-Guilbert. Bois-Guilbert first uses rhetorical persuasion and then outright coercion to pressure Rebecca into having sexual relations with him. He then falls in love with her and tries to force her to elope with him in order to save her life. The Knights Templar, under the leadership of the Grand Master Lucas de Beaumanoir, conclude that the Jewess has bewitched Bois-Guilbert and therefore place Rebecca on trial for witchcraft.

While we might follow Ragussis' (1995) suggestion and read *Ivanhoe* as a mythical aetiology of English national identity, we can also view Rebecca's story as a mythicized retelling of Jewish identity. Such a reading of the novel is encouraged by Rebecca's continual association with the biblical figure Zion. As Nadia Valman notes, Rebecca's suffering is "made to stand for that of her nation ... it is part of a collective destiny, the punitive exile that continues from Bible times" (2007, 31). Zion is typically personified within the prophetic writings of the Hebrew Bible as a female figure, specifically "a daughter, mother, bride, widow and whore" (Maier 1989, 2); this personification allows the city's conquest and capture by foreign forces to be portrayed as a sexual assault. In this article, I therefore argue that Rebecca's story parallels the biblical Zion traditions, as her capture, near martyrdom, and eventual rescue transform her from the divinely cherished Daughter Zion to the fallen Whore (or Witch) Zion, until, ultimately, she becomes the redemptive and nurturing Mother Zion. In particular, by using the repeated motif of the "whore" to identify Rebecca as Whore/Witch Zion, *Ivanhoe* presents a witch-hunt narrative that unifies gendered violence, fabricated accusations, and Jewish persecution, all the while constructing a mythical version of Jewish identity.

"Thou Shalt Not Suffer a Witch to Live"

At the heart of any discussion of witchcraft is Exod. 22:18—"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"—and its legacy in shaping a particularly Christian and patriarchal narrative of witchcraft.³ While *Ivanhoe* explores the fictional witch-hunt of a Jewish woman, Scott would later publish *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* ([1830] 1884), a collection of ten letters surveying historical and contemporary examples and discourses of demons, witchcraft, and the paranormal world. Referencing Exod. 22:18, Scott discusses depictions of magic, witchcraft, and sorcery in the Hebrew Bible alongside their cultural and legal context, observing that "the connexion between the conjurer and the demon must have been of a very different character under the law of Moses, from that which was conceived in latter days to constitute witchcraft" (1884, 50). Exemplifying sorcery and witchcraft in the Hebrew Bible, Scott argues that the Hebrew witch is justly punished for the crimes of idolatry and rebellion against God, regardless of whether or not any supernatural acts were performed (52). Magic and sorcery were not considered to be intrinsically evil, but as they functioned in opposition to God and contravened the first commandment, capital punishment was deemed appropriate. In contrast, the early modern witch craze of the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries imagined a completely different system of witchcraft, where charges of witchcraft were fabricated and exploited to

³ All biblical quotations are from the King James Version.

punish troublesome individuals, or even remove them from society altogether. As Scott suggests, “the accusation of witchcraft thus afforded to tyranny or policy the ready means of assailing persons whom it might not have been possible to convict of any other crime” (165). Scott draws on this understanding of witchcraft in *Ivanhoe*. Exploiting the formulaic narrative of the witch-hunt that demands those identified as witches be put to death regardless of their actual guilt or innocence, he depicts Rebecca being persecuted by the Templar Knights, a tyrannical, patriarchal, and religious organisation. This witch-hunt narrative would have been familiar to Scott’s readers, not from the witchcraft described in the Hebrew Bible, but from the European witch craze.

The early modern witchcraft trend was underpinned by purportedly theological doctrines, legal and philosophical treatises, as well as the Bible. Again, Exod. 22:18 is foundational. Scott highlights that the original Hebrew word in this passage means “poisoner” rather than “witch” (1884, 50). This (mis)translation can in part be traced to the publication of the King James Bible in 1611 and its subsequent versions, thus widely disseminating the equation of Exod. 22:18 with witchcraft. Despite the inaccuracy of this translation, the classification of “witch” was seized upon, contributing to the constructed image of the adversarial witch. Within the European concept of witchcraft that developed in the Middle Ages, the notion that “the witch owed her powers to having made a deliberate pact with the Devil” (Thomas 1991, 521) was popularized, and witches were aligned not only with magic but with evil and Satan himself. King James VI of Scotland (James I of England), who commissioned the King James Bible, was famously fascinated yet fearful of witches, and prior to the publication of the King James Bible, wrote his own dissertation on the supernatural, *Dæmonologie* (1597). This work appeals to canonical law to justify the persecution of those accused of witchcraft within a Christian society, but it was not the first to do so. In 1487, German Inquisitor Heinrich Kramer published *Malleus Maleficarum* (also translated as *Hammer of Witches*). Perhaps the most well-known treatise on witchcraft, this work developed detailed legal and theological theories advocating for the extermination of witches. Although the publication was condemned as being inconsistent with Catholic doctrines (witchcraft being long forbidden by the Roman Catholic Church), the *Malleus Maleficarum* became an instant bestseller. Moreover, by directly linking witchcraft to the perception of women’s spiritual weakness and natural proclivity for evil, this text laid the foundations for the emerging concept of the specifically female witch (Bailey 2002, 120). While Scott blames Exod. 22:18 for much of the “cruelty and bloodshed” occurring during the witch-hunts of this period, “either from its tenor being misunderstood, or that, being exclusively calculated from the Israelites” (1884, 50), the cultural impact of texts such as the King James Bible, *Dæmonologie*, and *Malleus Maleficarum* cannot be overlooked. Used to justify violent oppression, these texts supported the structural persecution enacted throughout the European witch-hunts and the Inquisition, where victims were largely women and/or religious minorities.

Identifying Zion

The apogee of witch-hunt narratives is the death of the accused, and, as Erin Sheley writes, the “image of the burning woman has the effect of unifying and reifying a whole legal history into one bifurcated image” (2014, 218). Concurrently signalling

the already-dead burning woman as historical relic *and* living victim, this image also recalls the Inquisition's *auto-da-fés*, where countless victims were condemned for heresy—of which witchcraft was one specific variety—and publicly burned at the stake. While European witch-hunts were becoming increasingly entrenched in gendered conventions, the persecution enacted by the Inquisition focused on those viewed to be in opposition to Christianity, including Jews. Victims were charged (via the Knights Templar) with witchcraft and endangering the Christian body politic; the intersection of Rebecca's identification as both woman and Jew thus adds another element of cultural and historical significance to *Ivanhoe*. However, Scott's fictional narrative of Rebecca is not the first to unite religious and gendered persecution, or to personify the intersection of Jewish persecution and sexual violence in the figure of a woman. Here, we can turn to the biblical figure of Zion who embodies both female and Jewish identity.

The term Zion has accrued multiple meanings, both in the biblical texts and throughout history. First mentioned in 2 Sam. 5:7 to signify the city of David, it is also used in the Hebrew Bible to denote Mount Zion and the temple precinct (Mic. 4:6-7), and the cities of Zion and Jerusalem (Isa. 52:1-2; Ps. 48:1-14). The various meanings of Zion have also been extended by synecdoche to refer to the dwelling place of God or a space filled with the divine presence (Psalm 48; 50; 74:2) and the Land of Israel (Isa. 46:13; Ps. 135:21). As Christl Maier notes, Isaiah presents the city of Zion as “a symbol of faith that unites all those who believe in YHWH, the Israelite national deity” (1989, 2). With regard to the female personification of Zion, Maier suggests that spatial and gendered elements become intertwined: “the personification allows one to think of Zion as a space and as a woman that represents the inhabitants of this space” (2). And, like women, cities (both as political entities and as populations) can be “desired, conquered, protected, and governed by men” (73). Zion appears as both the cherished daughter (Zech. 9:9; Zeph. 3:14-19; Isa. 62:11) and the suffering daughter (Mic. 4:10; Jer. 4:31), and when the city is personified as a “daughter,” particular connotations come to the fore. As Johanna Stiebert observes, the daughter is the family member who is “particularly cherished and particularly entitled to paternal protection. As such, the depiction of the suffering daughter effectively arouses emotion” (2013, 193). Though at times punished and rebuked by God, Daughter Zion continues to be cherished and protected by God: “Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more” (Zeph. 3:14-15).

Whereas Daughter Zion is loved and safeguarded by God, Mother Zion, in contrast, speaks to an exilic situation where this paternal protection has been withdrawn. The motherly role of Zion thus functions to offer comfort to the experience of pain, death, and exile while signalling to new, painless births: “Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children” (Isa. 66:8). Symbolically, nations are born through Mother Zion to whom a future time of salvation is portended (see Maier 1989, 190, 202-203).

Connecting the identities of Daughter and Mother is the identification of Zion as whore. Jeremiah 4:29-31 presents Zion as a disobedient daughter, where

Zion is not only sexualized, but the violent attack on the city is figured as a sexual assault provoked by Zion herself. The Lord is shown to chastise Daughter Zion for her inappropriate behaviour, including adorning herself, publicly displaying her beauty, and having multiple lovers. During the assault, she cries “as of a woman in labour, a groan as of one bearing her first child—the cry of Daughter Zion gasping for breath” (Jer. 4:31). Compared to the painless labour depicted in Isa. 66:8, Daughter Zion metaphorically experiences a painful first labour. This representation of Zion implies that certain behaviours justify punishment, and as this punishment is equated with sexual violence, it perpetuates the perennially common response of blaming rape victims for their own assault.

Zion in *Ivanhoe*

By the early-nineteenth century, Zion, and in particular the theme of exile, was a topic picked up by the Romantics, while Zionism as a political movement also started to emerge. The close of the eighteenth century saw a rise in publications anticipating the End Times, and predictions in which the fulfilment of a prophetic future salvation (as believed to be prophesied in Isaiah 65–66) would entail the restoration of Jews to Israel. Charles Jerram’s *An Essay Tending to Shew the Grounds Contained in Scripture for Expecting a Future Restoration of the Jews* (which won the 1796 Norrisean essay prize at the University of Cambridge) discusses the prophetic return of Jewish people to Israel, but this restoration is contingent on Jewish “repentance” and conversion to Christianity. Similar publications that place Jewish restoration and conversion at the centre of discussions of Zionism and eschatology include James Bicheno’s *Signs of the Times* (1793) and *A Word in A Season* (1795), as well as the anonymous essay *The Illuminator* (1796). The discourse of prophecy at this time was constantly “evolving and responding to contemporary events” (Crome 2018, 203), and as the turn of the century failed to bring the expected End Times, missionary organizations were established, including the *London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews* (founded in 1809). As well as promoting Jewish conversion to Christianity, one of the main aims of this particular society, also known as the *London Jews’ Society*, included encouraging the physical restoration of (Christian-converted) Jews to Israel.⁴

The increasing interest in Jewish people within prophetic, missionary, and Zionist movements grew alongside a rise in Jewish immigration to Britain. A number of debates also began regarding Jewish legal rights, epitomized by the 1753 Jewish Naturalization Act, or “Jew Bill,” that was repealed in 1754. Todd Endleman (2002, 4) notes that although Britain’s Jewish population was never high, the eighteenth century saw London become a major hub for urban Jewish life, and this small but significant increase in immigration continued into the next century, while Jewish emancipation was eventually granted in The Jews Relief Act of 1858. Against this backdrop, Byron published *Hebrew Melodies* in 1815, a collection of poems, or lyrics, accompanied by music composed by Isaac Nathan and including “Oh Weep for Those,” a lament about Zion and the wandering tribes of Israel. However, Byron was not Nathan’s original choice for this collection. Nathan first approached Scott himself, and although Scott declined, Ragussis (1995, 96) observes

⁴ For a detailed history of the *London Jews’ Society*, see Gidney (1909); Scult (1978).

that this initial choice uncannily anticipated, and perhaps even influenced, Scott's decision to pen *Ivanhoe* and thus rewrite both English and Anglo-Jewish history.

Scott is central to the creation of the historical novel genre, and discussing his Waverly novels, Susan Manning writes that they “collectively transformed what history meant” (2012, 145). Having previously focused on the history of Scotland, *Ivanhoe* marks Scott's first venture into English history, and while his decision to set this novel in the twelfth century allows his continued innovation of historical genres (specifically the genre of chivalric romance), it also aligns English history with a pivotal, and at times violent, period in Anglo-Jewish history. The narrative takes place before the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290. Significantly, the period leading up to this expulsion witnessed the invention of the blood libel and ritual murder libel⁵—where Jewish communities were accused of kidnapping and murdering Christian children for ritual sacrifices and black masses—as well as many massacres of Jewish people “each more horrifying than the last” (Rubinstein 1996, 38). One such massacre took place in York, and this is evoked by Scott through the association between *Ivanhoe*'s Jewish characters and Isaac's designation as Isaac of York. Following Jewish expulsion in 1290, and in the absence of a significant Jewish population, these stories of blood libel haunted England; indeed, even Shakespeare's Shylock popularized a bloodthirsty Jewish merchant and his bond of flesh. Oliver Cromwell officially legalized Jewish readmission in 1655, and Scott's novel falls into a developing trend of texts that address, or refute, these anti-Semitic stories and stereotypes (including George Walker's *Theodore Cyphon; or, The Benevolent Jew*, 1796; Thomas Dibdin's *The Jew and the Doctor*, 1799; Mrs Meeke's *The Spanish Campaign; or, The Jew*, 1815; Maria Edgeworth's *Harrington*, 1817). Thus, Scott's novel transforms and rewrites a violent period of Anglo-Jewish history. Drawing on its reader's awareness of the history following this period, *Ivanhoe* focuses in particular on the readmission of Jews to England and the societal shift towards tolerance (relatively speaking) in place of anti-Semitism.

Scott's transformation of this period centres on Rebecca as a personified figure of Zion. In creating Rebecca, Scott also draws on the trope of the Jewish Daughter. Exemplified in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* through Shylock's daughter Rebecca and her narrative of marriage and conversion, the Jewish Daughter trope became important in conversionist literature during this period (Ragussis 1995; Valman 2007). This genre, along with novels such as *Harrington* and *The Spanish Campaign*, typically concluded with either the marriage and conversion of the Jewish daughter, or with her death. Scott, however, rejects the traditional conversionist plot; rather than presenting Rebecca's Jewish identity as problematic or something in need of conversion, he instead centres it throughout the novel, including in her experiences of persecution. Personifying a collective Jewish identity, Rebecca transforms from Daughter Zion to Whore/Witch Zion, and then, at the end, to Mother Zion. She thus embodies a universal Jewish narrative of a nation once cherished and protected, which suffers a painful experience that leads to exile, but is ultimately left with the promise of future salvation. Furthermore, this personification also reflects a specifically Anglo-Jewish narrative: a community not necessarily cherished as such but allowed to live in relative peace until false

⁵ The most infamous of these blood libel cases include the murders of William of Norwich in 1144 and Hugh of Lincoln in 1255.

allegations of ritual sacrifice and black magic lead to violent massacres and expulsion (or exile); finally, though, the community is readmitted and offered a future peaceful coexistence in England. Nevertheless, reading Rebecca as a personification of Zion alongside witch-hunt narratives emphasizes the gendered violence inherent in the biblical Zion narrative, specifically Jer. 4:30-31.

Throughout *Ivanhoe*, Rebecca is frequently associated with Zion through her suffering, but also her beauty and sexuality: “Ah, my daughter!—Alas for the beauty of Zion!—Alas! for the captivity of Israel!” (*Ivanhoe*, 282).⁶ Her first appearance exemplifies how her appeal throughout the novel is informed by her “powerful and exotic sexuality” (Valman 2007, 4), and further echoes Jer. 4:30:

What are you doing, you devastated one?
Why dress yourself in scarlet
and put on jewels of gold?
Why highlight your eyes with makeup?
You adorn yourself in vain.
Your lovers despise you;
they want to kill you.

Here, the speaker looks upon Daughter Zion and questions the appropriateness of her dress, while associating her opulent adornment with sexual promiscuity (for which Daughter Zion is later punished). Drawing on Stiebert’s conclusion that the texts of the Hebrew Bible are “androcentric, by men, and for men,” and that the perspectives they present are “those of men” (2013, 210), this verse reveals a masculine perspective in which a father is reprimanding his daughter. We can also read this verse in terms of the notion of the “male gaze.” First coined by Laura Mulvey in relation to film theory, the male gaze identifies the construction of women displayed as sexual object, an erotic spectacle that “holds the look, plays to, and signifies [heterosexual] male desire” (Mulvey 1999, 837). Similarly, the initial portrait of Rebecca is also presented through this male gaze:

Her form was exquisitely symmetrical, and was shown to advantage by a sort of Eastern dress, which she wore according to the fashion of the females of her nation. Her turban of yellow silk suited well with the darkness of her complexion. The brilliancy of her eyes, the superb arch of her eyebrows, her well-formed aquiline nose, her teeth as white as pearl, and the profusion of her sable tresses . . . It is true, that of the golden and pearl-studded clasps, which closed her vest from the throat to the waist, the three uppermost were left unfastened on account of the heat, which something enlarged the prospect to which we allude. A diamond necklace, with pendants of inestimable value, were by this means also made more conspicuous. (*Ivanhoe*, 93-94)

The gaze in this scene is not her father’s, although Rebecca is depicted clinging to his arm as if seeking paternal protection, but is instead associated with the gaze of her apparent Prince John. Described as a “shrewd connoisseur,” his “quick eye” is

⁶ All page references to *Ivanhoe* are from the 2008 edition (see References for details).

“much more agreeably attracted by the beautiful daughter of Zion” (*Ivanhoe*, 93). The physical description of both Daughter Zion in Jer. 4:30 and Rebecca—explicitly identified in the novel as the beautiful daughter of Zion—dissects the female body, categorizing constituent parts separately. While the speaker in Jeremiah itemizes Daughter Zion’s scarlet attire, gold jewels, and eyes highlighted with makeup, Rebecca is similarly catalogued, and Scott uses blazon (for example, “her teeth as white as pearl”) to further emphasize this bodily dissection. In other words, Daughter Zion and Rebecca are depicted as the sum of their physical parts; their individuality is removed and they are simply portrayed as two-dimensional sexualized objects.

Furthermore, the male gaze through which Rebecca is initially constructed compels the reader to appraise her physically. As the scene is narrated, the reader is placed in the same position as Prince John, whose gaze scans Rebecca from her turban, to her face, and then to her partially exposed breasts. Her dress and body, immediately compared to that of the Saxon Rowena, therefore emphasize her “exotic sexuality” as she is “conflated with the Oriental woman” (Valman 2007, 4). Through her dark complexion, eyes, and hair, her exoticized Eastern dress, and her volume of expensive accessories, Rebecca is marked as different and Other in explicitly gendered terms, while the reader is compelled to focus on her exposed body parts. Although not reprimanded by a father figure here, the objectification and sexualization of Rebecca’s body suggests that her seeming exotic sexuality is desirable but forbidden. Rebecca looks for paternal protection and thus does not actively seek out this taboo desirability, but it is nonetheless imposed on her through the male gaze.

The imposition of this gaze is further demonstrated in the 1982 film adaptation of *Ivanhoe*. In this same scene, Rebecca (Oliva Hussey) is dressed primarily in red with gold embellishments and covered in a long, opaque, red veil. Throughout the film, her outfits comprise a varied and bright colour palette consisting of yellows, reds, purples, and golds. In a later scene, she is portrayed wearing yellows and golds exclusively. At the tournament scene, however, the near monochrome bright red of Rebecca’s outfit heightens her exotic sexualization and distinguishes her from the crowd, who are dressed in more muted colours, including Rowena’s (Lysette Anthony) outfit of pastel blues and pinks. As the scene progresses, Bois-Guilbert (Sam Neill) rides on horseback to stand directly in front of Rebecca, where he uses his lance to lift up her veil, thus exposing her face without her consent. Although Rebecca does not react here, she does emulate Daughter Zion as a cherished and protected daughter when her father (James Mason) intervenes to protect her, physically seizing Bois-Guilbert’s lance and pushing it back aggressively. Significantly, this exchange is shot from the point of view of Bois-Guilbert, placing the viewer in his position. We are thus compelled to observe this scene, and therefore to observe Rebecca, from his perspective, as if we too are complicit, not only in his male gaze but in the act of unveiling itself. Associated with unveiling and undressing (through Rebecca’s exposed body), the male gaze is presented as intrusive and unwelcome, making clear that this gaze does not seek consent and can be viewed as an unsolicited physical assault. This interaction also serves to foreshadow Bois-Guilbert’s later kidnapping of Rebecca and his threats of sexual violence towards her.

Before moving on from this scene, it is worth considering the earlier 1952 adaptation of *Ivanhoe* which presents Rebecca (Elizabeth Taylor) through this male gaze in a slightly different way. By the time we reach the tournament scene in this film, we have already seen Rebecca on three previous occasions: the first occurring outside her house, the second inside her house, and the third in Ivanhoe's (Robert Taylor) lodgings. In each of these scenes, shots frame Rebecca using windows and doorways; she gazes at Ivanhoe while the camera focuses on her, and at times, but not always, Ivanhoe's point of view aligns with that of the camera. For example, the first scene uses low- and high-angle shots to show Rebecca standing in an upstairs window looking down at her father and Ivanhoe who are standing below. Realizing a stranger is with her father, Rebecca cover the lower half of her face with her veil while continuing to observe, and Ivanhoe glances up and aligns his gaze with the camera's point of view, before continuing to assist Isaac (Felix Aylmer). In the second scene, Rebecca stands half-hidden in a doorway. Ivanhoe and her father are talking within a well-lit room while Rebecca looks on from the shadows with only a beaded curtain separating them. Over-the-shoulder shots position Rebecca in the foreground as she gazes into the room, while the doorway itself frames both the room and, more importantly, Ivanhoe. Later in the same scene, a shot from within the room shows Rebecca reflected in a mirror placed on the wall. Framed by both the mirror and the doorway, again Ivanhoe's gaze aligns with that of the camera to perceive Rebecca, who once more seeks to conceal herself, this time by withdrawing fully into the shadows. As Ivanhoe leaves, Rebecca emerges from behind the beaded curtain and stands in the doorway; a medium close-up shot focuses on the unveiled Rebecca as she gazes after Ivanhoe. Though not as significant as the first and second scenes in terms of the male gaze, the third scene depicts an intimate encounter between Ivanhoe and Rebecca. Ivanhoe catches Rebecca attempting to escape from his room through the window, in her attempt to secretly give him her jewels to enable his participation in the forthcoming tournament.

The construction of these scenes reveals Rebecca's sexual desire for Ivanhoe: this desire is forbidden, but it also contributes to Rebecca's own objectification and desirability. Point-of-view shots disclose that Ivanhoe is the object of Rebecca's gaze, and medium close-ups reveal her sustained observation of Ivanhoe, while her sighs expose her desire. However, the default perspective is contained within the male gaze; as Rebecca watches and desires Ivanhoe, the viewer watches and desires Rebecca as "erotic object for the spectator" (Mulvey 1999, 838). In particular, this is achieved through over-the-shoulder shots and medium close-ups that place Rebecca in the foreground. When aware of Ivanhoe's gaze upon her, Rebecca acknowledges the impropriety by stepping back from the window, back into the shadows, or attempting to escape from his room. Similarly, she also veils her face, but only the lower half, thus allowing her own gaze to continue. The first two scenes further establish a physical boundary between Ivanhoe and Rebecca, but one that can be crossed. For example, they are separated first by being outside and inside Isaac's house, and on the ground floor and first floor, and then by a doorway divided only by a beaded curtain (and they finally interact in the third scene). However, despite being aware that such exposure—through the lack of barriers or face covering—is improper, the viewer is permitted to gaze upon Rebecca as she is alone and unveiled. Thus, by the time we reach the tournament scene in this 1952 retelling, Rebecca's status as erotic object for the viewer has already been established.

Paralleling the paternal rebuke of Daughter Zion in Jer. 4.30, Isaac is shown to observe his daughter's gaze and interest in Ivanhoe with confusion, before stating that he approves of her action to bestow her jewels upon Ivanhoe (thus facilitating his participation in the tournament) but his approval is "only of the gift." Although the tone of Isaac's rebuke differs from that in Jeremiah, in that Isaac appears more caring and does not threaten punishment in response to her behaviour, he nonetheless censures Rebecca's sexual desire and any potential romantic or sexual relations between his daughter and Ivanhoe (and by proxy, other non-Jews). In response to her father's words here, Rebecca—who had let her face become uncovered as she watched Ivanhoe defeat a Templar Knight and then ride up to her to show his gratitude—purposely veils the lower half of her face again. By doing so, she appears to accept her father's rebuke and thus confirms the impropriety of her desire and her exposed body.

Celebrated as a story of English history and national identity, *Ivanhoe* has been continually adapted across different mediums since its publication, and it is worth noting that the 1952 and 1982 film adaptations are situated within their own generic, historical, and cultural contexts. Operating within a visual medium, the actors cast as Rebecca in these adaptations are not Jewish at the time of filming, although Taylor later converted to Judaism in 1959 and subsequently became an active supporter of Jewish and Zionist causes. Nonetheless, this casting choice does raise questions regarding the authenticity of a Jewish story within a film celebrated for its portrayal of Jewish characters, and particularly one originally written by a Christian author. Starring Taylor, one of the most popular stars of classical Hollywood in the 1950s, the 1952 version produced by MGM (one of Hollywood's most influential studios at the time) was also released in a decade that saw the rising popularity of biblical epics such as *David and Bathsheba* (1951) and *The Ten Commandments* (1956). *Ivanhoe* (1952) is a historical epic, but similarly draws on historical and biblical stories to portray narratives of sex and violence in an entertaining yet acceptable way. Capitalizing on Taylor's celebrity, and the portrayal of sex and violence popularized by biblical epics, *Ivanhoe* became the highest grossing film of 1952. In contrast, the 1982 version was created in a period following the decline of the biblical epic. Drawing on Hussey's acclaimed role as Shakespeare's star-crossed lover in *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), this adaptation emphasizes the theme of forbidden love within Scott's historical tale. Exploiting sex, violence, and stories of taboo desires, these films demonstrate the prevailing notion that sex sells.

Nevertheless, Rebecca's consent to being observed and eroticized as an object of sexual desire is utterly absent in these scenes as they appear in both Scott's novel and the two film retellings discussed here. In fact, her acts of veiling and seeking paternal protection suggest her *lack* of consent. Although regarded as an erotic object performing a powerful and exotic sexuality, Rebecca does not seek this identification herself, and yet she is judged and punished for it. Turning to Jer. 4:30-31, it is evident that Daughter Zion is likewise not only chastised, but punished for what is perceived as her inappropriate, sexual behaviour:

I hear a cry as of a woman in labour,
a groan as of one bearing her first child,

the cry of Daughter Zion gasping for breath,
stretching out her hands and saying,
“Alas! I am fainting;
my life is given over to murderers.” (Jer. 4:30)

Like Daughter Zion, Rebecca is also subjected to physical violence and sexual threat in response to her objectification, perceived sexual promiscuity, and her subsequent identification as both a daughter *and* a whore. Reading Rebecca’s story as a witch-hunt narrative, her identification as Whore/Witch Zion underscores her lack of consent, lack of power, and the use of fabrications to justify the physical violence and the threats of sexual harm that she endures. This is particularly evident following her initial abduction, as she and others are taken to the Castle of Torquilstone, and later, as she is taken alone by Bois-Guilbert to a Templar Preceptory. There, she is discovered by the Grand Master and put on trial for witchcraft. Throughout these scenes, Rebecca’s preference for “death to dishonour” is repeatedly demonstrated (*Ivanhoe*, 256). Even though her death would be violent and painful, Rebecca consistently displays her lack of consent to Bois-Guilbert’s verbal, physical, and sexual threats. Emblematic of her non-consent is her reaction to Bois-Guilbert’s first advances at the Castle of Torquilstone. After repeatedly refusing him, she rushes to stand on the edge of a parapet, pronouncing that she will “plunge myself from the precipice; my body shall be crushed out of the very form of humanity upon the stones of the court-yard, ere it become the victim of thy brutality!” (254). Later, as Bois-Guilbert offers to save her from being burned as a witch, she demands that he “Put not a price on my deliverance” (433). These and many other examples in *Ivanhoe* demonstrate Rebecca’s refusal to either consent to a sexual relationship with Bois-Guilbert or to purchase her freedom through sex. When given a choice, Rebecca asserts absolute control over her body; any sexual encounter with Bois-Guilbert would be a violation of her bodily autonomy, while any stories regarding her sexual promiscuity are exposed as false.

Mother Zion

Despite her lack of consent, and echoing Jer. 4:31, Rebecca is punished for her perceived (though false) Whore/Witch identity; metaphorically, her suffering thus transforms her into Mother Zion. Established as Daughter Zion throughout the novel, Rebecca’s relationship to Isaac is questioned, thus introducing a kind of slippage between her daughter and mother identities. For example, at the tournament Prince John asks, “What is she, Isaac? Thy wife or thy daughter” (*Ivanhoe*, 94); later, when imprisoned at the Castle of Torquilstone, Isaac is told by his captor Front-de-Bœuf, “I deemed that yonder black-browed girl had been thy concubine, and I gave her to be a handmaiden to Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert” (237). Isaac too declares that his daughter “is the image of my deceased [wife] Rachael” (237); through her physical association with her dead mother, and the erroneous misreading of their familial relationship, Rebecca is placed in the position of her father’s wife or lover. Furthermore, Scott’s choice of names for this family—Isaac, Rebecca, and Rachael—engenders an association with the biblical Isaac, Rebekah, and Rachel. In the Genesis story, Rebekah is Isaac’s wife and Rachel the wife of their son, Jacob. It is worth noting that the apparent mutability of female identities is also implied within this original biblical narrative, to some extent at least. Genesis

26:1-11, for example, contains near-incestuous implications through the revelation that Isaac presented his wife Rebekah as his sister, although the story suggests this was for her own protection against the sexual interests of Philistine men. In *Ivanhoe*, the biblical Isaac's fears are realized, as Rebecca is misidentified and taken from her father's protection to be given to a Templar Knight. In Scott's novel, however, this is not due to deliberate deception on Isaac's part but because their familial relationship was misinterpreted by others. *Ivanhoe* depicts Isaac and Rebecca's father-daughter relationship as mutually loving and caring, Rebecca assuming the place of cherished daughter. And, while she may be the *image* of her mother, she is *not* her mother. However, Front-de-Bœuf's unintentional misreading of this relationship not only allows Rebecca to be viewed as sexual property (and thus given to Bois-Guilbert as his prize), but introduces a slippage between the identities of daughter and lover/mother, thus facilitating the suggestion that Rebecca can be considered as more than simply a daughter.

As has been noted, the personification of Zion connects spatial and gendered elements; the labour pains portrayed in Jer. 4:31 can thus be read as representing an unprotected city (and nation) under siege. The military threat against the daughter's bodily integrity reveals the insecurity of the city space as well as the emotional response of those caught up in the ensuing violence. As Maier observes, the motif of a woman in labour is frequently used as an "oracle of doom to illuminate the experience of fear and pain" (1989, 77, 84). Isaiah 1:8 also depicts a military threat in terms of the female body: highlighting her abandonment and unprotected status, Daughter Zion is left alone "like a shelter in a vineyard, like a hut in a cucumber field, like a city under siege." Without the protection of her father, Rebecca's body is similarly under threat. In the castle of Torquilstone, she is not alone in her imprisonment, and even encounters the wounded Ivanhoe. However, as the castle is attacked in order to rescue the prisoners, Rebecca is denied liberation: "[Bois-Guilbert] seized on the terrified maiden, who filled the air with her shrieks, and bore her out of the room in his arms in spite of her cries" (*Ivanhoe*, 335-36). This is the only moment during her imprisonment that Rebecca cries or shrieks, but it is a moment that recalls Daughter Zion's labour pains in Jer. 4:31. Moreover, learning of his daughter's lone imprisonment, Isaac offers all of his wealth and even his own life for his daughter's safety, imploring the Templar Knights to, "spare my daughter, deliver her in safety and honour!" (237). With her body assaulted and subjected to sexual violence, Rebecca's witch trial emphasizes her isolation and lack of protection. The initial trial positions her in opposition to allegations pronounced by the Knights Templar: an exclusively Christian and exclusively male religious order of Knights sworn to protect the Holy City. Led by the Grand Master, this particular Order is ironically named the Order of Zion, and Rebecca—Daughter Zion personified—stands before them as the lone Jew and lone woman. Moreover, her singular and isolated status is further highlighted as she prepares to burn as a witch: stripped of all her ornaments except for her long, black hair, her "Oriental garments" are substituted with "a coarse white dress, of the simplest form" (484). Dramatically contrasting with her previous exotic and colourful appearances, Rebecca's white dress paradoxically symbolizes her innocence and (sexual) purity. Marking her as victim of a patriarchal organization, this visual spectacle symbolizes the witch-hunt narrative. Although Rebecca is spared the burning, her false identification as Whore/Witch Zion reveals a patriarchal power structure in which the unprotected

bodies of women (or those without power) are threatened with physical and sexual violence while also being blamed for their perceived crimes.

Defying the violent fulfilment of the witch-hunt narrative, Rebecca survives her witchcraft trial and emerges transformed into Mother Zion. Moreover, as a chivalric romance, Rebecca's fate is decided by a trial by combat. Although claiming to love Rebecca, her original abuser Bois-Guilbert reluctantly represents the Templar Knights in battle against her chosen champion, Ivanhoe. Yet, although Ivanhoe defeats his opponent, Bois-Guilbert dies of *natural* causes, his death pronounced to be the "the judgement of God" (*Ivanhoe*, 490). Together with Rebecca's salvation, this scene envisages the prophetic deliverance of Zion in Isa. 52:2: "Shake off your dust; rise up, sit enthroned, Jerusalem. Free yourself from the chains on your neck, Daughter Zion, now a captive." Emerging from her captivity with renewed paternal protection (from both her father Isaac and also God) and no longer subject to the threat of physical and sexual assault enacted by the Knights Templar, Rebecca chooses to leave England altogether. Again, the idea of consent, bodily autonomy, and the right to choose one's fate is central to Rebecca's salvation. She refuses Bois-Guilbert's offer that he be her champion, choosing Ivanhoe instead, and then decides to leave England. It is also worth noting here that Rebecca invokes the memory of Racheal, her deceased mother, to convince her father about her decision to leave, again allowing for the suggestion that Rebecca is no longer simply just a daughter. In this way, Scott's narrative of Anglo-Jewish history is, to some extent, historically accurate in that the Jewish community must leave England so they can later be readmitted. Similarly, Rebecca's deliverance from the witch trial and safe departure from England foreshadows the future salvation prophesied in Isa. 52:2.

Furthermore, in personifying the Anglo-Jewish community who are thus doubly exiled (both from Israel, and, in 1290, from England), we can turn to the representation of Zion in Lamentations to consider Rebecca's maternal role. Maier writes that "Zion's motherhood is intrinsically connected to the exilic situation," and also that the maternal role is crucial to the survival of those exiled, particularly in shaping the "memory of the postexilic community" (1989, 190). Primarily, Zion's previous and then renewed status "enables her to grant shelter and food to her inhabitants" (191), and Rebecca is similarly depicted in this nurturing and healing role. Charged with witchcraft, she is not simply persecuted because she is a witch, but because she is a *Jewish* witch. Embodying the "Witch Zion" trope, Rebecca's supposed witchcraft not only threatens the body politic of Christianity, but through personifying Zion, her threat also lies in her ability to give birth to, nurture, and protect the Jewish nation. Rebecca's father is persecuted for his money, but Rebecca embodies a greater threat through her potential identity as mother, both literally and metaphorically. Rebecca is also the former pupil of Miriam, a Jewish healer who, unlike her pupil, fulfils the witch-hunt narrative in that she was previously accused of witchcraft and then killed. Acknowledging her biblical predecessor and Miriam her mentor, Rebecca is labelled a "second Witch of Endor" (*Ivanhoe*, 390; cf. 1 Samuel 28), and like Miriam, Rebecca employs her medical talents to heal her Jewish community along with her Christian neighbours (including Ivanhoe himself). This profession brings with it certain risks, and, further paralleling her mentor, Rebecca's medical skills are used as supporting evidence that she is a witch. This demonstrates Scott's charge in *Letters of Demonology and Witchcraft* that the witch

narrative of Exod. 22:18 has been exploited to occasion persecution against Jews. However, despite knowing her mentor's fate and the risks involved, Rebecca continues to use her skill to heal others, demonstrating that she privileges the wellbeing of the community above herself. And it is not just the Jewish community that Rebecca strives to nurture. *Ivanhoe* concludes with a meeting between Rebecca and Rowena, where Scott's Jewess reveals she is leaving England, before bestowing upon the recently married Rowena and Ivanhoe a casket filled with valuable jewels. This scene mirrors an earlier moment in the novel where Rebecca repays Ivanhoe money he had previously paid her father by furnishing him with money from her own wealth along with an additional sum. Showing gratitude to Ivanhoe for saving her father's life, these scenes also emphasize her generosity towards others and her maternal and salvific ability to provide for them.

Leaving England and cementing her identity as Mother Zion, Rebecca declares that she will devote her life to "tending to the sick, feeding the hungry, and relieving the distressed" (*Ivanhoe*, 501). But while Rebecca leaves, her legacy remains in England. In the final pages of *Ivanhoe*, the narrator remarks that Ivanhoe recollected Rebecca's "beauty and magnanimity" more than his wife might approve (502), and readers of *Ivanhoe* share this fixation. After Scott's novel was first published, several dramatic adaptations appeared in quick succession, including Thomas Dibdin's *Ivanhoe; or, The Jew's Daughter* (1820) and William Thomas Moncrieff's *Ivanhoe; or, the Jewess* (1820). An anonymous review of Moncrieff's play, written in 1820, observes that Scott's *Ivanhoe* "was very eagerly seized on by several dramatic writers, and, we believe, pieces grafted on it played at five theatres in London at the same time" ("Ivanhoe; or, The Jewess," 326). Valman (2007, 20-21) notes that out of the twenty-nine dramatic and operatic versions produced in the sixty years following *Ivanhoe*'s publication, fourteen shift the focus away from Ivanhoe and onto Rebecca, while many emphasize the Jewish elements of the production in their titles. Notably, many of Scott's readers felt so strongly that Ivanhoe should have married Rebecca instead of Rowena that Scott was compelled to address this issue in his introduction to *Ivanhoe*'s 1830 edition:

The prejudices of the age rendered such an union almost impossible ... Providence has deemed worthy of suffering merit, and it is dangerous and fatal doctrine to teach young persons, the most common readers of romance, that rectitude of conduct and of principle are either naturally allied with, or adequately rewarded by, the gratification of our passions, or attainment of our wishes. (12)

Several of the novel's film and television adaptations have continued this trend, accentuating the romantic relationship between Rebecca and Ivanhoe and even—as in the 1982 film version and the 1997 five-part television adaptation—portraying their embrace, although the ending remains unchanged. Constructed through the male gaze, the heightened romance emphasizes Rebecca's status as a sexual object; however, Rebecca's story is not a romance, but one of Jewish persecution and the perpetual threat of sexual violence. Transforming from Daughter Zion to Mother Zion through the Witch/Whore narrative, Rebecca's body is left marked by her suffering. Because she decides to leave England, the reader and viewer can assume that Rebecca herself does not return. Thus, although she survives her witch trial, it ultimately leads to her physical removal from the narrative space and story.

Conclusion

Ivanhoe is a historical novel, and like the enduring image of the burning woman, Scott's construction of Rebecca unites the past with the present. Drawn from the biblical legacy of Zion personified and the historical witch-hunt narratives, Rebecca embodies a specific, though fictional, moment in history, and also invites readers to consider the continued harm engendered through the witch-hunt trope. Rebecca is not burned at the stake, but the charge of witchcraft against her nonetheless has a lasting effect on her body and her sense of self. Her story further reveals the intersections of gendered violence with religious or racial persecution, where individuals are doubly discriminated against because of their multifaceted identities. Today, the witch-hunt trope is invoked by those in power to protect and maintain this power when they stand accused of sexual, political, or financial abuse. And while they may rewrite this narrative trope to reframe themselves as victims, Scott's novel reminds us instead that individuals abused by those in power, and whose persecution is supported by societal power structures, should be identified as the real victims.

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