What is a “Helpmate”?: Using Comparative Semitic Linguistics to Propose New Translations for Ezer Kenegdo

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What is a “Helpmate?” Using Comparative Semitic Linguistics to Propose New Translations for *Ezer Kenegdo*

By

Rebekah Call

Claremont Graduate University
2023
Approval of the Dissertation Committee

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the Committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of Rebekah Call as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Religion with a concentration in Critical Comparative Scriptures.

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Abstract

What is a “Helpmate?” Using Comparative Semitic Linguistics to Propose New Translations for Ezer Kenegdo

By

Rebekah Call

Claremont Graduate University: 2023

This dissertation argues that a comparative Semitic analysis of ezer kenegdo (KJV: “help meet”) in Genesis 2:18, 20 can provide new semantic ranges that enrich the reading of gender roles in Genesis 1-3.

The usage of ezer kenegdo in Genesis 2:18, 20 has defied satisfactory interpretation, even though this passage has played an important role in the conversation surrounding gender roles in the Bible, in other religious discourse, and even aspects of culture influenced by elements of Jewish and Christian worldviews. The struggle with this phrase is twofold: the first difficulty lies in the association of ezer “help” with subordinate female roles. The second problem has to do with the word neged, whose Hebrew form defies grammatical categorization, with the effect that its common translation values lack a strong correlation to the actual Hebrew text. It is possible that the difficulty in producing suitable translations and interpretations of ezer kenegdo stems not from a lack of basic understanding of cultural norms, but rather from a lack of understanding of the basic semantic ranges of the terms ezer and neged. Certainly, the struggle inherent to translating and interpreting this phrase illustrates the need for other approaches. While much ink has been shed over how best to approach the traditional view of these words, very few studies have applied a comparative Semitic linguistic approach to this phrase in the search for new semantic ranges. Of these few studies, none have been comprehensive.
This dissertation utilizes a comparative Semitic Linguistic approach, identifying potential cognates from Akkadian, Arabic, Aramaic, and Ugaritic. These lists of cognates are first analyzed according to linguistic suitability. They are then analyzed in context of the Genesis 1-3 account, with particular attention to whether semantic ranges fit the narrative through an examination of grammar, context, theme, and semantics within the text itself. Following this analysis, a list is provided of the translation values that are linguistically and contextually appropriate to Genesis 1-3.

In summary, this dissertation identifies what *ezer kenegdo* does not mean, and gives a range of values for what it can mean. In doing so, it reframes the conversation surrounding *ezer kenegdo* by disproving many traditional theological assumptions about the text that tend to simplify, objectify, and condemn the woman, or that focus on hierarchy in the male-female relationship in the Garden of Eden. This dissertation provides evidence that the woman is not a weak, evil creation; however, she is also not a paragon of beauty and virtue. Rather, based on *ezer kenegdo*, the text itself regards the woman in an overwhelmingly positive light as a complex, dynamic, many-layered human being.
Dedication

To women.
Acknowledgements

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the many, many people who have supported me in the journey to produce this piece of scholarship. Firstly, I would like to thank Tammi Schneider for helping me learn how to think about the text, for always cheering me on, and for greatly simplifying my process by pointing out the portions of my research plan that were unnecessary. Tammi, the opportunity to work with you and to be one of your students is one of the most prominent reasons I am glad to have attended CGU.

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Thank you to all of my family for your help and support, especially to my father, Ben Call, my sister, Sarah Murray, my brother, Joseph Call, and my sister-in-law, Ruth Call. Thank
you for many hours of listening to me hash out my ideas, and for your probing questions in response that helped me wrap my mind around what I wanted to say. Thank you to my parents, Ben and Jackie Call, for financial help. It has made a world of difference, knowing that I had a safety net. Other family members also deserve my appreciation for letting me live with them while researching and writing. To the Ben and Sarah Murray family, and the Joseph and Ruth Call family: you kept me sane, for which I am profoundly grateful.

My thanks to Eddie Surman for training me in the usage of Atlas.ti. While my initial dataset through Atlas.ti does not figure into this dissertation, the results from Atlas.ti helped shape the way I thought about the text, which in turn impacted my eventual approach.

To Janette Olson: you helped me see the possibility of light at the end of the tunnel when I felt like giving up. Thank you.

To Monica Eckert: thank you for believing in me so much that I could not help but believe in myself.

Thank you to Heather Burrow for walking this path with me.

To my dear friends and colleagues at CGU: thank you. You have helped make my doctoral journey beautiful. Thank you for always cheering me on, for listening to and pushing back on my ideas, and for sharing your ideas. My friendship with you has been a highlight of my studies and of my life. I am honored to be associated with you.
Preface: A Guide to Reading this Dissertation

Many people have expressed a desire to read the results of my research. I understand that my readers will have diverse backgrounds and different interests. In response, I have prepared a guide for those who may not be as intrigued by some of the nitty-gritty details. Therefore, this guide maps out ways to read the dissertation from shortest/simplest to longest/most detailed.

If you are interested in a very brief synopsis of what I have done in my study, what I found, and why it matters, then read the Abstract as well as the So What? and Conclusion chapters. Altogether, these total fewer than ten pages, and give a condensed idea of what my research is about.

If you would like to read in more depth about the Genesis 1-3 account, and why certain semantic ranges do/do not fit the context, then begin with the Abstract, and then read from Analysis of Cognates to the end. This reading method will give the most meat from my analysis without turning to the heavier portions of linguistics and grammar. Realize, however, that it does not discuss how I got my dataset/ranges of cognates, why I am writing on this topic, or what others have said on the matter.

If you are wanting to know how I arrived at the list of cognates that are being analyzed, then read the Methodology chapter. This chapter details how I produced and organized my dataset.

Finally, if you are interested in why I chose this topic, how it fits into the current scholarly conversation, and the gap I aim to fill, then begin with the Introduction.

I wish you happy reading!
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Introduction

And Yahweh Elohim said, “It is not good that the human be alone. I will make for him an ezer kenegdo.” And Yahweh Elohim shaped from the ground each life of the field, and every bird of the heavens; and he brought them unto the human to see what he would call it. And for each, what the human called it—breathing life, that was its name. And the human called names for all the livestock, and for the fowl of the heavens, and for each life in the field. But for the human—he did not find an ezer kenegdo.¹

This is a surprisingly difficult passage to interpret. What is an ezer kenegdo? What is the relationship of the woman to the man? Does deity have expectations for the woman based upon this appellation? What events, if any, does ezer kenegdo foreshadow? For many, the answers to these questions are built upon centuries of tradition, and provide justification for viewing the woman in the garden as a lesser being, one who brought a curse upon all of humanity because of her inability to follow divine direction. However, acknowledging a tradition’s long history is not necessarily the same as proving the validity of a reading by illustrating that the reading actually is supported by the grammar and linguistics of its context.

This dissertation aims to explore new understandings of ezer kenegdo in Genesis 2:18 and 20, by identifying new semantic ranges through analogy with other Semitic languages, and by applying a text-centric approach to evaluate which semantic ranges can be supported by the context of Genesis 1-3. In doing so, this dissertation maintains that multiple textually supported readings are possible, and may even be stronger than traditional readings of the text.

¹ Genesis 2:18-20.
The proposal of a project does not necessarily justify the project itself. Therefore, to demonstrate the applicability of this research, we will now cover what has been written in roughly the last hundred years about ezer kenegdo, and illustrate what is missing in the literature.

Literature Review

The purpose of this dissertation is twofold: firstly, to utilize a comparative Semitic linguistic approach to identify through analogy cognates that correspond with ezer and neged; and secondly, to determine which of those cognates can appropriately be applied to the Eden context. This literature review will position this attempt within the existing academic conversation.

Literature regarding the woman in the Garden of Eden has focused almost entirely on the woman’s relationship to the man. The publication of Trible’s 1972 article, “Eve and Adam: Genesis 2-3 Reread,” and her book, God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality in 1978 significantly changed the tenor of the conversation surrounding ezer kenegdo. Prior to Trible’s contributions, all of the examined literature discussed ezer kenegdo solely to answer the question of “what does the woman do for the man?” This literature review will first break down the general directions taken in pre-Trible interpretations, organized chronologically according to the first time each argument occurs. Generally speaking, these commentaries focus on ideas such as how the man is lacking or lonely and needs to be completed, how the woman is created to help the man fulfill his purpose, how the man should value the woman, and how male completion due to a female counterpart serves as the basis of human society, which the man cannot hope to properly comprehend without the woman’s aid.² Please note: the majority of these commentators spend no

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² All the examined works written prior to Trible fit within this category, as well as a number of publications produced after 1978. See the following (‘pre-Trible’ authors):
more than 1-2 paragraphs on interpreting ezer kenegdo, and some only write a few sentences on it. Consequently, the analysis of their writings will be brief, and will not cover every author’s writings, since many of their ideas overlap.

The earliest author analyzed for this study is Gunkel, who is perhaps the most significant pre-Trible author. This statement is based on the fact that nearly every other pre-Trible author echoes Gunkel in some fashion. Gunkel, a German liberal protestant, published his commentary in 1901, and his comments harmonize with typical interpretive efforts of his milieu. He notes that the man is found to be incomplete by deity, and that “his life is too lonely, his work too hard.”

According to Gunkel, the mention of the naming of the animals is meant to illustrate that although the animals are similar to humans, they are not meant to be Adam’s helper, thus necessitating the creation of the woman. As a very influential scholar in the field of Hebrew Bible, Gunkel’s ideas appear (sometimes specifically cited) in other authors’ commentaries. Nearly all of the pre-Trible authors mention some element of loneliness; some (noted below) also mention other reasons for the woman’s creation:

Cassuto, a Jewish Italian scholar, adds that the creation of the woman in Genesis 1 emphasizes the sexual relationship, whereas the creation of the woman in Genesis 2 emphasizes an ethical relationship.

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3 Authors who echo Gunkel: Skinner, Cassuto, Richardson, Bonhoeffer, Von Rad, Davidson, Vawter, Davis. See bibliography for full citations.

4 Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, Translated by Mark E. Biddle (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997; Original publication 1901), 11-12.

Richardson, a British Anglican scholar, is the first writer to touch on ideas of equality, noting that the woman is not subordinate to the man, and the man is not her leader. He also writes that a person can only realize oneself through the existence of an “other,” and that the woman helps the man realize himself.  

Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran pastor, chiefly added to the conversation by writing that the woman helps the man love his life in its limitation, which he could not do without a community.  

Another German Lutheran scholar, Von Rad’s main contribution is that solitude is helplessness; verse 18 speaks firstly “only of an assistant, of one who is to be for the man the embodiment of inner and outer encouragement.” Von Rad also writes that the animals can assist the human, but they are not worthy, mirrored beings in which the man can recognize himself. The naming of the animals causes the man to become aware of the desire for a similar creature, upon which Von Rad notes, “God has in mind a wonder greater than [the animals]!”

Speiser, a Jewish Polish-American Assyriologist provides perhaps the tersest explanation of ezer kenegdo in his commentary, explaining that the traditional translation is essentially correct and adequate, but can lead to confusion. Speiser writes that the Hebrew indicates “alongside him” or “corresponding to him.”

These works, from protestant Christian and Jewish scholars, hailing from both Europe and America, echo some of the chief issues with traditional interpretation surrounding the

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woman in Eden (and by extension, to women in western culture): that woman is viewed as existing only in relation to a man, with no exploration of a woman’s capabilities outside of the male perception; and that the woman’s voice (if it exists at all) is modulated entirely through the male perspective. Thus, none of these provide significant readings of the women in Eden that treat the woman as a complex and dynamic character on her own terms. Moreover, none of these commentaries engage a comparative semitic approach to discovering new ways of understanding the woman in Eden. Therefore, of the literature that predates Trible’s work, there is clearly a gap which this dissertation can fill.

Phyllis Trible’s writings changed the tenor of the conversation surrounding ezer kenegdo and gender roles in the creation account. Her research is an example of protestant Christian feminist rhetorical criticism. Since her works, much of the conversation has centered around power dynamics between the genders, querying whether the text indicates a power imbalance between the genders, or whether the narrative can be read as promoting gender equality. The majority of the subsequent authors engage with Trible’s ideas, with authors who strongly agree, and some who strongly disagree with Trible’s assessment of the woman as being at least equal, if not greater than the man.

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10 Trible, along with many of her feminist contemporaries and successors, have highly influenced my thoughts in approaching this conversation.
12 See the following (Authors who disagree with Trible): Harris, Clines, Watson, Fewell and Gunn, Stratton, Mitchell, Simkins, Yee, Brayford, Schechter, Coleman. See bibliography for full citations.
Of the authors who agree with Trible, perhaps the most significant are Carol Meyers, Lyn Bechtel, Phyllis Bird, Paul Cantz and Kalman Kaplan, and Barbara Deutschmann. Of course, there are many other excellent studies which are included in the bibliography; however, only the overall structure of the conversation will be discussed here.

Carol Meyers, a prominent feminist scholar, disputes the claim that a “helper” inherently indicates an inferior. Meyers notes that ezer can also refer to God, who is never inferior to humans. She also translates kenegdo as “opposite, corresponding to, parallel with,” or “on a par with.” Based on this, she concludes that the male-female relationship is fundamentally complementary, and is given priority even before that of a parent-child relationship, because the parent-child relationship is intrinsically hierarchical. In her later writings, Meyers also notes that while tradition labels Eve a sinner, there is no sin or seduction associated with Eve in the Biblical account.

Phyllis Bird is a Methodist feminist scholar of biblical hermeneutics. Bird’s main thrust is to note that the Genesis 2 creation of women is not highlighting differences in biology. Rather, it is serving as an origin of gender culture. Despite the fact that the account is androcentric (the man needs a helper, and so his need is filled), and despite the fact that the woman is derived from the man, she is not inferior. She confronts and completes the man. For Bird, the creation of the woman is crucial for survival, and a hierarchical relationship is not inherent to the woman’s creation, but is later imposed in Genesis 3.

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Cantz and Kaplan, both psychologists, compare and contrast the depiction of women in Greek literature with the creation of the woman in Genesis 2. The main thrust of their argument is that the Greek view of masculinity is a phallocracy, and Greek literature therefore presents a severely maligned view of women. Within Greek literature, men’s masculinity is not secure enough to handle a “real woman,” but the “biblical man is up for the task.” They argue that the Hebrew text presents a very female-positive narrative, which views woman as being essential, regards female sexuality positively, indicates that man cannot be complete without woman, and teaches that the fundamental responsibility of the sexes is to be reunited.16

Deutschmann, an Anglican feminist scholar, posits that the Genesis 1-3 narrative is an “anti-wisdom” narrative, in which humans are discouraged from the independent pursuit of wisdom.17 She writes that based on the usage of the grammatically masculine word ezer, the reader might expect a male counterpart, or at least creative wordplay. However, the phrase ezer kenegdo is hapax legomenon; the understanding of ezer kenegdo must be built from its proximate context, which indicates that the ezer kenegdo has to do with humans’ need for psycho-social relationships and support. Such relationships rely on both unity and differentiation to function in a complementary manner. The creation of the ezer kenegdo represents the final progression in the Eden narrative, in which there is no hierarchy. In addition, ezer kenegdo subverts the androcentric view of the text: the masculine human/adam is taken from the feminine earth/adamah, the human is not male until the female appears, and ezer kenegdo appears to be gender/sex indeterminate.18 Rather, the ezer kenegdo relationship is non-vertical. It is a kinship

17 Barbara Deutschmann, Creating Gender in the Garden: The Inconstant Partnership of Eve and Adam (T&T Clark, 2022), 14.
18 Deutschmann, 37-43. See also chapter 6, especially 111-114, 116-117.
that is based on love, and the narrative invites readers to “reconsider the gender politics that pits man against woman, binary against non-binary, white against black. It asks us to consider a creational partnership that supports and values difference and finds in it the necessary strength to build a better world.”

As mentioned above, there are also a number of authors who disagree with Trible’s conclusions. Of these, the most prominent by far is David Clines, although there are other important contributions by Kevin Harris, Danna Nolan Fewell and David Gunn, Gale Yee, and Roche Coleman. Once again, there are many contributions to this conversation, but only the general overview will be discussed here.

David Clines, an Australian scholar, was one of the pioneers in new methods of biblical criticism, including rhetorical, reader-response, deconstruction, and ideological criticism. While Clines’ publication was not the first to disagree with Trible, his has had, by far, the widest-reaching effects. Thus, it will be treated first in this discussion. Clines views the designation of woman as “helper” to be a stumbling block for equality. He examines ezer kenegdo, once again referring to Trible’s argument that ezer is not inferior, and may even imply superiority, since it is applied to God, and that the connotation of superiority is tempered by kenegdo, which specifies equality. Clines views that the Bible is too inherently patriarchal to support such a reading. He argues that even if a superior being is being the helper, in the very act of helping, they are being inferior, because “they are subjecting themselves to a secondary, subordinate position.”

Even in the Hebrew, Clines argues, helpers provide only tangential assistance, while the agency and responsibility remain with the person being helped. Clines then asks what Eve is actually doing

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19 Deutschmann, 221, 226.
to help, since the text seems to have something in mind. He argues that Eve does not help with working the ground or naming animals, nor is her conversation with the serpent or partaking of the fruit helpful. The only way that Eve is actually helpful is through procreation, in response to God’s command, and this is the way in which her help is distinct from the help of the animals. This explains the emphasis on nakedness, Eve’s punishment, and her very name, which has the same root letters as the Hebrew word for life. Clines concludes by quoting Augustine and Aquinas saying that for companionship or non-procreative help, a second man would have been better. Thus, “the text persists in its androcentric orientation, from which it cannot be redeemed.”

Harris, a Christian American scholar, was the first author to seriously disagree with Trible’s conclusions. Harris notes that there is much that suggests that in the text, women are viewed as inferior, with nothing to support the idea that women might be superior to men. Moreover, even the stance of gender equality is difficult to support based on the actual Genesis text: the woman is created last, after the man has established superiority over the animals. In addition, as a help meet, she is only a very small part of the man, and in a sense belongs to man, who rules over her because she partook of the fruit first. Thus, the Bible prescribes, supports, and endorses “a gender differentiation in which women take an inferior place and adopt a subservient role to men.”

Fewell and Gunn (American Christian scholars), in their chapter “Shifting the Blame,” write that in the second creation account, the focus is on the creation of social roles. As a part of that, “it is not good that the human should be alone; I will make it (him) a helper, counterpart

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21 Clines, 37.
(keneged; ‘like-opposite’) for it (him).” They focus extensively on aloneness and companionship: the deity and animals are not counterparts for the human. Perhaps “like God, the human desires its own image,” thus precipitating the division of the human into man and woman. The man claims the woman, and finds a suitable partner because they are of the same flesh. However, because the woman is the human, the human, although divided, remains alone. Thus, “the desire for relationship with a like-opposite is therefore both fulfilled and unfulfilled, fulfillable and unfulfillable.” The text perpetuates negative gender roles in that the deity brings the woman to the man—God nominates the man as being the “original inclusive being, the ‘Human.’ Thereby the human becomes both the human and the man. The woman is merely the woman,” and she exists in relation to the man’s desires to leave his parents and cleave to her. Fewell and Gunn also note that the leaving and cleaving diminishes parent-child relations, as well as relations between people of the same sex. Because the ezer kenegdo is a sexual opposite, the text represents human sexuality as monogamous, exogamous, and heterosexual.23

Gale Yee is an American Christian feminist scholar. Yee’s main contribution is her claim that the Genesis text is not indicative of Early Israelite culture. Rather, the gender roles in Genesis reflect an ideological interchange between the text’s authors and their cultural contexts. These values changed throughout history, and they all articulated “issues of power and its asymmetry in class and colonial relations,” and “replicated the material and ideological disparities found in male-female relations in ancient Israel.”24 With regards to the creation of woman, she writes that as the society became more stratified, “relations between man and

woman became more hierarchically ranked.” We see male status reflected in the production of Genesis 2. Thus, the woman is created as a “help corresponding to him,” whose primary role is procreative. But male priority is retained: she is created from the man’s substance, a reversal of the natural order of female birthing. Moreover, the man states his authority by naming the woman. “As the man is created by YHWH, a god, from the ground to serve and tend the ground, the woman, built from the man, exists to serve and tend the man.”

Coleman is a pastor of a non-denominational church in Texas. He provides a strongly worded article arguing that the woman in the garden was the first femme fatale, and that she “did not fulfill her divinely created role as the helper.” Coleman does acknowledge that there is responsibility assigned to both the man and the woman; he also considers that there should be no shifting of blame. According to Coleman, the man’s condemnation was for failing as a leader by listening to the woman instead of God, and the woman should be condemned for being the first femme fatale. All other interpretations (specifically “the denial of the fall, the depatriarchalizing of the biblical narrative and the deconstructionalist interpretation) are invalid because they “disregard the authoritative meaning of the biblical text.”

As a response to the conversation created by Trible, there also exists pushback against Trible’s very examination of equality between genders. The most notable of these is Mieke Bal, a Dutch cultural and literary theorist, who wrote that both androcentric and feminist readings of the text are “equally false.” According to Bal, the text relies on both negative and positive markers towards women in order to ensure that both men and women accept the story as

25 Yee, 70.
26 Roche Coleman, “Was Eve the First Femme Fatale?” Verbum et Ecclesia 42, no. 1 (2021), 6 (1-9).
27 Coleman, 6, 8.
normative, producing a complex narrative that fully supports neither androcentric nor feminist readings.  

Publications within Trile’s conversation are primarily written by Christian second-wave feminist scholars, or else by scholars responding to second-wave feminism. At their heart, these publications engage with the theological ideas that since the woman heeded the serpent, she is responsible for original sin, and is morally weaker than the man, inherently evil, and of lesser quality and value. Such views may be accompanied by negative perceptions about female sexuality, with the view that women’s sexuality must be protected, overseen, and even owned, since the woman was the original seductress. These interpretations also serve as the basis for the view that all women are pure as virgins and sullied (or even become succubae) after virginity is lost. Granted, these ideas are frequently no longer stated in such extremity; but the descendants of these ideas continue to permeate theological and cultural conversations. Thus, many of the

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29 Examples of this might include statements in church such as the following: “Men are meant to be leaders, and women are meant to be followers. This is because the man followed the woman into sin by eating the fruit. She showed herself to be untrustworthy as a leader, so God decided that she should learn to be humble by always following the man, who did not lead them into sin” (paraphrased from personal experience). Another indirect way in which this manifests is in the current state of women’s rights in the United States, including equal opportunity and pay. This political situation was influenced by conservative Christian movements in the 1960s and 1970s. For further discussion, see Alice Ogden Bellis, Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women’s Stories in the Hebrew Bible (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), especially pages 27, 45-63; see also Phyllis A. Bird, Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), especially pages 47-48, 165, 181; See Susan Niditch, “Genesis,” in Women’s Bible Commentary, Expanded Edition with Apocrypha, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), especially the section on “The Becoming of Woman in Genesis 2-3;” Carol Meyers, “Eve,” in Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament, ed. Carol Meyers (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000); Mignon R. Jacobs, Gender, Power, and Persuasion: The Genesis Narratives and Contemporary Portraits
authors who follow in Trible’s footsteps do create readings that reflect a feminine perspective, and the woman gains complexity in their analysis. However, none of these utilize a comparative Semitic linguistic approach in order to do so, which still leaves a gap in the literature.

Following the 1970s, there are some authors who chose to sidestep Trible’s general question regarding the text. Rather than primarily focusing on questions of equality, they tend to center their discussions on the creation of community or the importance of intimacy between two people. These authors often emphasize the importance of both genders in these endeavors.30

An excellent example of this is Walter Brueggemann, an American Protestant theologian, who identifies the creation of woman as being the creation of community, on which the goodness of the garden rests.31 He considers the creation of woman to be a second creation, in which “God engages in a sharp secularization of the human creature. God does not intend to be the man’s helper. . . . The ‘help’ the man needs and must have will be found among the ‘earthlings.’” The woman is created in newness and her emergence is as “stunning and unpredicted as the previous surprising emergence of man. The woman is also God’s free creation,” is the “crowning event in the narrative and the fulfillment of humanity,” and at the time of her creation exists in mutuality with the man.32

30 See the following, who usually approach this through the concepts of community and intimacy:
32 Brueggemann, 47, 50.
Still other authors focus on tension between the man and woman, based on the translation of *kenegdo* as being “against” or “contrary to,” commenting on the complementary nature of the genders (often through reliance on *neged*). A good example of this literature is Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, a Jewish Scottish scholar, who writes that *ezer kenegdo* means “fitting helper,” literally, “a help against him.” She then quotes Ramban, saying that it is important that “his helpmate should stand in front of him,” and adds that *kenegdo* has “confrontational implications.” Thus, the *ezer kenegdo* brings the man out of a “static, unchanging, and unwilled life.” For Zornberg, the man’s inability to find a fitting help was the purpose of his lone creation, and that he requires relationship to find fulfillment.

In addition to these foci, there has been some examination of the usage of the root *ezr* throughout the Hebrew Bible, which has provided a good basis for interpretation, provided one accepts “help” as the appropriate semantic range for *ezr*. These will be treated later on in this chapter under the section “What is *Ezer*.”

Analysis on *neged* has been even sparser than that of *ezer*. Only a few authors dive into the usage of *kenegdo*. Victor P. Hamilton, a Christian Canadian/American scholar, writes on *neged*, drawing a brief parallel to the verbal form *nagad*, meaning “tell, declare, expound, reveal, go ahead,” suggesting a connection with the ideas of “achievement, pioneering, risk, and deliberate thrust into the unknown.” Hamilton’s connection to the verbal root shows promise,

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33 Kvam, Zornberg, Eskenazi, Alter, Camille, Deutschmann. See bibliography for full citations.  
but he never explores the full interpretive potential of the root; instead, he concludes his analysis by remarking that the woman corresponds to the man as a complement. Thus, Hamilton’s near exploration of new semantic ranges ends with a return to a relatively traditional view of the female existing as a complement to the male.

Many of the above-mentioned authors have contributed in significant ways toward furthering the conversation regarding ezer kenegdo and gender roles in the Genesis account. While these authors do employ linguistic analysis (and often to great effect), they do not challenge the accepted semantic ranges of ezer or neged; as this dissertation aims to look beyond the semantic ranges of ezer “help” and neged “corresponding to,” these studies to not prove useful for this examination, and there remains a gap in the literature. Therefore, despite these authors’ contributions, this literature review will not go in further detail to their arguments. Since the purpose of this work is to employ a comparative Semitic approach to explore new semantic ranges for the roots ezr and ngd, the intricacies of the preexistent conversation cease to be relevant, as such comparative linguistic analysis will alter the contextual shape of the Eden account.

In all the literature, there are only three studies that make any attempt at using comparative Semitic Linguistics to expand the interpretive scope of ezer kenegdo. There are two comparative studies on ezer, and on study on neged:

Freedman, a Jewish American scholar, writes that the typical translations of ezer kenegdo are not suitable, because woman was not intended to be a helper, but a partner. He argues that ezr in the Hebrew Bible is a conflation of two separate ancient Semitic roots: ezr, meaning “to rescue, save,” and ġzr, meaning “to be strong.” Through examination of context and of poetic

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37 Hamilton, Genesis: Chapters 1-17, 176.
parallelisms in the text, Freedman demonstrates that both senses (“to rescue” and “to be strong”) occur in the Hebrew Bible. He posits that it does not make sense for the woman to be created as a savior, and concludes that “God creates this new creature to be, like the man, a power or strength superior to the animals.” Freedman proposes that ezer kenegdo be translated as “a power equal to him.” 38

Freedman’s linguistic analysis is excellent. However, his later application to the text requires further development. As part of his argument for gender equality, he examines the curses given to the man and the woman before their expulsion from the garden, and proposes that these are equal in nature. However, the weakness in Freedman’s analysis has to do with the “lifting” of the curses. Freedman writes that the man’s curse is lifted through divine decree at the time of Noah. However, woman’s punishment is continuously mitigated through female ingenuity. This would imply that the man receives greater favor than the woman—he is given a temporary curse, while the woman receives a permanent curse requiring ongoing accommodation. His argument indicates that the woman is not equally favored by deity, since she never receives a lasting reprieve from her curse. A convincing defense of the translation “a power equal to him” would require further contextual analysis, based on elements other than curses. 39 Thus, despite Freedman’s excellent philological analysis, his own contextual analysis undermines his conclusion, and does not satisfactorily fill the gap in the literature.

39 In addition to the contradictions in Freedman’s argument, it should be noted that according to word usage in the text, neither the man nor the woman is cursed. They receive consequences, but the text does not identify these consequences as curses. Only two entities, both of which are non-human, receive curses: the serpent, and the earth. See Genesis 3:14-19.
Rendsburg, another Jewish American scholar, questions the traditional translation of *ezer* as “help,” and also pushes back on Freedman’s rendering of *ezer* as “power.” Rendsburg cites Ze’ev Ben-Hayyim, and supports an analogous connection to the Arabic root, ‘*adrā*, meaning “maiden, young woman.” He also discusses the translation of *keneged*, favoring Midrashic translations of “similar to” and “equal to,” proposing that the correct meaning of *ezer kenegdo* is “a lady as his opposite,” or “a woman as his equal.” He acknowledges that *neged* generally has a spatial connotation, but writes that it “does not fit easily into the context of Gen. 2:18, 2:20.” Rendsburg then suggests that the unusual phrase, *ezer kenegdo*, was chosen by the author because of alliterative harmony with other phrases in the Eden account (*be-gan eden*, and *eş ha-gan*), and states that “we can be proud that this ancient Israelite author understood that the role of the female was not to help or serve her husband, but rather to function as his equal partner—as his ‘opposite’ on the theatrical stage of the human enterprise.” As with Freedman, Rendsburg’s work does employ a comparative Semitic linguistic approach, but remains narrow in scope.

Zevit, a Jewish American scholar, is the only scholar to attempt a comparative Semitic approach to understanding both *ezer* and *neged*. He positions his book as being a response to questions by those disturbed by the Eden account, in particular the gender roles presented in the text. Thus, his aim is to produce cultural readings based in ancient historical origins and audiences, biblical intertextual echoes, and contemporary scholarship, and to apply it to a contemporary culture and audience. In his chapter on Genesis 2:18-20, he begins with the following translation: “And YHWH god said: The human, being by himself is not good. I will

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make for him *ezer kenegdo*. . . . But for the human he did not find *ezer kenegdo.*” Zevit identifies the entire phrase as being difficult to interpret, and not just the individual words.

Zevit engages with Freedman’s translation of “a power equal to him.” He disagrees with Freedman’s use of analogy to the creation of a “powerful help” in the Gilgamesh Epic. He counterargues that each time a powerful help is created in Gilgamesh, it is like for like: male for male, female for female, which the Genesis account does not reflect. In addition, the usage of the grammatically masculine word *ezer*, rather than one of the multiple feminine options available, only further convolutes the connection to the Gilgamesh epic. Finally, he writes that Freedman’s translation overlooks the grammatical particularities of the compound *kenegdo* and its contextual usage throughout the Hebrew Bible. For Zevit, Freedman’s approach is unsuitable.

Zevit then proposes his own alternate translation. He notes that the Hebrew recitation marks indicate a pause, like a comma, between *ezer* and *kenegdo*, and posits that *kenegdo* is modifying *ezer*: “I will make for him a helper, like his *neged*.” He then argues that *neged* should not be viewed as a preposition (which is how it occurs in all other instances in the Hebrew Bible), but as a noun, which through analogy to a cognate from Ge’ez, he renders as “tribe, kin, clan.” Thus, Zevit renders this phrase as “a helper like his kin,” reflecting the creation of the first community in the isolation of the garden. Zevit’s treatment is one of the more in-depth and useful studies, in that he does not overlook problems of grammar or context in his attempt to produce an interpretation/translation.42 While he acknowledges and disagrees with Freedman’s contribution, he (unfortunately) does not propose a new approach to *ezer*; rather, he trusts the traditional understanding of “help,” and focuses his creative efforts solely on *neged*. Ultimately,

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while Zevit’s analysis moves in a similar direction as this dissertation, it is too small in the scope of its analysis, leaving ample room for expansion.

In the above literature review, we see that the majority of commentators weighing in on this phrase are Protestant Christian scholars. Because of this, it appears at first glance that the overt fixation on gender hierarchy is most pronounced in scholarship produced by Christian scholars. However, Jewish scholars do enter this conversation, as Freedman, Rendsburg, and Zevit all include discussion on hierarchy in their articles. One notable fact, however, is that Jewish American scholars are the only ones to generate comparative Semitic linguistic studies regarding *ezer kenegdo*. In writing this dissertation, I claim these Jewish comparative linguists and Christian feminist scholars (such as Trible) as my intellectual forbears.

As can be seen, the current state of scholarship leaves space for new comparative Semitic forays into the Genesis account. In addition, it appears that there is still possibility for new angles in exploring the female in the text. This dissertation aims to break from prior research: when one accepts the general idea of *ezer* to be “help,” and *naged* to have something to do with positionality, it becomes very difficult to focus on elements other than equality and community, and even female-positive readings of the text are frequently dismantled using their own internal logic. However, aside from the small forays into new semantic ranges by Freedman, Rendsburg, and Zevit, there has been little written that exists outside the mainstream boundaries of the conversation.

There may be doubt as to whether breaking from certain problematic interpretations is possible: some authors have argued that the text is irredeemably androcentric.43 It is true that the

43 See David J. A. Clines, *What Does Eve Do To Help?: And Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1990); and Mieke Bal, “Sexuality, Sin, and Sorrow: The Emergence of the Female Character (A Reading of Genesis 1-3),” in *Lethal Love: Feminist*
woman is contextually created in relation to the man, which for some authors, means that finding a feminine perspective is contrary to the intent of the text.\textsuperscript{44} In this sense, the text remains androcentric. However, this dissertation illustrates that with the addition of entirely new semantic ranges, not only are readings which highlight the female perspective possible, but they are also supported by the actual words of the text. New semantic ranges can change the geography of the conversation so as to support empowering conclusions regarding the woman in the garden, and by extension, women intertextually. (Note: a true intertextual reading not only extends intertextual engagement to other passages of the Hebrew Bible, but also to any literary or communicative media with which the Hebrew Bible comes in contact. This presupposes an extremely wide range of intertextual communication and potential influence.) Thus, while acknowledging that the text itself is written from an androcentric perspective, this dissertation demands the flexibility to approach the woman in the garden from a feminine perspective, examining how the woman exists as an individual with her own voice.

\textsuperscript{44} See Bal, “Sexuality, Sin, and Sorrow: The Emergence of the Female Character (A Reading of Genesis 1-3).”

As Hebrew is the language of the text under analysis (Genesis 2:18, 20), it would be appropriate and helpful to first examine definitions of the Hebrew root. In English Bible versions, *ezer* appears to be remarkably stable in translation. By far, the most common of these is “help” or “helper.” Other translations include “partner,” “companion,” and “sustainer.”

This narrow range, however, does not shed light on other ways to understand *ezer* in the text. Therefore, we will turn to scholars’ lexical work in an attempt to expand the understanding of *ezer*. The sources consulted are the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (TDOT); the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (NIDOTTE); and David Clines’ *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (DCH). The *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (BDB), the *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (TLOT), and the *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (HALOT) were also consulted, but do not figure into this discussion, since their definitions were not as in-depth, and did not add material differing from TDOT, NIDOTTE, and Clines’ works. Some of the following definitions may have direct corollaries in other Semitic languages, while others may simply provide new interpretive applications for the Eden account.

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45 *Ezer* is translated as “help” or “helper” in the following translations: Wycliffe (1388); Tyndale (1528); Coverdale (1535); The Great Bible (1539); The Geneva Bible (1557); Douai-Rheimes (1582); King James (1611 and 1769); Robert Aitken’s First “American” Bible (1781); Matthew Carey’s first Catholic Bible in America (1790); Julia E. Smith’s first translation by a woman (1876); New International Version (1978); New Living Translation (1996); Jewish Publication Society (1985); New Revised Standard Version (1989); and English Standard Version (2001). See bibliography for full citations.


In the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (TDOT), Edward Lipiński takes a deep dive into *ezr*, its etymology, and its usage. According to Lipiński, *ezr* in the Hebrew Bible is a conflation of two separate Semitic roots, ‘*ḍr*’ and ‘*ģzr*’. Of those two, ‘*ḍr*’ had the general semantic range of “help,” although some languages, such as Arabic, have extended this range to include “forgive,” which develops from the idea of “[causing] oneself to be helped.” Lipiński notes that ‘*ḍr*’ is attested across a wide variety of Semitic languages, including Aramaic, Hebrew, Ugaritic, Arabic, and Ethiopic, but is not attested in Akkadian. In *NIDOTTE*, Harman agrees with Lipiński that the root *ezr* does not occur in Akkadian.

Despite these authors’ excellent contributions, one is left wondering how much their conclusions should be trusted, as not all of their claims appear to be accurate: the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary does contain an entry for *azāru*, “to help, to forgive.” This omission is apparently not due to lack of information: *azāru* is included in volume 1 part II of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, which was first published in 1968. Harman’s article in *NIDOTTE* was published in 1997 and Lipiński’s work in TDOT in 2001, so reference to the CAD entry was available to them. Harman’s and Lipiński’s statements, therefore, lead us to two potential conclusions: either *azāru* is not related to its Semitic counterparts, and Harman and Lipiński merely fail to explain why, or else these scholars are simply mistaken in their assertion. In order to ascertain the potential for relation between the Akkadian *azāru* and *ezr* in other Semitic languages, it may be useful understand the building blocks of comparative Semitic linguistics.


In order for azāru to be considered a potential cognate, one must first establish consonant equivalency. In other words, the e (ayin), z (zayin), and r (resh) of the Hebrew ezr must correspond to the letters of azāru in Akkadian. According to Huehnergard’s chapter, “Proto-Semitic” in the edited volume, *The Semitic Languages*, the Akkadian a can correspond to the Proto-Semitic glottal, just as the Hebrew ayin does. The Akkadian z corresponds to the Proto-Semitic consonants dz and ḍ, precisely as the Hebrew zayin does, and the Akkadian r corresponds to the Proto-Semitic r, just as the Hebrew resh does. Thus, according to linguistic evidence for Semitic consonant shifts, there is no reason to discard azāru as a root unrelated to usages in other Semitic languages. It is entirely possible that in their notable (and sizeable!) contributions, Harman and Lipiński merely overlooked this Akkadian usage.\(^5\)

One may question why Harman’s and Lipiński’s error is important. It is not pointed out in order to devalue their contributions. On the contrary—all scholars make mistakes; it is part of the human condition, and it behooves scholars to learn from—and with—each other, rather than tearing each other down. This particular error is important to note only because it illustrates the lack of deep excavation into this root, which in turn, influences the way the phrase ezer kenegdo is both translated and interpreted. This error highlights the very gap that this dissertation aims to fill.

Now to return to the analysis in TDOT: Lipiński’s further analysis of the Hebrew usage looks primarily at ezer “help,” with contextual translations of “save/salvation,” and one potential occurrence of “take vengeance.” There are usages of the nominal form that refer to military aid or protection.

\(^5\) As an illustration of this possibility, it is noted that Harman writes that ezr also does not occur in Ethiopic. However, Lipiński contradicts Harman, and includes Ethiopic as a language in which ezr is attested.
As for ǧźr, according to Lipiński, its basic semantic range is to “come together (in a group), form a mass, assemble.” In its stative form, it means to “be abundant.” Lipiński considers there to be only limited usage of this root attested in the Hebrew Bible. Overall, while Lipiński takes a close look at each occurrence of eżr in the Hebrew Bible, his analysis of eżr is considerably more limited than David Clines’s treatment of the root, as will be seen.

Clines’s multi-volume word, The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew is perhaps the most up-to-date and exhaustive ancient Hebrew dictionary at this time. The volume in which eżer is found was published in 2007, and contains the most precision in its contextual analysis of eżer. The following shows the semantic ranges as set out by Clines; it also identifies in the footnotes where prior dictionaries (NIDOTTE, HALOT, TDOT, and BDB) intersect. Note: none of these other dictionaries provide definitions outside of those identified by Clines.

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52 Lipiński, “עָזַר/azu,” 12.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ἐζήρ</td>
<td>Help, assist, come to the aid of; give help, send help&lt;sup&gt;54&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun: helper; one who is helped&lt;sup&gt;55&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be copious, abundant (for evil)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To join together, come together, assemble&lt;sup&gt;56&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be strong, valiant; make valiant, make strong; deal valiantly with, show valor to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun: valiant one, hero, warrior, strong one, army&lt;sup&gt;57&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To justify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To hinder, restrain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To free, save (noun: savior)&lt;sup&gt;58&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ezer</strong></td>
<td>Help, assistance, helper&lt;sup&gt;59&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lad, warrior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength, might, valor&lt;sup&gt;60&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberation; liberator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper name&lt;sup&gt;61&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Azarah</strong></td>
<td>Ledge, court, border around altar&lt;sup&gt;62&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ezrah</strong></td>
<td>Help, assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength, might</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battle, war</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young men (collective)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper name&lt;sup&gt;63&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberation, liberator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>54</sup> Also included in NIDOTTE (to help, support; to find help), HALOT (to help, assist; to experience help), and BDB (to help, succor), TDOT (to help).

<sup>55</sup> Also included in NIDOTTE (help, support), HALOT (help, assistance), and BDB (help, succor), TDOT (help).

<sup>56</sup> Also found in TDOT (to join someone, support someone).

<sup>57</sup> Also found in HALOT (hero, warrior), TDOT (hero, leader).

<sup>58</sup> Also in TDOT. (Note that TDOT often includes connotations in its discussions that coincide with these translation values. However, TDOT most frequently suggests “help” or “aid” as the correct translation value, with a contextual understanding that this refers to saving someone, or sending warriors in aid, etc. Thus TDOT only accepts two very large semantic ranges for ἐζήρ, rather than multiple semantic ranges, as Clines does.

<sup>59</sup> Also found in BDB (one who helps—embodied help).

<sup>60</sup> Also found in HALOT (strength, might)

<sup>61</sup> Also found in HALOT and BDB.

<sup>62</sup> Also found in NIDOTTE (border of altar or court), HALOT (border around the altar), BDB (enclosure: ledge surrounding Ezekiel’s altar; outer court of the temple; a wall builder), and TDOT.

<sup>63</sup> Also in HALOT and BDB.
Conclusion

In comparing this chart to the literature review, one can see that the vast majority of interpretive efforts of Genesis 2:18-20 have focused only on one potential semantic range of *ezer*: namely, that of help or assistance. Only two authors have attempted other readings, namely of “woman” or “strength.” This leaves many semantic ranges entirely unexplored, which this dissertation aims to rectify through expanding the potential interpretive options. This expansion will be done through two means: first, through accepting the semantic ranges presented by Clines, and second, through analogy to potential cognates from Akkadian, Arabic, Ugaritic, and Aramaic.
Neged in Hebrew

Having discussed ezr in Semitic languages at length, this research will now examine ngd as it occurs throughout the Semitic languages in question, beginning with Hebrew.

Before delving into scholars’ treatment of neged, it may be useful to briefly categorize the attestations of the root ngd in the Hebrew Bible.

**Verb**

The root ngd only occurs in one conjugation, Hiphil, in the Hebrew Bible. This verb, lehagid, “to tell, report,” has to do with communication.

**Noun**

Ngd has one nominal form attested: nagid, which has two accepted semantic ranges: “prince, leader,” and “correct things, proper things.”

**Preposition and Adverb**

The prepositional and adverbial form of ngd is vocalized as neged; it has two main semantic ranges. The first range indicates locational and relational placement (how near one is to another). The second range indicates locations and measurements, most frequently in construction contexts.

**What is neged?**

The translation of neged remains difficult. In form, neged presents precisely as we would expect in the prepositional form of this root. However, the comprehensibility of this root as a preposition in this context is problematic, as will be seen in the following analyses. One way this is evident in the way that negdo in Genesis 2:18 and 20 is translated, as seen below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bible Version64</th>
<th>Translation (italics added)</th>
<th>Translated Part of Speech</th>
<th>Source Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King James’ Version (1611)*</td>
<td>help meet for him</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Living Translation (1996)</td>
<td>I will make a helper who is just right for him</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Revised Standard Version (1990)*</td>
<td>helper as his partner</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good News Bible (1976)*</td>
<td>suitable companion to help him</td>
<td>Adjective and noun</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New American Standard Bible (2020)*</td>
<td>helper suitable for him</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New American Bible (1970)</td>
<td>helper suited to him</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplified Bible (1964)</td>
<td>helper [one who balances him—a counterpart who is] suitable and complementary for him</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)</td>
<td>helper as his complement</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Standard Bible (2017)</td>
<td>helper corresponding to him</td>
<td>Adjective or gerund</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Standard Version (2011)</td>
<td>an authority corresponding to him</td>
<td>Adjective or gerund</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NET Bible (1996)</td>
<td>companion for him who corresponds to him</td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literal Standard Version (2020)</td>
<td>helper as his counterpart</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New King James Version (1982)</td>
<td>helper comparable to him</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douay-Rheims (1750)65</td>
<td>help like unto himself</td>
<td>Prep. phrase</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishops’ Bible (1568)*</td>
<td>helpe lyke vnto hym</td>
<td>Prep. phrase</td>
<td>Great Bible, Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverdale Bible (1535)*</td>
<td>helpe to bear him company</td>
<td>Verbal phrase</td>
<td>Tyndale; Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyndale (1526)*</td>
<td>helper to beare him company</td>
<td>Verbal phrase</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

64 The information regarding original years of publication for texts marked with * comes from Bruce M. Metzger, *The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2001). When possible, all other information is taken from the versions’ websites or through publishers’ websites. See bibliography for full citations. All are most recently accessed 7 July 2023.

As one can see from this list, the translations of neged, including parts of speech utilized, vary widely, from adjectives, nouns, and verbal phrases, to prepositions and gerunds. This leaves us with the question of what is actually happening in the Hebrew. As will be demonstrated, it appears that the usage of kenegdo in Genesis 2 is anomalous. One of the key difficulties arises due to the fact that according to the way that kenegdo is vocalized, neged appears to be functioning as a preposition, and not as a noun. This appears to align with the usage of neged throughout the Hebrew Bible: every other instance of neged in the Hebrew Bible is either a preposition or an adverb.

However, a complicating factor to viewing neged in Genesis 2:18, 20 as a preposition is the fact that another preposition, ke- is prefixed to neged, and the pronominal suffix -o is suffixed to neged. These affixes point to neged in Genesis 2:18, 20 functioning as a noun. We are therefore left with a grammatical conundrum requiring resolution. While translations show no consensus regarding an appropriate rendering of kenegdo, one might hope that dictionaries and lexicons might shed light on the basic semantic ranges of ngd, and whether these different ranges are related or not.

*BDB and HALOT*

The BDB and HALOT entries for neged do not agree on how exactly to deal with neged in Genesis 2. BDB opens the entry on neged by identifying neged as “[substantive.]” What is conspicuous or in front, always as adv. or prep. in front of, in sight of, opposite to.” Likewise,

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66 Note: a substantive is a preposition that has taken a nominal form.
67 Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, “נָגַד (Nagad),” in *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), 666-668; Emphasis original. Note that many Biblical Hebrew dictionary symbols are shorthand. For example, > indicates that one meaning derives from another.
HALOT writes that this was “orig. substantive that which is opposite, that which corresponds only in [kenegdo] like his opposite > proper for him Gn 2:18, 20; pl. [negidim] correct, proper expressions Pr 8:6.” Halot here lists Proverbs 8:6 as a support for interpreting kenegdo in Genesis 2. The claim is that “like his opposite” means “proper for him.” Without this leap, there is no support for including negidim from Proverbs 8:6 in this particular entry, particularly when a separate form, nagid (“prince, ruler”) already exists, and is more closely harmonic in vocalization with Proverbs 8:6. Halot’s translation of negidim (“correct, proper”) focuses on the parallel with “uprightness” at the end of the same verse. However, Halot’s connection of negidim (“correct, proper”) with neged is not necessarily solid since other sources contradict Halot.

BDB lists negidim in Proverbs 8:6 as a subcategory of nagid (“ruler, prince”), which, based solely on vocalization, appears to be a better fit for negidim in Proverbs 8:6. In addition, it also seems possible that negidim could be a subcategory of the Hiphil verbal form of ngd (lehagid—“to tell, inform”), particularly since its context is all about speech. Thus, after assessing both dictionaries’ treatment of ngd, one can see that the Genesis 2:18, 20 occurrence is the only undisputed nominal form of neged, since the connection with the nominal form of negidim is contested. Every other form of ngd vocalized as a segholate is listed as adverbial or prepositional. However, for the sake of argument, we will examine whether neged could properly be treated as a preposition.

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69 Proverbs 8:6 reads, “Hear, for I will speak negidim, and from the opening of my lips [will come] uprightness.”
70 Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “נָגַד (Nagad): subcategory נָגִיד (nagid).”
As mentioned before, all other occurrences of neged are either adverbial or prepositional. Part of the difficulty here seems to be the combination of the preposition k’ (“like, as”) with neged (usually an indicator of relational distance). One could perhaps argue that this dual prepositional usage is specific to Hebrew syntax and thus defies accurate translation into English. Certainly, this could be the case. However, this particular construction also appears to be anomalous, if not problematic in the Hebrew. In Hebrew, neged is combined with three other prepositions, most frequent of which are mi (“from”) and le (“to, towards”). The third prepositional construction is with ad (“until, as far as”) as found in Nehemiah 3:16 and 3:26. However, each of these three adjoined prepositions inherently deals with distance or direction, and their usage implies a relationship between the locations of two parties or objects. In addition, even when neged occurs without a preposition, it still clearly indicates some sort of position in relation to another person or object.

Thus, the pairing of neged with k’ (“like, as”) is strange even in Hebrew, since k’ does not have connotations of location or distance. K’ can indicate correspondence or similarity when attached to a noun,71 however, in those cases, the context is clear regarding the elements that correspond, most likely because there is no semantic confusion regarding the meaning of the preposition and its associated noun. There are only rare occurrences when k’ is paired with other prepositions, and BDB does not list Genesis 2:18, 20 as one of those instances. Moreover, even when k’ is affixed to a second preposition, there is no confusion as to the referent or semantic range of the phrase. (See Judges 20:32 “as at the beginning;” 1 Sam 14:14 “like in half a

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71 Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “ֶגֶד (Nagad): subcategory ֶגֶד (neged),” note 2. See also “ֶגֶד (neged),” note under 3b.
furrow;” Gen 28:24 “like from three months.” In the latter two examples, it is clear that the k’ is referring to an estimate: “around [the length] of half a furrow” or “around three months later.”

The only other combination of prepositions is in the phrase ka’al, which BDB identifies as universally meaning “according to” or “the like of which.”72 In other words, when attached to other prepositions, k’ has to do with approximations or comparisons. This semantic usage has no overlap with the usage of prepositional or adverbial neged throughout the Hebrew Bible. Given this complete lack of semantic overlap, along with the difficulty in translating such a construction, it is reasonable to conclude that the prepositional usages of k’ and neged contradict the idea that neged in Genesis 2:18 and 20 is functioning prepositionally or adverbially.

If neged is not a preposition, then could it be a substantive, as BDB and HALOT assert? If so, then it should follow the vocalization patterns of nouns in the Hebrew Bible. However, according to Gesenius, kenegdo does not appear the way a noun should when a pronominal suffix is attached. If it were a normal segholate noun, then it would appear either as kenagdo or kenigdo.73 Gesenius lists no regular or irregular noun forms vocalized like kenegdo upon the addition of a third masculine singular pronominal suffix. In other words, if neged is a substantive form, then its vocalization in Genesis 2:18, 20 is the only occurrence of its type in the text.

It appears from this discussion that neged, as found in Genesis 2:18 and 20 is deserving of a much deeper grammatical and philological scrutiny. In fact, since neged’s form and function in the context of Genesis 2:18 and 20 is unclear, this study will broaden its investigation to include evaluation of all forms of the root ngd in order to determine semantic ranges of ngd in Genesis 2.

72 Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “난 (Nagad): subcategory 난 (neged),” notes a and b.
The Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament (TLOT) adds analytical depth to our understanding of *ngd*. BDB and HALOT treat the root letters *ngd* in three separate entries:

- *ngd* as a verb (*lehagid*, “to tell, inform”),
- *ngd* as a preposition (*neged*, “near to, opposite”), and
- *ngd* as a noun (*nagid*, “ruler, prince”).

By presenting them in separate entries, BDB and HALOT indicate that they do not view these three iterations of the root to be related. Rather, they treat them as three unrelated homonyms. TLOT partially agrees with this assessment, and indicates that the attempt to connect the Hiphil verb *ngd* (“to tell, communicate”) with *nagid* (“prince, ruler”) “remain[s] more or less hypothetical.” However, where TLOT differs from HALOT and BDB is its postulation that the verbal form of *ngd* (to tell, communicate”) “is apparently a denominative from the (originally subst.) prep. *neged* (opponent, counterpart).” In other words, TLOT views the semantic range of “to tell, communicate” as developing from the preposition *neged*. Such a development would be abnormal (although not impossible) in a language that generally derives nominal forms from verbal stems, rather than verbal forms from nouns, prepositions, or adjectives, as is generally found in Indo-European languages.

To further complicate matters, in the New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis (NIDOTTE), Robert H. O’Connell writes that the base form of this root is “to make known, disclose, declare.” According to O’Connell, this verb has to do with

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communicating something previously unknown, usually in an audible and verbal manner, although it can sometimes denote nonverbal showing or attesting. It occasionally can mean to interpret or reveal. When God is the subject of *ngd*, it usually indicates some sort of revelation that the recipients previously did not know. O’Connell also includes the Aramaic *nāgōdā* (“leader”), the Arabic *nğd* (“to rise above, surpass”), and the Syriac *nāgūdā* (“guide, leader”) in its list of cognates of the Hebrew verbal root *ngd*.76

While not an overt statement, such inclusion implies that O’Connell agrees with the position that the verbal root *ngd* (having to do with communication) and the nominal root *ngd* “prince, ruler” share a common source. NIDOTTE includes a separate entry for *nagid*, written by Kenneth T. Aitken, who writes that the base meaning of *nagid* is inconclusive, but that it is both a “general term for a leader” and “a royal designation,” usually designating the ruler selected by deity to rule.77 Thus, in both articles, NIDOTTE seems to indicate that the varying forms of *ngd* share a common root source.

**TDOT**

The *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (TDOT) also includes two separate entries for *neged* and *nagid*. García-López is the author of the entry on *ngd*, and includes an etymology that contrasts with that of O’Connell. O’Connell views the base meaning of *ngd* as having to do with communication. However, García-López posits that the fundamental sense of *ngd* is “to place opposite, place before, confront with.” This sense developed into the more common Hebrew usage of “report, inform, show, explain, announce, reveal,” as well as usages in

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77 O’Connell, “נד (ngd).”

Hebrew and other Semitic languages of “help, courage, overcome, pull, lead, travel, prince, face, and front.”

García-López does, however, align with O’Connell’s depiction of the verb ngd as primarily indicating verbal communication, and secondarily indicating nonverbal communication. In both cases, this is communication of information previously unknown. The TDOT also explains that yada “to know,” and šama “to hear” are part of the semantic field of ngd; kiḥed “to hide, conceal” is also antithetically part of ngd’s semantic field. García-López’s article thus clearly ties ngd to ideas of visibility, awareness, and learning.

Hasel is the contributor for the TDOT entry for nagid, and identifies multiple other languages with the root ngd. According to Hasel, the base meaning of ngd in Aramaic, Phoenician, Ammonite, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Samaritan all has to do with being high or exalted, or being some sort of exalted leader. Hasel writes that it is unclear whether the Mandaic ngd, “pull, draw forward, extend; torture, pain” is related to the occurrences in other Semitic languages.

J.J. Glück

Yet another stream of thought only further obscures matters. Glück argues that the primary root of ngd/nqd “meant shepherd or shepherding in the broader sense, i.e., it embraced all the functions of a shepherd’s work. Gradually, as the language developed, the different aspects of the shepherd’s work lent secondary meanings to the name, many of which continued

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80 García-López, “.CreateCommand,” 175-177.
to develop independently in their new connotations.” Some of those secondary meanings include “oversee, guide, go in front, feed, mark (from marking the sheep,), etc.” This root seems to have potential of a wide range of meaning: oversee, guide, go in front, feed, mark, and may be connected to ideas of to cut, shear, write, count, tell. In Aramaic, nqd means to point out, to point to, to clean, to sting, to puncture; and ngd means to guide, to pull, to spread, to rule, to lash; many of these can be connected to ideas of leading and ruling.

In addition, another important task of the shepherd was to count the flock. Glück notes that the word “tell” is related to the word “count” in most languages, and demonstrates that this is certainly the case at the very least in both Hebrew and Aramaic. Thus, according to Glück’s logic, ngd/nqd “to communicate, tell, inform” developed from shepherds counting their sheep as a part of their duties in tending the flocks. In this way, ngd/nqd developed into the two main semantic ranges found in the Hebrew Bible: “to communicate, tell, inform,” and “prince, ruler.”

In expounding his discussion on leadership, Glück also writes that “nagid was not just any ruler.” In the Hebrew Bible, nagid was not an inherited title, but was a title given by appointment, with the strong implication that the nagid was the ideal ruler. Moreover, throughout the Ancient Near East, the title of “shepherd” “indicated the loving care. . . Extended especially to the weaker members of the flock, as being characteristic of the ideal ruler.”

84 Glück, “Nagid-Shepherd,” 146.
85 For further support of Glück’s ideas, see Jeong Bong Kim and D. J. Human, “Nagid: A Re-Examination in the Light of the Royal Ideology in the Ancient Near East,” *HTS: Theological Studies* 64, no. 3 (2008): 1494–95. Kim and Human argue that nagid is a term for an idealized leader, used with the intent to emphasize religious legitimacy of kingship.
As for prepositional or adverbial usage of *ngd*, Glück disagrees with the typical translation of *neged*. Rather, he promotes the idea of being “in front,” which he connects with the idea of leadership, specifically “the shepherd, [who] walks in front, cares for, and guides his flock.”

*Wolfgang Richter*

Richter agrees that research on *nagid* has identified it as a title of one who has been appointed for kingship. However, Richter goes on to demonstrate that the word undergoes an evolution throughout the text: in texts that are set in pre-Davidic times, *nagid* refers to an individual called by a prophet in order to save Israel from an enemy. During the Davidic narratives, it becomes a term that refers to kingship. Thereafter, we find occurrences of both meanings: of a *nagid* king, as well as a divinely preappointed, non-king savior figure. Richter strongly disagrees with Glück’s premise that *ngd* and *nqd* are developments from the same root. He argues that Glück’s *g/q* conflation is not supported in any Semitic languages and should not be considered.

Despite Richter’s arguments, *ngd* and *nqd* are discussed together Lipiński’s 2016 entry in the Aramaic volume of the TDOT. One might counter that the existence of sufficient evidence for conflating *ngd* and *nqd* in Aramaic is not necessarily indicative of the same conflation existing in Hebrew. However, according to Huehnergard’s representation of Semitic consonant

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87 Glück, “Nagid-Shepherd,” 149.
changes, Aramaic \(g, k, q\) equate to Hebrew \(g, k, q\).\(^{91}\) Therefore, if evidence is sufficient for Aramaic, it can also be sufficient for Hebrew. In addition, Lipiński’s conflation of \(ngd\) with \(nqd\) at least indicates that despite Richter’s confident tone, not all scholars are convinced of an etymological distinction between \(ngd\) and \(nqd\). Thus, \(ngd, nkd,\) and \(nqd\) will all be examined in this study.

**Conclusion**

Based on this discussion, one can see that there is no consensus among the authors of Biblical Hebrew dictionaries and lexicons regarding the relationship of \(ngd\) and \(nqd\), as well as any relationship that may exist among \(ngd\) “to communicate,” \(ngd\) “to lead,” and \(nqd\) “shepherd,” and the prepositional usage of \(ngd\). Some posit that no relation exists, while others argue the existence of varying relationships among these roots. The entries in BDB, HALOT, TLOT, and NIDOTTE only illustrate the ongoing confusion surrounding these roots.

Considering that the purpose of this study is to better understand the way that \(ngd\) is functioning in Genesis 2:18 and 20, it would be overly hasty at this point to discard any of the \(ngd\) semantic ranges from the discussion of Genesis 2:18, 20. Based on the treatment of \(neged\) in HALOT, BDB, TLOT, and NIDOTTE, \(ngd\) in Genesis 2 will be approached with no preconceived notions as to its function, part of speech, or translation value.

One might ask why it is even necessary to examine potential Semitic cognates for \(neged\), which would depend on accepting the occurrences of \(neged\) in Genesis 2:18-20 to be hapax legomena. However, the form \(kenegdo\) in Genesis 2:18 and 20 is already the only occurrence in the text. Not only is \(neged\) never paired with \(ke-\) at any other point, but this is the only nominal

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form of a preposition. Much of the literature struggles with how to translate this word because this form, as interpreted, simply does not make sense. Moreover, according to the voweling of Hebrew nouns as described by Gesenius, *kenegdo* is not a normal Hebrew noun. The voweling of the word may, therefore, be an indicator that this is a word borrowed from a related language, or at the very least, the text could be signaling that something unexpected is going on semantically with this word. Thus, the examination of other potential cognates is not creating a new problem. The problem already exists, and this approach may provide a solution.

**Table of Hebrew definitions of *ngd***

(All entries are taken from their attributed dictionaries and are either direct quotes or are slightly paraphrased for length or clarity. Quotation marks have been removed for ease of reading.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ngd</td>
<td>To tell, declare, announce, report, make known, inform, explain, expound&lt;sup&gt;92&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To make known, disclose&lt;sup&gt;93&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report, inform, show, explain, announce, reveal (communication)&lt;sup&gt;94&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To denounce, inform against&lt;sup&gt;95&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngd</td>
<td>preposition: in front of, before; in presence of; opposite, against&lt;sup&gt;96&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To place opposite, place before, confront with&lt;sup&gt;97&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neged</td>
<td>Vor, gegenüber&lt;sup&gt;98&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kngd</td>
<td>Corresponding to; fit for; in contrast with, contrary to&lt;sup&gt;99&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngd</td>
<td>adj: honest; noun: honest things, forthright things&lt;sup&gt;100&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>noun: blow, affliction&lt;sup&gt;101&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngd</td>
<td>Help, courage, overcome; pull, lead; travel; prince; face, front&lt;sup&gt;102&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nagid</td>
<td>Leader, king&lt;sup&gt;103&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prince, ruler, leader&lt;sup&gt;104&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader, prince, ruler; leader, commander, chief officer (may be in temple); noble things; leader, prince (may be as divine appellative)&lt;sup&gt;105&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be high, exalted; exalted leader&lt;sup&gt;106&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>95</sup> Clines, “↨ núi (ngd).”  
<sup>96</sup> Clines, “↨ núi I (naged I).”  
<sup>97</sup> García-López, “↨ núi /ŋgd.”  
<sup>99</sup> Clines, “↨ núi II (naged II).”  
<sup>100</sup> Clines, “↨ núi III (naged III).”  
<sup>101</sup> Clines, “↨ núi III (naged III).”  
<sup>102</sup> García-López, “↨ núi /ŋgd.”  
<sup>103</sup> Gesenius, “nagid.”  
<sup>105</sup> Clines, “↨ núi (nagged).”  
In conclusion, these analyses of *neged, nagid*, and *lehagid* indicate that even leading scholars struggle to define and categorize the etymology of *ngd*. In particular, there is very little agreement as to whether any relation exists between the pronominal/adverbial, nominal, and verbal attestations of the root. This lack of unity in scholars’ conclusions only further highlights the difficulty of understanding *neged* in Genesis 2:18, 20, since there is no unified consensus on how *ngd* manifests in different forms. Thus, scholars’ conclusions do not assist in determining a sound semantic range for *kenegdo* in Genesis 2. Rather, the lack of agreement in translations, dictionaries, and lexicons undermines confidence in an appeal to scholarly consensus when seeking appropriate translation values. Consequently, this study will proceed to seek further insights based upon analogy to other Semitic languages.

To be clear: pushing back on problematic elements of prior discourse, and even proposing completely new translations and interpretations does not mean that this dissertation promotes discarding former interpretations entirely. This work is not embarked upon in search of a single, final interpretation that trumps all other interpretations. Rather, this dissertation aims to provide an array of options to enrich the interpretive potential of the text. It is the hope that future developments will draw from the excellent insights provided by preceding scholars’ work, as well as exploring the potential for new interpretations applicable to current interests and concerns.

The current state of literature indicates the following: *ezer kenegdo* is grammatically and interpretively problematic and lacks scholarly development in providing solutions to the issues with the phrase. This dissertation proposes an approach to filling the gap in current literature, namely through comparative Semitic analysis of *ezr* and *ngd*. In the coming chapters, this dissertation will first identify all potential cognates of both *ezr* and *ngd* in Akkadian, Arabic,
Ugaritic, and Aramaic. These cognates will then be examined to determine viability based on grammar, other established cognates, and contextual suitability. A part of this examination will include a close analysis of how each potential cognate interacts with the Genesis 1-3 context, as well as interpretive repercussions of different semantic ranges. The end result of this is a list of possible translation values for both ezer and neged. These translation values reframe the conversation surrounding ezer kenegdo, providing a platform for complex and dynamic discussion of gender roles, both within and outside the text. In addition, the analysis will demonstrate that the traditional view of female inferiority, and even the conversation centering around the existence or non-existence of gendered hierarchy is not supported by the actual text of Genesis 1-3.
Methodology

As established in the previous chapter, the phrase *ezer kenegdo* has received almost no attention from a comparative Semitic linguistic approach. This dissertation aims to fill that gap, with the end goal of expanding the scope of the conversation surrounding *ezer kenegdo*. In order to achieve this end, this study implements the following steps: first, all potential cognates to both *ezer* and *neged* in Akkadian, Arabic, Ugaritic, and Aramaic will be identified. This list of potential cognates will then be analyzed to determine which roots warrant further analysis, and which do not, according to criteria which will be further explained below. Following this, the words that are suitable for further analysis will be closely examined within the Genesis context. The results of this contextual investigation will further determine whether cognates’ semantic ranges fit the context of Genesis 1-3 through demonstrating their linguistic, grammatical, and contextual harmony or disharmony. A chart of appropriate semantic ranges, or translation values that fit will then be included. The outcome of this analysis will be to provide new readings of *ezer kenegdo* that reframe the conceptualization of gender roles in the text. In addition, these results will call for a reevaluation of the very conversation surrounding gender roles in Genesis 1-3.

The aim of this scholarship is not to establish beyond doubt whether certain roots across languages correspond as cognates. Rather, the aim of this research is to use the comparative approach to determine new cognates, and through analogy, to explore new and fruitful readings of the Eden account in Genesis. Thus, the progression of research will be as follows:

1. Identification of potential cognates
   a. The identification of cognates will depend upon the root system found across Semitic languages, in which most words are built from triliteral consonantal
roots. Thus, words containing the same three consonants in a root may be related. In addition, due to consonant shifts and vagueness in cuneiform writing, there are some roots that may be considered as related, even though they may no longer be phonetically identical. This will be discussed in more depth later in the dissertation.

2. Reduction of cognates
   a. Of the words in the first list of cognates, any that obviously do not align with the Eden context, or else correspond to another unrelated Hebrew root will not be retained. (For example, there is no contextual relation, even obliquely, in the Eden account to fecal matter. Therefore, that semantic range would be disqualified.)

3. Analysis of remaining cognates
   a. In this section, the remaining cognates will be analyzed in depth against the Eden context. Any whose semantic range does not contextually fit the Genesis 1-3 account will be removed. Contextual relation is determined by the presence of narrative, linguistic, and intertextual elements that support a semantic range.

_Ezer in Other Semitic Languages_

_Akkadian_

Before discussing the method used for selecting potential cognates, a brief analysis of the Akkadian writing system will be included. Akkadian had hundreds of symbols that could function either as logograms (much like Chinese characters) or phonetically; phonetic usage could vary, with some symbols having over a dozen correct phonetic options, which could
include Phoenician words used in a phonetic manner. Thus, the Akkadian writing system is extraordinarily complex; sometimes even identifying a root used in an inscription can be like cracking a code. The nature of the Akkadian writing system should be kept in mind in order to understand why certain obliquely related consonants have been included in this study; it also helps to explain why the list of potential Akkadian cognates is so long.

It has been acknowledged that Hebrew likely contained borrowings from Akkadian.\textsuperscript{107} The process for identifying potential cognates through analogy begins with identifying root letters to be analyzed. The Hebrew letters in question are \textit{ayin (’)}, \textit{zayin (z)}, \textit{resh (r)}. The Hebrew \textit{ayin}, a glottal stop, corresponds to the Akkadian vowels: \textit{a, e, i, u}. The semivowels \textit{j (y)} and \textit{w} were included in the search, due to the strong connections that \textit{j} has with \textit{i}, and also because of intra-dictionary redirection between roots beginning with \textit{w} and words beginning with \textit{a} and \textit{u}. Only one word beginning with \textit{w} was found, and no words beginning with \textit{j} were found. \textit{ḥ} has also been included, due to intra-dictionary redirection from vowel-initial words to words beginning with \textit{ḥ}, and because of crossover between the glottal ’, \textit{ḥ}, and other vowel sounds in Old Babylonian and later Akkadian.\textsuperscript{108}

The Hebrew \textit{resh} corresponds only to the Akkadian \textit{r}.

The Hebrew \textit{zayin} corresponds to the Akkadian \textit{z}. However, due to crossover in cuneiform sign usage among the voiced alveolar fricative \textit{z}, the voiceless alveolar fricative \textit{s}, and the voiceless alveolar emphatic stop \textit{š}, the consonants \textit{s} and \textit{š} have also been included in the study. Although \textit{s} sometimes redirects to \textit{š}, this study will not include \textit{š} in the examination, as the

rate of intra-dictionary redirection is relatively low, and š does not share phonetic characters with z, s, and s. It is acknowledged that many of the roots in the following list might not be related to the Hebrew ezer. However, the purpose of this research is not to establish incontrovertible relation between roots, but rather to analyze through analogy potential cognates. For roots to be considered for further analysis, their usage of the root must fit contextually within the Genesis narrative. In addition, any roots that have an established cognate relation with another Hebrew root (other than ezer) will not be included in later analysis. In other words, any Semitic roots that are an obvious cognate with an unrelated Hebrew root will automatically be removed from the list. Likewise, any roots that clearly do not relate to the Genesis account will also be removed from the list. Justifications for removal or retention will be listed in the “suitability” column.

In addition, since nouns and adjectives may have obvious relation to verbs (nouns and adjectives are often derived from verbal forms in Semitic languages), the semantic ranges of adjectives, nouns, and verbs will be considered. However, due to the mental gymnastics required to appropriately convert the semantic ranges of adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions, these word forms will not be considered for suitability. The word forms will be listed, but not discussed unless they already connect to a verbal, nominal, or adjectival form.

Each of these roots has been identified using the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (CAD); all definitions listed here are taken directly from CAD, with occasional paraphrasing in the interest of length or clarity. Quotation marks have not been used in order to improve readability.

Please note: only words that actually contain a definition in CAD will be analyzed for suitability. Put another way, any words whose meaning is unclear, or any words that lack a

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definition in favor of a reference to another entry will not include discussion regarding their suitability. All words with unclear meaning are grouped at the end of the table.

This list is not strictly alphabetical; rather, it is listed by semantic range, with the first roots in each semantic range following a rough alphabetical order. Primary words in a semantic range follow what is indicated by CAD. This means that if CAD redirects *asîru* to *esēru*, then the first entry in a semantic range will be *esēru*. In the leftmost column, * indicates a new semantic range unrelated to this study, and *** indicates a new semantic range that will be further analyzed.

***= New semantic range, suitable for further analysis

*= New semantic range, not suitable for further study

### Akkadian—Words Organized by Semantic Range and Strength of Potential Relation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Suitability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td><em>asarru</em> B</td>
<td>A type of tablet or literary composition</td>
<td>There does not seem to be any contextual relation to the Eden account; while words do play a prominent role in the act of creation (the deity speaks/declares things into existence), there is no reference to writing or engraving in any portion of the narrative, including the creation and existence of the woman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>***</td>
<td><em>asurrû</em></td>
<td>Foundation structure, lower (damp) course of a wall</td>
<td>This does appear to have contextual resonances. As will be discussed later, the creation of the woman has clear connections to construction and building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td><em>asurrû</em></td>
<td>A part of the exta</td>
<td>This does not fit contextually. The exta were portions of entrails used in divination. While there is certainly communication with the deity throughout in Eden, at the point of woman’s creation, death does not exist in the narrative. Thus, the idea of the woman being similar to exta in</td>
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<td>---</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isru B</td>
<td>A part of the exta</td>
<td>See asurrû.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* azaru (azzaru)</td>
<td>Lynx</td>
<td>This word has no contextual relation to the Eden account. While the narrative does mention the creation of animals, and while the serpent does receive a speaking role, there is nothing to suggest a prominent feline role.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** azāru (or ašāru)</td>
<td>To help, forgive</td>
<td>This does have connection to the traditional translation of ezer, and perhaps even expands the semantic range of ezer (“help”).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ašāru</td>
<td>See azāru</td>
<td>See azāru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḫaziru</td>
<td>Used in personal names, helper (?)</td>
<td>See azāru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* esēru A</td>
<td>To press for payment due, to collect, to put a person under pressure; 2. Ussuru to collect tribute, to put pressure upon a person; 3. To be collected; išir—issir; cf. esēru A, isru, isirtu A</td>
<td>There is no contextual relation to payment or tribute in the Eden account, so this word will not be examined. In addition, this root may be related to the verbal form of the Hebrew root ayin, sin, resh, which has to do with collecting a tenth part as tribute or tithe.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>esēru A in ša esēri</td>
<td>A collector of dues; cf. esēru</td>
<td>See esēru A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>esirtu</td>
<td>Collected tax, see isirtu</td>
<td>See esēru A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isirtu A (esirtu)</td>
<td>Collection of payment; cf. esēru A</td>
<td>See esēru A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>esēru A</td>
<td>Collected payment; cf. esēru A</td>
<td>See esēru A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usirtu (usištu)</td>
<td>Collection (of payment); cf. esēru A</td>
<td>See esēru A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usurtu B</td>
<td>Demand; cf. esēru A</td>
<td>See esēru A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* esēru B</td>
<td>To shut in, to enclose, to confine; 2. To channel water; 3. To stifle a cry; 4. Usuru to enclose, to take captive; utassuru to become enclosed; 6. To become constricted. Īsir—issir—esir; variant forms esēru and ezēru in lex. Section; cf. asirtu, asiru, asīrūtu, asru, esēru B; seirtu, esru, isirtu B, mēsirtu, mēsiru, ussurtu, ussuru</td>
<td>There is no obvious contextual relation to the Eden account. In addition, this root corresponds to another attested root in Hebrew that uses completely different root letters: aleph, samech, resh, and thus does not meet the criteria for further examination.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>esēru B</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prisoner of war, captive foreigner used as worker, see esēru A</strong></td>
<td>See esēru B.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>asīru A</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prisoner compound; see esēru B</strong></td>
<td>See esēru B.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>asīrātu</strong></td>
<td><strong>Captivity, cf. esēru B</strong></td>
<td>See esēru B.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>esēru B in bīt esēri</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cage; cf. esēru</strong></td>
<td>See esēru B.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>esēru B in bīt esēri</strong></td>
<td><strong>Confinement, enclosure; cf. esēru</strong></td>
<td>See esēru B.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>isēru B</strong></td>
<td><strong>Confinement, imprisonment. Cf. Esēru B</strong></td>
<td>See esēru B.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>isru C (išru)</strong></td>
<td><strong>A fold; cf. esēru</strong></td>
<td>See esēru B.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>isru D</strong></td>
<td><strong>Small granary</strong></td>
<td>See esēru B.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>usēru</strong></td>
<td><strong>Adj., enclosed; cf. esēru B</strong></td>
<td>See esēru B.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>usēru</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pressing stone (among tools and implements used for brewing beer)</strong></td>
<td>Not relevant to this study. There is no contextual mention of tools or brewing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>esēru A</strong></td>
<td><strong>To draw, make a drawing; 2. usṣuru to make a drawing, establish (regulations). išir—išīr—esēr; cf. ēṣiru, eṣru, išīrū, iširu, ēṣiru, mēṣiru, mēṣ.uṭu, usṣuru adj., uṣṣertu</strong></td>
<td>There is a possible connection to the idea of caring for or ruling in the Eden account; there are also potential connections to the idea of planning something out (as the deity appears to do in the creation).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>eṣīrūtu</strong></td>
<td><strong>Confinement, imprisonment. Cf. Esēru B</strong></td>
<td>See esēru B.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>iṣēru</strong></td>
<td><strong>Carver of reliefs, cf. esēru A</strong></td>
<td>See esēru A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>iṣēru</strong></td>
<td><strong>Drawn, cf. eṣer A</strong></td>
<td>See esēru A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>iṣīrūtu</strong></td>
<td><strong>Plan of destiny cf. eṣēru</strong></td>
<td>See esēru A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>iṣīrūtu, mēṣīrūtu</strong></td>
<td><strong>Plan, design, border line; cf. esēru A</strong></td>
<td>See esēru A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>iṣīru</strong></td>
<td><strong>Frontier, territory. Cf. Eṣēru</strong></td>
<td>See esēru A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>uṣṣertu</strong></td>
<td><strong>Drawing, plan, engraving, picture, relief; 2. (Divine) design, plan, concept,</strong></td>
<td>This has potential connections with the creation account, in which the deity apparently has a concept or plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uṣirtu, iṣurtu, aṣṣurtu, ṣurtu)</td>
<td>ordinance; 3. (A document of obligations owed by local Anatolians to Assyrians); 4. (A wooden object, reading uncertain); cf. eṣēru</td>
<td>of how the creation will proceed. See similar discussion of eṣēru A.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>iṣurtu</td>
<td>(Drawing), see uṣurtu</td>
<td>See uṣurtu A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uṣirtu</td>
<td>See uṣurtu A.</td>
<td>See uṣurtu A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uṣṣurtu</td>
<td>See uṣurtu A.</td>
<td>See uṣurtu A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uṣṣuru</td>
<td>Adj. drawn, engraved, incised; cf. eṣēru</td>
<td>See uṣurtu A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** eṣēru</td>
<td>To curse; īzir; cf. izru</td>
<td>Curses do play an important part in the Eden narrative, but only after the fruit has been eaten and the cosmic order changed. Nevertheless, this word will be analyzed further for the sake of thoroughness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* ḫasarratu (hasilratu)</td>
<td>A kind of grass</td>
<td>While the creation of plants plays an important part of Genesis 1-3, the only plants that play significant roles after the creation are trees. This, along with the fact that the woman is built from the man (implying wood/trees or stone) preclude this root from being included in this study.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hasirratu</td>
<td>See ḫasarratu.</td>
<td>See ḫasarratu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* ḫaṣartu (hasiltu, ḫašaštu)</td>
<td>Wool or cloth of a certain color, probably green; (green) dry mucus, nasal discharge</td>
<td>While cloth or covering might have contextual relevancy (due to the emphasis on nakedness and covering), the basic semantic level of this word appears to do with a color, rather than a covering. There are also no contextual markers supporting the semantic range of mucus. Thus, it will not be treated in this study.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḫaṣartu</td>
<td>See ḫaṣartu A</td>
<td>See ḫaṣartu A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** ḫaṣāru (hasilu)</td>
<td>Enclosure for sheep; enclosed area for delivery of dates</td>
<td>This root may have potential if woman is viewed as a microcosm of Eden, which is an enclosed liminal area. Other related forms of this word (iṣāru, uṣāru) have meanings related to temple structures and personnel. These could also produce interesting readings of the woman as a temple figure, as discussed later.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ḥisāru</strong></td>
<td>Enclosure, court; cf. ḥaṣāru, isāru, usāru</td>
<td>See ḥaṣāru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ašāru</strong></td>
<td>(Yard) see usāru</td>
<td>See ḥaṣāru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>isāru</strong></td>
<td>See isāru</td>
<td>See ḥaṣāru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ḥasāru</strong></td>
<td>See ḥaṣāru</td>
<td>See ḥaṣāru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>iṣāru or isaru</strong></td>
<td>(Part of the temple complex)</td>
<td>See ḥaṣāru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>uṣārītū</strong></td>
<td>See uṣārū</td>
<td>See ḥaṣāru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>uṣāru (aṣāru)</strong></td>
<td>Courtyard; cf. uṣārū</td>
<td>See ḥaṣāru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>uṣārū</strong></td>
<td>Person attached to the uṣāru temple complex; cf. uṣāru</td>
<td>See ḥaṣāru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** hesēru**</td>
<td>To blunt, chip, trim; ḥasir, hesir; cf. ḥasru, ḥusīru, ḥussuṣu</td>
<td>There are no clear contextual connections to trimming or chipping in Genesis 1-3; this will not included in this study.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ḥasru (hesru)</strong></td>
<td>Chipped; cf. ḥesēru</td>
<td>See hesēru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ḥusīrītu</strong></td>
<td>Cut off part of a reed; cf. hesēru</td>
<td>See hesēru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ḥussuṣu</strong></td>
<td>Blunted, trimmed down; cf hesēru</td>
<td>See hesēru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** haziri**</td>
<td>He holds back(?) West Semitic word and gloss</td>
<td>No obvious connection to the Eden account; in addition, the exact meaning of the word is uncertain.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** hazru (or ḥasru)**</td>
<td>(A kind of swamp) syn. List</td>
<td>Not relevant to this study; while different terrains and flora are created in the Eden account, only trees play a significant role in the narrative.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ḥasru</strong></td>
<td>See hazru (Swamp)</td>
<td>See hazru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ḥesru</strong></td>
<td>See hasru (Swamp)</td>
<td>See hazru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** hazāru A**</td>
<td>(An object or location in a house)</td>
<td>This is general and relatively vague. While there are contextual connections to structures in the Genesis account, there are other words with better defined ranges regarding buildings that will be analyzed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** hazāru B**</td>
<td>(A garment), probably a Hurrian word</td>
<td>N/A—Hurrian is not a Semitic language; this is irrelevant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** hinzirību**</td>
<td>(Blue or a shade of green); cf. henzūru, inzūru</td>
<td>No contextual relation to the Eden account. No colors are explicitly mentioned in the creation/Eden narrative.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>hizzarību</strong></td>
<td>See hinzirību</td>
<td>See hinzirību</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** ḥusāru (ḥuṣāru)**</td>
<td>(A precious stone)</td>
<td>No contextual relation to the Eden account. While certain stones and ores are mentioned, they play no larger narrative role.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ḥuṣāru</strong></td>
<td>See husāru</td>
<td>See husāru</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>ḫusiranu</td>
<td>See sub urani (Uriānu?) see urānu, puppy</td>
<td>Not relevant to this context. While animals are created and the serpent plays a part in the narrative, there is no contextual emphasis on dogs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ḫuzīrtu</td>
<td>An insect, lit.: sow; cf. ḫuzīru, ḫuzīrānu</td>
<td>Not relevant to this context. While animals are created and the serpent plays a part in the narrative, there are no contextual emphasis on dogs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ḫuzīrānu</td>
<td>Pig-like (occ. Only as personal name); cf. ḫuzīru</td>
<td>See ḫuzīrtu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ḫuzīru</td>
<td>Hog; cf. ḫuzīrtu, ḫuzīrānu</td>
<td>See ḫuzīrtu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>issurri</td>
<td>(Perhaps) see surri [perhaps, surely]</td>
<td>N/A due to part of speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>ḫussūr (x21)</td>
<td>All of these are construct phrases, the ḫussūr portion always has to do with some type of bird. Cf. ḫussūru</td>
<td>Not relevant to this context. While animals are created and the serpent plays a part in the narrative arc, there are no contextual indications supporting an emphasis on birds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ḫussūriš</td>
<td>Like a bird; cf. ḫussūr</td>
<td>See ḫussūr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ḫussūrtu</td>
<td>Female bird; (a wooden object); cf. ḫussūr</td>
<td>See ḫussūr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ḫussūr (x7)</td>
<td>Bird, poultry; a bird-shaped rhyton; “bird” (as a technical term in extispicy, referring to a bird-shaped(?) grouping of certain parts of the exta); Other definitions all are construct phrases having to do with birds; only one exception has to do with a plant.; cf. ḫussūr</td>
<td>See ḫussūr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>usaru</td>
<td>Cult of Aššur?</td>
<td>Not relevant: there are no contextual indicators linking the Eden account to Aššur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>usslralû</td>
<td>(A vessel)</td>
<td>There are no contextual resonances with any vessels or containers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>uṣṣāru</td>
<td>Storehouse, treasury</td>
<td>While there are potential connections to buildings or structures, there are greater connections to sacral structures, not to storehouses. Words within that semantic range will be analyzed further, but this word will not be discussed further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>***</td>
<td>uṣṣuru A (wuṣṣuru)</td>
<td>To be attentive, to listen</td>
<td>This word might have connections to traditional interpretations of the text,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>wuṣṣuru</strong></td>
<td>See uṣṣuru A.</td>
<td>Since the man listened to the woman in partaking the fruit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>uṣṣuru B</strong></td>
<td>To sever</td>
<td>This has potential contextual resonances with the Eden account. If one accepts Eden as a prototypical temple text, and also approaches the Eden narrative from an intertextual point of view, then “severing” could be similar to “cutting a covenant” (the phrase used in Hebrew for making a covenant). There could be interesting readings made to later temple ritual. There could also be resonances with the idea of man leaving parents for woman.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>uṣurtu B</strong> <em>(usuštu)</em></td>
<td>Fortification</td>
<td>This word has contextual connections with the Eden account. This is in large part due to the woman’s connections with building or constructions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>uzāru</strong></td>
<td><em>(A woolen cloth or garment)</em></td>
<td>This word has potential for further analysis, due to the prominent imagery of nakedness and covering in the Eden account.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Glossary

- **asarru A**: Meaning Uncertain  
  
- **asīru B (or azīru)**: Meaning Uncertain  
  
- **azīru**: See asīru B; meaning uncertain  
  
- **asru**: Meaning uncertain  
  
- **asāru**: See asru s.  
  
- **aṣarru**: Meaning uncertain  
  
- **azīru**: Meaning uncertain  
  
- **eṣēru B**: Meaning uncertain  
  
- **hasāru**: Meaning uncertain  
  
- **hāsiru**: Meaning uncertain  
  
- **ḥesīru**: Describing an article of apparel  
  
- **hisru**: Meaning uncertain  
  
- **ussuri**: Unclear, see surri, meaning 1c-1’a’[perhaps, surely]  
  
- **uzūru**: Meaning unknown  
  
- **uzzuru**: Meaning uncertain, cf. ezēru  
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>uṣṣuru</strong></td>
<td>See uṣṣuru A.</td>
<td>See uṣṣuru A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>uṣṣuru B</strong></td>
<td>To sever</td>
<td>This has potential contextual resonances with the Eden account. If one accepts Eden as a prototypical temple text, and also approaches the Eden narrative from an intertextual point of view, then “severing” could be similar to “cutting a covenant” (the phrase used in Hebrew for making a covenant). There could be interesting readings made to later temple ritual. There could also be resonances with the idea of man leaving parents for woman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>uṣurtu B</strong> <em>(usuštu)</em></td>
<td>Fortification</td>
<td>This word has contextual connections with the Eden account. This is in large part due to the woman’s connections with building or constructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>uzāru</strong></td>
<td><em>(A woolen cloth or garment)</em></td>
<td>This word has potential for further analysis, due to the prominent imagery of nakedness and covering in the Eden account.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A similar method will be used with the other Semitic languages (Arabic, Ugaritic, and Aramaic) as was used with Akkadian. However, because there is much less vagueness in the transmission and writing of consonants, the list of words examined will be much smaller.

Arabic has a much simpler correlation to Hebrew roots than Akkadian: 110

The *ayin* of Hebrew can correspond with the voiced pharyngeal fricative `ayn or the voiced uvular fricative ghayn.

The *zayin* of Hebrew can correspond with the Arabic voiced dental stop dal or the voiced dental fricative zay.

The Hebrew *resh* corresponds with the Arabic dental trill ra.

Once again, for roots to be considered for further analysis, their usage of the root must contextually within the Genesis narrative, and there cannot be any other existing Hebrew roots that provide a closer cognate to the proposed Arabic root.

Please note: the following definitions are all taken from Lane’s Arabic Dictionary. 111

These are all either direct quotations or near quotations; quotation marks have been removed to aid in ease of reading.

***= New semantic range, suitable for further analysis

*= New semantic range, not suitable for further study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Suitability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>***</td>
<td><em>qadarah</em></td>
<td>to excuse, free, clear, exempt from blame, exculpate; to excuse one’s conduct, withhold blame</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a _Register root | To become excusable                                                        | See discussion of _register root  
| ya _Register root | To excuse oneself                                                          | See discussion of _register root  
| ašya _Register root | To ask, desire to be excused                                               | See discussion of _register root  
| ได้อยroot  | Excusing; an excuser                                                       | See discussion of _register root  
| mi _Register root; ma _Register root | Excuses, apologies; excused, freed, cleared, exempted from blame | See discussion of _register root  
| mu _Register root | One excusing himself                                                        | See discussion of _register root  
| ˍRegister root; ta ˍRegister root | To be without excuse                                                       | While this root is the negative semantic range of ˍRegister root, it still functions within the same scope. In addition, of the ten words within this semantic range, it is one of only two negative words, suggesting that the base meaning of the root is positive (to excuse, free, clear, etc.) rather than negative (to be without excuse). See also discussion on ˍRegister root. |
| ˍRegister root  | Evil in disposition (requiring excuse)                                     | This word also falls within the negative semantic range. See discussion of ˍRegister root; ta ˍRegister root above. |
| *** yā ˍRegister root | To draw back, remain behind, hold back, go backwards                      | It is unclear whether this word has resonance with the Genesis account; it will be further examined. |
| *** ˍRegister root  | A house, dwelling, of which there are many traces, or relics               | This could resonate with construction themes that are present in the Eden text, as will be discussed later. |
| * ˍRegister root  | Human dung or ordure; the court or yard of a house (where human fecal matter was placed) | This word is not deemed relevant; there appears to be no contextual relation in Genesis tying the woman to fecal matter. |
| *** ˍRegister root  | A virgin                                                                    | Due to sexual overtones in the account, this word will be discussed further later. |
| * ˍRegister root; al ˍRegister root  | A brand, or mark made with a hot iron; also referring to what is cut off from the place of circumcision of a girl. | While circumcision figures prominently later on in the narrative (beginning with Abraham), there are no contextual markers pointing to its usage here. It is true that nakedness does play a major |
role in the narrative, however, nakedness does not equate with circumcision. This word will not be discussed further.

<p>| *** | ᵃᵈʳᵃḥ; ᵃᵈʳ | The virginity, maidenhead, hymen; the “act of cutting,” because a girl’s hymen is rent when she is devirginated; also has reference to elements of circumcision, both male and female. | This word has two main ranges: virginity (discussed later; see ᵃᵈʳᵃḥ), and circumcision, (not discussed later; see ᵃᵈᵘʷʳ; al ᵃᵈᵘʷʳ). |
| ** | ᵃᵈⁱʳ | A scar, or mark of a wound | There are no contextual references to either wounds or scars within the creation/Eden account; this word will not be examined further. |
| ** | ᵃᵈᵃʳ | Bridle of a horse | There is no contextual relation in Genesis 1-3 to this word. |
| *** | ᵃᵈⁱʳ | Veils, curtains, or coverings | This word has potential for meaningful interpretation, due to the prominent imagery of nakedness and covering in the Eden account. |
| *** | ᵃᶻᵃʳᵃḥ | To prevent, withhold, hinder, forbid; turn someone away or back. | It is unclear whether this word has resonance with the Genesis account; it will be further examined. |
|  | ᵃᶻʳᵘ’h; ᵃ’yᵃ ᵃᶻᵃʳ | To discipline, chastise, correct, punish, meaning “he did to him that which should turn him away, or back, from evil or foul conduct.” | See discussion of ᵃᶻᵃʳᵃḥ above. |
| *** | ᵃᶻᵃʳᵃḥ | To inflict a beating or flogging less than that prescribed by the law | The Eden account has no contextual elements supporting physical violence; however, the humans do receive consequences that are sometimes viewed as punishments; this will therefore be discussed later. |
| *** | ᵃʳᵃᵈⁱˡ | The angel of death | This could be interpreted as being the woman’s role of partaking the fruit (and thus bringing death), thus standing in contrast to the seraphim that guard the way to the tree of life. |
| *** | ᵃᶻᵃʳ | A species of tree | There may be fruitful contextual connections using the semantic |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*</th>
<th>āzār</th>
<th>A species of crane</th>
<th>Not relevant to this context. While animals are created and the serpent plays a part in the narrative arc, there are no contextual indications supporting an emphasis on birds.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>***</td>
<td>ġazura</td>
<td>To become much, abundant, copious</td>
<td>This may have potential contextual resonance with the woman being the pinnacle of the creation process; the creation is presented as the abundant production of life; in addition, after the Fall, the man names the woman Eve, since she is the “mother of all living.” This could also have strong connections with more traditional interpretations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ġazīr</td>
<td>Much, abundant, copious</td>
<td>See discussion of ġazura above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>ġāzruh</td>
<td>To attempt to obtain in return more than one gives</td>
<td>There is no obvious contextual relation between this word and the Genesis account; it will not be discussed further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>āġzara; gazr</td>
<td>Abundance of milk in animals</td>
<td>While the Genesis 1-3 account does focus on abundance (abundance will be discussed further later) and the creation of animals, there is no reason to consider a particular focus on animal’s milk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>taģzīr</td>
<td>To skip a milking between two milkings</td>
<td>This word will not be further analyzed in this dissertation. See discussion above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>ġazr</td>
<td>A vessel made of grass and palm leaves</td>
<td>While the Genesis 1-3 account does focus on abundance of life, including plant life, there is no reason to consider a particular focus on vessels made from plant fibers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ugaritic

Ugaritic also has a much simpler correlation to Hebrew roots than Akkadian. Like Akkadian, Ugaritic was written using cuneiform symbols. However, rather than utilizing hundreds of cuneiform symbols with multiple logographic or phonetic readings, Ugaritic was limited to only 30 cuneiform symbols that functioned alphabetically. Thus, as with Arabic, there is very little question regarding consonant equivalencies.\(^{112}\)

The *ayin* of Hebrew can correspond with the glottal ` or with the fricative ǧ.

The *zayin* of Hebrew can correspond with the Ugaritic *d*, *z*, or *ḏ*.\(^{113}\)

The Hebrew *resh* corresponds with the Ugaritic *r*.

Once again, for roots to be considered for further analysis, their usage of the root must contextually within the Genesis narrative, and there cannot be any other existing Hebrew roots that provide a closer cognate to the proposed Ugaritic root.

***= New semantic range, suitable for further analysis

*= New semantic range, not suitable for further study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Suitability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>***</td>
<td>dr</td>
<td>Great, mighty; wonderful, magnificent, strong, good quality (with cognates in Phoenician, Punic, and Biblical Hebrew)(^{113})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


| **| Noble, worthy (with cognates in Punic and Biblical Hebrew) $^{114}$ | This word corresponds to the Hebrew root $\text{aleph, dalet, resh}$, and thus will not be included in this study. |
| **| Good quality, noble, the best (with cognates in Phoenician, Punic, and Biblical Hebrew) $^{115}$ | This word corresponds to the Hebrew root $\text{aleph, dalet, resh}$, and thus will not be included in this study. |
| **| Nobility, the most noble (with a cognate in Biblical Hebrew) $^{116}$ | This word corresponds to the Hebrew root $\text{aleph, dalet, resh}$, and thus will not be included in this study. |
| ** $\text{`zr}$ | To gird, bind; clothed, enrobbed, veiled ($\text{uzr}$, with cognates in Phoenician, Aramaic, and Hebrew) $^{117}$ | This word could have had potential contextual application due to the emphasis on nakedness and covering. However, it has another unrelated Hebrew cognate: $\text{aleph, zayin, resh}$, and so will not be included in this study. |
| *** $\text{`dr}$ | To help, rescue, to save (with cognates in Punic, Old Canaanite, Akkadian, Hurrian, Ugaritic, Old South Arabic, and Hebrew; cf. “followers, adherents” in Old South Arabic) $^{118}$ | This is a direct cognate with $\text{ezzer}$ as it has traditionally been translated. Because this word, combined with different translation values of $\text{neged}$ may yet produce different readings of the text, this will be further analyzed later in the dissertation. |
| *** $\text{`g`zr}$ | 1. Lad, youth; 2. Noble, hero; 3. Champion, warrior (epithet of gods and heroes and cult officials) cf. Arabic $\text{Gazīr}$, “much, abundant” $^{120}$ | This may have contextual resonances with leadership and conflict elements in the narrative. This root will be further analyzed later in the dissertation. |

---


Aramaic

As perhaps the language most closely related to Hebrew, Aramaic also has the simplest correlation to Hebrew consonants.\(^{121}\) The ayin of Hebrew corresponds with the Aramaic ayin.

The zayin of Hebrew can correspond with the Aramaic zain (z) or dalath (d).

The Hebrew resh corresponds with the Aramaic resh.

Once again, for roots to be considered for further analysis, their usage of the root must contextually within the Genesis narrative, and there cannot be any other existing Hebrew roots that provide a closer cognate to the proposed Aramaic root.

*** = New semantic range, suitable for further analysis

*= New semantic range, not suitable for further study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Suitability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>***</td>
<td>azarah(^{122})</td>
<td>Temple courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>adr(^{123})</td>
<td>Flock, herd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>***</td>
<td>azr(^{124})</td>
<td>Help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>dr(^{125})</td>
<td>Chaff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table of semantic ranges for *ezer* with source languages listed

At this point, we are left with a list of 17 general semantic ranges, drawn from the five languages in question (Hebrew, Akkadian, Arabic, Ugaritic, and Aramaic). Some of these ranges occur in only one language, but over half of them (nine, to be precise) occur in more than one Semitic language. Of the remaining eight that are attested in only one language, two are found only in Hebrew, two solely in Arabic, and four only in Akkadian.

It ought to be reiterated at this point that this list is *not* claiming a cognate relation between these Semitic roots; it is pointing out potential cognates that may be used through analogy as a basis for further analysis of *ezer kenegdo* in Genesis 2:18 and 20.

The following list illustrates the semantic ranges, as well as the languages in which each range occurs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic Range</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Source Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To help, assist, forgive</td>
<td>To help, assist, come to the aid of; Helper, one who is helped, assistance; To rescue, save; To forgive, excuse</td>
<td>Hebrew: <em>ezr</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Akkadian: <em>azāru</em>, <em>ḥaziru</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ugaritic: <em>ḏr</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To excuse, justify, exempt from blame</td>
<td>To excuse, free, clear, exempt from blame, exculpate; to excuse one’s conduct, withhold blame; to justify; Excusing; an excuser; excuses, apologies; excused, freed, cleared, exempted from blame</td>
<td>Hebrew: <em>ezr</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arabic: <em>ṣaḏarah</em>, <em>aḏr</em>; <em>aḏur</em>; <em>ašya ḥara</em>; ḥaḏīr; <em>mi ḥir</em>; <em>ma ḥuwr</em>; <em>mu ṣiḏir</em>; ḥaḏir; ḥaḏawwar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To free, save</td>
<td>To free, save</td>
<td>Hebrew: <em>ezr</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Savior, liberation, liberator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To hinder, restrain</td>
<td>To hinder, restrain</td>
<td>Hebrew: <em>ezer</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To draw back, remain behind, hold back, go backwards</td>
<td>Arabic: ṣaḏara; ṣazār; ṣazarah; ṣzzruh; yā ṣār</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To prevent, withhold, forbid; turn someone away or back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To discipline, chastise, correct, punish, meaning “he did to him that which should turn him away, or back, from evil conduct”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic: ʕazarah</td>
<td>To beat, flog</td>
<td>To inflict a beating or flogging less than that prescribed by the law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic: ʕagūr</td>
<td>Construction, building</td>
<td>Enclosure for sheep, a fold; enclosed area for delivery of dates; enclosure, court, yard; confinement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabaic: ʕagūr</td>
<td>Construction, building</td>
<td>A house, dwelling; Fortification, wall, foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew: azarah</td>
<td>Sacral architecture</td>
<td>Temple/Sanctuary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew: azarah</td>
<td>Sacral architecture</td>
<td>Ledge, court, border around altar; temple courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew: azarah</td>
<td>Sacral architecture</td>
<td>Part of temple complex, person attached to the temple complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akkadian: ezēru</td>
<td>To curse</td>
<td>To curse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akkadian: uṣṣuru B</td>
<td>To sever</td>
<td>To sever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akkadian: uṣṣuru A</td>
<td>To be attentive, to listen</td>
<td>To be attentive, to listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic: mi ʕāfir</td>
<td>Cloth, covering</td>
<td>A woolen cloth or garment; veils, curtains, coverings; to gird, bind; clothed, enrobed, veiled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic: ʕázūr</td>
<td>Cloth, covering</td>
<td>Akkadian: uṣṣuru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew: azarah</td>
<td>To draw, engrave, plan</td>
<td>To draw, make a drawing; establish regulations; carver of reliefs; plan of destiny; plan, design, border line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew: azarah</td>
<td>To draw, engrave, plan</td>
<td>Drawing, plan, engraving, picture, relief; divine design, plan, concept, ordinance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew: ʕzr</td>
<td>To join together</td>
<td>To join together, come together, assemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew: ʕzr</td>
<td>To be abundant</td>
<td>To become much, abundant, copious, to be abundant (for evil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic: ʕāzdūr</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>A species of tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew: ʕzr, ezrah</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Woman, maiden, virgin; virginity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew: ʕadrā; ʕudrah; ʕadr</td>
<td>Angel of death</td>
<td>The angel of death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The number of potential cognates for *neged* (*ngd*) is much smaller than that for *ezer*. The primary reason for this is that *neged* is built of consonants with fewer historical shifts and assimilations. This analysis encompasses the following consonantal range:

- Hebrew letter “*nun*” (*n*):
  - *n*
- Hebrew letter “*gimmel*” (*g*):
  - *g*, *k*, *q*, *j*
- Hebrew letter “*dalet*” (*d*):
  - *d*, *t*

Several considerations should be made for the range of consonants included when identifying potential cognate roots. First, one must understand that /d/ in Hebrew does not have a one-for-one correspondence with /d/ in other Semitic languages. It is true that according to Heuhnergard’s language reconstruction chart, the Hebrew /d/ corresponds to /d/ across Semitic languages, but this study will justify the inclusion of additional consonants. Similarly, Hebrew /g/ has a near one-for-one correspondence with /g/ in other Semitic languages. However, as we see in Glück’s article, the idea of relation between phonetically similar consonants is entirely possible. Glück provides ample evidence for the interchangeability of *gimmel* and *quf*, lending support to his argument that “*ngd* and *nqd* are variants of one expression.” Rather than accepting flat consonantal equivalency, this study acknowledges that in Semitic languages, there is crossover between correlating voiced, voiceless, and emphatic consonants, as will be demonstrated shortly.

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Consonant Selections by Language

The following section will demonstrate by language that the selected consonants contain enough evidence for linguistic crossover to be included in the search for Semitic cognates of the root _ngd_ in Genesis 2:18, 20. The bolded words are the dictionary entry, while the italicized words are alternate spellings of the entry words.

_/g/_

Akkadian

Consonants included in the Akkadian search corresponding to the Hebrew /g/ include _g_, _k_, and _q_. It appears that these consonants were occasionally interchangeable, as evidenced by a dictionary search of words with these consonants.\(^{128}\) Even a brief perusal produces the following examples, of which the following are only a small representation of the many words with alternate spellings.

\[Gā’u, kā’u, qā’u\]
\[Gazāzu(m), kazāzu\]
\[Kalgukku(m), kalguqqu\]
\[Kapālu(m), qapālu(m)\]
\[Qaqqaru(m), kaqqaru(m)\]
\[Qaqqullu, kakkullu\]
\[Qarānu(m), garānu(m)\]

\(^{128}\) Citations in this section taken from Jeremy Black, Andrew George, and Nicholas Postgate, eds., _A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian_ (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassovitz Verlag, 2000).
Arabic

The Hebrew /g/ nearly always corresponds to /j/ in Arabic, due to consonant shifts. This study does not push back on this, as it is quite consistent.

Aramaic: (Qumran, Mandeans, Samaritan, Biblical)

The Hebrew /g/ corresponds to both /g/ and /q/ in Aramaic, due to consonant shifts.

Ugaritic

The Hebrew /g/ consistently corresponds to both /g/ and /q/ in Ugaritic.  

/dt/

Akkadian

In Akkadian, this study accepts Akkadian roots with /d/ and /t/ as being acceptable correspondences with the Hebrew /dt/. Due to the fact that /d/- and /t/- can be represented by the same cuneiform symbols, this is not a stretch at all. This is, again, reflected in dictionary entries.

*Derkullum, tarkallu*

*Dirratu(m), tirratu*

*Tamtu, damtum*

*Tappašt, dappastu*

While the interchange between /d/t/ is not as frequent as that between /g/k/q/ in Akkadian, it is nevertheless present.

---

Arabic

The Hebrew /dl/ nearly always corresponds to /ld/ in Arabic. This study does not push back on this, as it is quite consistent.

Qumran Aramaic, Mandeon Aramaic, Samaritan Aramaic, Biblical Aramaic

The Hebrew /dl/ nearly always corresponds to /ld/ in Aramaic dialects. This study does not push back on this, as it is quite consistent.

Ugaritic

The Hebrew /dl/ nearly always corresponds to /ld/ in Ugaritic. This study does not push back on this, as it is quite consistent.\(^{130}\)

Please note: there are some cognates lacking a dental plosive as the third radical. These roots were included in the acknowledgment that if negdo is functioning as a loanword, there may be grammatical forms adopted from the loaning language. Moreover, both niku (sexually ravish) and naku (to fornicate, commit adultery) are related to niktu (“fornication”), which does appear to potentially fit.\(^{131}\) Likewise, CAD connects nagu (joy, jubilation) and nugu (to sing joyously) to nigutu (joyful music, merrymaking). In addition, the plural form of niqu (sacrifice, offering) can be niqiatu, niqetu, or niqatu.\(^{132}\)

As with the word lists for ezer, this examination will identify semantic ranges acceptable for further analysis according to the following guidelines: for roots to be considered for further

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\(^{130}\) Sivan, A Grammar of the Ugaritic Language: Second Impression with Corrections, 27.


\(^{132}\) See “niqu” in Reiner, N (CAD).
analysis, their usage of the root must contextually within the Genesis narrative, and there cannot
be any other existing Hebrew roots that provide a closer cognate to the proposed Semitic root.

Please note that any words with an unknown meaning will not be considered.

**Nged cognates in other Semitic languages:**

**Akkadian**

All Akkadian entries are taken from the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary and are either
direct quotes or are slightly paraphrased for length or clarity. Quotation marks have been
removed for ease of reading.

The following list is organized alphabetically by semantic range as indicated by CAD.
This means that if CAD redirects *nigu tu* to *nagû*, then the first entry in the semantic range will be
*nagû*. In the leftmost column, * indicates a new semantic range unrelated to this study, and ***
indicates a new semantic range that will be further analyzed.

***= New semantic range, suitable for further analysis

*= New semantic range, not suitable for further study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Suitability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* nagduqqu</td>
<td>To be read</td>
<td>This word has no clear relation to the Genesis 1-3 account and will not be analyzed further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** nagû</td>
<td>Object/building made of wood</td>
<td>This could have interesting connections to the Eden account: there are building themes used in connection with the creation of the woman, and trees play an important role in the narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nagîtu</td>
<td>District(?); cf. nagû</td>
<td>N/A—the semantic range is uncertain and this will not be analyzed further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* nagû— (negû)</td>
<td>To sing joyously; cf. nigu tu, nîgu, tangîtu</td>
<td>This has no clear contextual markers tying it to the Genesis account; the only emotions explicitly mentioned are their initial lack of shame at being naked, and fear when the humans realize their nakedness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nigūtu</strong></td>
<td>Joyful music, merrymaking; cf. nagū v.</td>
<td>See nagū.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nūgu</strong></td>
<td>Joy, jubilation; cf. nagū v.</td>
<td>See nagū.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** <strong>nakādu—(naqādu)</strong> A</td>
<td>1. Worry, to fear, to be anxious about; 2. (In the stative) to be in a dangerous situation; 3. Nukkudu to cause concern; cf. itkudu, nakdiš, nakdu, nakuttu, nikittu.</td>
<td>There are contextual resonances with fear in the text; this will be examined further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nakuttu</strong></td>
<td>Fear, concern, worry, anxiety, distress; cf. nakādu</td>
<td>See discussion of nakādu A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>niqittu</strong></td>
<td>Meaning unknown, context of blood and body and death; see also nikittu (fear, worry, concern; redirects to nakādu)</td>
<td>See discussion of nakādu A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** <strong>nakādu—(naqādu)</strong> B</td>
<td>To beat, throb; palpitate</td>
<td>There is no contextual evidence supporting the idea of physical violence in the text; nevertheless, due to potential resonance with traditional interpretations regarding punishment, this semantic range will be discussed along with similar semantic ranges of neged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nakdu</strong></td>
<td>Critically ill; critical; reverent; cf. nakādu</td>
<td>There is no contextual evidence for any illness in the garden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nakkadu—(nakdu)</strong></td>
<td>Meaning unknown</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nakkatu</strong></td>
<td>(A type of real estate)</td>
<td>This definition is too vague, and will not be included in further analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** <strong>naktu</strong></td>
<td>Garment, fabric</td>
<td>This word has potential for meaningful interpretation, due to the prominent imagery of nakedness and covering in the Eden account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** <strong>nāku—(niāku)</strong></td>
<td>To have illicit sexual intercourse, to fornicate; 2. To have illicit intercourse repeatedly; 3. To permit intercourse. Cf. Muttatiku, nuttikku, nā ’ikānu, najāku, niktu, *nīku adj., nīku s., niqīqu.</td>
<td>Although its base form lacks all the root letters of Neged, this word is still included due to related forms (such as Niktu appearing to have all the same/similar root letters as neged, as well as due to sexual overtones in the narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nakū II</strong></td>
<td>“Possessions of the man” or “having had sexual intercourse”</td>
<td>See discussion of nāku.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>niktu</strong></td>
<td>Fornication; cf. nāku.</td>
<td>See discussion of nāku.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>níku</strong></td>
<td>Taken (sexually), ravished; cf. nāku</td>
<td>See discussion of nāku.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nīku</td>
<td>Fornication, adultery; cf. nāku</td>
<td>See discussion of nāku.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** nāqīdu</td>
<td>Herdsman (cf. naqidutu, naqidatu)</td>
<td>This word aligns with elements of the Hebrew root nesed that have already been discussed by other scholars. This word will be included in later discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nāqīdu in</td>
<td>Overseer of herdsman; cf. nāqīdu</td>
<td>See discussion of Nāqīdu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rab nāqīdī</td>
<td>nāqīdu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nāqīdūtu</td>
<td>Pastorship, position as herdsman; cf. nāqīdū</td>
<td>See discussion of Nāqīdu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* nūqītu—</td>
<td>Aromatic wood</td>
<td>While trees do play an important narrative role in the Eden account, the focus seems to be on the fruit of the trees, not on the quality of the wood of the trees; thus this root is deemed contextually unrelated and will not be examined further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(or nūqītu,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nūq/k/qītu)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* nūqgātu</td>
<td>Anger, wrath; cf. agāgu (to be angry)</td>
<td>This has no clear contextual markers tying it to the Genesis account; the only emotions explicitly mentioned are their initial lack of shame at being naked, and fear when the humans realize their nakedness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* nūkkātu— (nūkātu, nūktu)</td>
<td>A plant</td>
<td>While the creation of plants plays an important part of Genesis 1-3, the only plants that play significant roles after the creation are trees. This word is a general word that does not specify type. This, along with the fact that the woman is built from the man (implying wood/trees or stone) preclude this root from being included in this study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* nūkkū</td>
<td>Meaning uncertain; royal</td>
<td>N/A—this study will not examine uncertain definitions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Arabic

(All Arabic entries are taken from An Arabic-English Lexicon, by Edward William Lane, and are either direct quotes or are slightly paraphrased for length or clarity. Quotation marks have been removed for ease of reading.)

*** = New semantic range, suitable for further analysis
*= New semantic range, not suitable for further study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Suitability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*** najadah</td>
<td>Overcame, overpowered, conquered, subdued, surpassed, prevailed over</td>
<td>There are contextual connections to conflict in the Eden account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manjūd</td>
<td>Overcome; conquered; subdued; overpowered; fatigued</td>
<td>There are contextual connections to conflict in the Eden account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** yanjīd</td>
<td>To try or prove a person, to teach and render expert or experienced and well informed, or firm, sound in judgement (by means of time, habit, or fortune)</td>
<td>This semantic range could harmonize with leadership elements found throughout the narrative, and will be examined further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** najūd</td>
<td>An intelligent woman; sharp, or quick, in intellect; possessing judgment</td>
<td>Due to contextual elements of knowledge and wisdom, this may have application to the Eden account and will be discussed later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>munajjad</td>
<td>One tried and strengthened by experience; expert; one who has experience in affairs and has become well informed</td>
<td>This range may harmonize with leadership elements found throughout the narrative, and will be examined further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** nājduh</td>
<td>To go forth to him to fight or combat</td>
<td>There are contextual connections to conflict in the Eden account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>munājid</td>
<td>A fighter, combatant</td>
<td>There are contextual connections to conflict in the Eden account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nijād</td>
<td>Suspensory cords or strings of a sword; the part of a sword that lies upon the shoulder</td>
<td>There are contextual connections to conflict in the Eden account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** injād</td>
<td>To aid or assist another, to succor someone</td>
<td>This connects with the traditional translation of ezer (“help”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋynjdh</td>
<td>To ask or desire aid or assistance and succor</td>
<td>This connects with the traditional translation of ezer (“help”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minjād</td>
<td>One who aids or assists much or well</td>
<td>This connects with the traditional translation of ezer (“help”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>munājid</td>
<td>An aider, assistant.</td>
<td>This connects with the traditional translation of ezer (“help”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** ynjād</td>
<td>To swear a big oath</td>
<td>This has potential connections to temple and ritual connections, since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>najd</strong></td>
<td>High or elevated land or country; or hard and rugged and elevated or high tableland; stony and rugged, or hard, elevated land, like a mountain, standing over against one and intercepting his view of what is behind it, but not very high.</td>
<td>There are contextual markers potentially connecting to Eden as a temple sanctuary/mountain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>minjad</strong></td>
<td>A small mountain</td>
<td>There are interpretations that view Eden as a mountain, due to its nature as a prototypical temple text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>najad</strong></td>
<td>Sweat, by reason of work, sorrow, grief, anxiety, etc.</td>
<td>This may resonate with Adam’s consequence for eating the fruit, in which Adam will only succeed through hard work and sweat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>najid</strong></td>
<td>A courageous person, sharp, or vigorous and effective in those affairs which others lack power or ability to accomplish; or courageous and strong, very valiant, quick in assenting to that which one is called or invited to do, whether good or evil.</td>
<td>This semantic range could harmonize well with leadership elements found throughout the narrative, and will be examined further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>najdah</strong></td>
<td>Courage with steadiness and calmness in awaiting death, victory, or martyrdom fearlessly; great valor</td>
<td>This semantic range may harmonize with leadership elements found throughout the narrative, and will be examined further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>najūd</strong></td>
<td>Applied to female donkeys or camels: long-necked; barren; tall, over-peering; high and great; sharp, spirited, vigorous; one that precedes or outgoes others; strong in spirit; abounding with milk; that surpasses other animals in production of milk; that (only) lies down on high ground</td>
<td>This has no clear contextual markers tying it to the Genesis account. While the creation of the animals is recounted, there is no continuing emphasis on beasts of burden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nājidah</strong></td>
<td>Streaks of fat on a camel’s shoulders</td>
<td>This has no clear contextual markers tying it to Genesis 1-3. While the creation of the animals is recounted, there is no continuing emphasis on beasts of burden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>najūd</strong></td>
<td>One who works in stuffing and arranging household furniture.</td>
<td>There are no contextual markers to furniture in the Eden account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>najād</strong></td>
<td>One who manufactures beds, pillows, etc.</td>
<td>There are no contextual markers to furniture in the Eden account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Suitability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nājid</td>
<td>Stupid, dull, wanting in intelligence; not penetrating, sharp, vigorous, or effective in performing affairs; soft, weak, lacking sturdiness, without endurance, weathy, fatigued.</td>
<td>Due to some traditions viewing woman as being created to be inherently lesser or weaker, this will be analyzed further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nājūd</td>
<td>Wine, or excellent wine; the first that comes out when the clay is removed from the mouth of a jar.</td>
<td>There are no clear contextual connections to wine in Genesis 1-3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nājūd</td>
<td>Wine vessel</td>
<td>There are no clear contextual connections to wine in Genesis 1-3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minjad</td>
<td>A kind of ornament worn by women and adorned with gems</td>
<td>There are no clear connections to ornamentation in Genesis 1-3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minjadah</td>
<td>A light staff or stick to urge beast of carriage forward; stick used to tease wool; stuffing of a camel’s saddle</td>
<td>There are no clear connections to sticks in the Genesis account.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ugaritic**

(All entries are taken from their attributed dictionaries and are either direct quotes or are slightly paraphrased for length or clarity. Quotation marks are removed for ease of reading.)

***= New semantic range, suitable for further analysis

*= New semantic range, not suitable for further study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Suitability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nqd</td>
<td>Chief shepherd, head shepherd; court official with task of inspector¹³³</td>
<td>This word has resonances with other leadership elements from the text, and will be further analyzed later. See discussion of ngd by Glück in the chapter, “Neged in Hebrew.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nqd</td>
<td>Grazing rights, see also maqqadu and muqādu¹³⁴</td>
<td>This has to do with the larger semantic range of sheep herding. See discussion above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngd</td>
<td>Linen garment¹³⁵</td>
<td>This word may suit the text very well, due to the prominent themes of nakedness and covering.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


¹³⁵ Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription*. 

72
Aramaic

The sixteenth volume of Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (TDOT) is specifically dedicated to Aramaic roots in the Old Testament. In the entry on *ngd*, Lipiński writes that the base verbal meanings of both *ngd* and *nqd* in Aramaic are “to move (out), to set out.” Thus, the verbal ranges of “to pull, to draw, to march, to bring in” all stem from the base meaning. Lipiński then identifies the prepositional form of *ngd*, “in the direction of,” and writes that it “corresponds to the basic meaning of the verb.”

Lipiński does not connect the nominal form to its verbal counterpart; he treats it separately, writing that the noun denotes an “emissary,” and that the Hebrew verbal form *higid*, “to tell, report” traces back to emissaries’ duties. Likewise, he connects the noun *ngdwt*, “advance” is an abstract form that developed from *ngd* “leader.”

Overall, Lipiński’s treatment is short and does not take into account the entire range of usages outside of the Old Testament; his analysis instead leans on Hebrew cognates. Granted, the stated scope of the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament is only the Old Testament. Therefore, one ought not judge Lipiński too harshly for remaining solely within that scope. However, as will be seen, there are several other semantic ranges found when one expands the search to include other sources such as Qumran Aramaic, Mandean Aramaic, and Samaritan Aramaic.

(All entries are taken from their attributed dictionaries and are either direct quotes or are slightly paraphrased for length or clarity. Quotation marks have been removed for ease of reading.)

---

### Word List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Suitability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biblical Aramaic</td>
<td><strong>ngd/nqd</strong></td>
<td>To move out, set out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td><strong>ngd/nqd</strong></td>
<td>Preposition: in the direction of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>***</td>
<td><strong>ngd/nqd</strong></td>
<td>Royal dignitary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>***</td>
<td><strong>ngd/nqd</strong></td>
<td>To report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>***</td>
<td><strong>ngd/nqd</strong></td>
<td>Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qumran Aramaic</td>
<td><strong>ngd</strong></td>
<td>To proceed, stretch, pull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>***</td>
<td><strong>ngd II</strong></td>
<td>To be scourged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>***</td>
<td><strong>ngd</strong></td>
<td>Scourge (noun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td><strong>ngd</strong></td>
<td>Corresponding, equal to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mandean Aramaic</strong></th>
<th><strong>Samaritan Aramaic</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*** ngada ***</td>
<td>*** ngd ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretching out, protraction, punishment, castigation, torment, pain</td>
<td>Dragging, pulling (including water flow), leading, rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Eden account has no contextual elements supporting physical violence; however, the humans do receive consequences that are sometimes viewed as punishments; this will therefore be discussed later.</td>
<td>This sense could have resonance with the idea of moving forth from the garden, which is a process that the woman initiates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** ngd ***</td>
<td>*** ngd ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To drag at, pull about, punish, torment, torture; to lead forth, guide, govern</td>
<td>To draw out/forth, stretch out, extend, extract, unfurl, pull out, prolong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Eden account has no contextual elements supporting physical violence; however, the humans do receive consequences that are sometimes viewed as punishments; this will therefore be discussed later.</td>
<td>This sense could have resonance with the idea of moving forth from the garden, which is a process that the woman initiates. It also has resonances with other leadership elements in the Eden account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** ngdo ***</td>
<td>*** ngd ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>To practice sorcery, sorcerer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This definition has resonances with other leadership elements in the Eden account.</td>
<td>While there is communication with the divine in the Eden text, there is no contextual resonance with sorcery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* ngd ***</td>
<td>*** ngd ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The definition “speech” fits within the larger semantic range of communication. This will be analyzed in depth later.</td>
<td>The definition “speech” fits within the larger semantic range of communication. This will be analyzed in depth later.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of semantic ranges for neged with source languages listed

At this point, we are left with a list of 20 general semantic ranges, drawn from the five languages in question (Hebrew, Akkadian, Arabic, Ugaritic, and Aramaic). Some of these ranges occur in only one language, but nearly half of them (nine, to be precise) occur in more than one Semitic language. Of the remaining eleven that are attested in only one language, six are found solely in Arabic, and three only in Akkadian, one only in Hebrew, and one only in Aramaic.

It ought to be reiterated at this point that this list is not claiming a cognate relation between these Semitic roots; it is pointing out potential cognates that may be used through analogy as a basis for further analysis of ezer kenegdo in Genesis 2:18 and 20.

The following list represents a condensation of the basic meanings identified in the various dictionaries and lexicons. Please note: definitions that fall under a larger semantic umbrella will be combined (e.g. “leader,” “official,” and “prince”).

The following list illustrates the semantic ranges, as well as the languages in which each range occurs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic Range</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Source Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication,</td>
<td>To make known, show, disclose, tell, declare, announce, report, inform,</td>
<td>Hebrew: ngd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>explain, expound, reveal; Denounce, inform against</td>
<td>Aramaic: ngd/nqd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Samaritan Aram.: ngd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest, forthright</td>
<td>Honest; honest things, forthright things</td>
<td>Hebrew: ngd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To swear an oath</td>
<td>To swear a big oath</td>
<td>Arabic: ynjjd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction/buildings</td>
<td>Object/building made of wood</td>
<td>Akkadian: nagû</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>High or elevated land or country; hard and rugged and elevated or high</td>
<td>Arabic: najd; minjâd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tableland; stony and rugged, or hard, elevated land, like a mountain,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>standing over against one and intercepting his view of what is behind it,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>but not very high; A small mountain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion</td>
<td>Worry, fear, be anxious; to be in a dangerous situation; to cause concern;</td>
<td>Akkadian: nakâdu, naqâdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear, concern, worry, anxiety, distress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exertion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweat by reason of work, sorrow, grief,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anxiety, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stupid, dull, wanting in intelligence;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not penetrating, sharp, vigorous, or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effective in performing affairs; soft,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weak, lacking sturdiness, without</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>endurance, weary, fatigued</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic: najad; nājid; manjūd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexuality</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have illicit sexual intercourse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(repeatedly), to fornicate; to permit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intercourse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessions of the man; having had</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sexual intercourse;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken (sexually), ravished</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fornication, adultery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akkadian: nâku, nîktu, nîku</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader, guide</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(May be divine appellative); prince,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruler, leader, king, commander, chief</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>officer (may be in temple); noble things;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>royal dignitary, guidance; to be high,</td>
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<tr>
<td>exalted; lead forth, guide, govern.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hebrew: nagid</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aramaic: ngd/ngd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samaritan Aram.: ngd, ngdo, ngd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mandeans Aram.: ngd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Help, aid, succor</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Help, to aid or assist another, to</td>
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<tr>
<td>succor someone; to ask or desire aid or</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>assistance and succor; an aider,</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hebrew: ngd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arabic: injād; ūyndh; minjād</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Courage, strength, potency</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Courage, a courageous person, sharp, or</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>vigorous and effective in those affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>which others lack power or ability to</td>
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<tr>
<td>accomplish; or courageous and strong,</td>
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<tr>
<td>very valiant, quick in assenting to</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>that which one is called or invited to</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>do, whether good or evil.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courage with steadiness and calmness in</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>awaiting death, victory, or martyrdom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fearlessly; great valor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew: ngd</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic: najid; najdah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To draw forth, proceed</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull (out) (including water flow),</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>drag at, pull about;</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To proceed, stretch (out), draw out/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forth, extend, extract, unfurl, prolonged, stretch out, protract</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew: ngd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qumran Aram.: ngd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandeans Aram.: ngd</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Samaritan Aram.: ngd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Torment, pain</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Punishment, castigation, torment, pain,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>torture</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aramaic: ngada</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandeans Aram.: ngada, ngd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blow, affliction</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Blow, affliction;</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To beat, throb, palpitate, strike,</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scourge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew: ngd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akkadian: nakādu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qumran Aram.: ngd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samaritan Aram.: ngd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To move, set out</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To move, set out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aramaic: ngd/ngd</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Garment, fabric       | Garment, fabric; linen garment | Akkadian: naktu  
 Ugaritic: ngd |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Shepherd              | Shepherd, herdsman, pastorship; chief shepherd, head shepherd; court official with task of inspector | Hebrew: nqd  
 Akkadian: nāqidu, nāqidūtu  
 Ugaritic: nqd |
| To learn through experience; be sound in judgement | To try or prove a person, to teach and render him/her expert or experienced and well informed, or firm, sound in judgement (by means of time, habit, or fortune); One tried and strengthened by experience; expert; one who has experience in affairs and has become well informed; to be intelligent, sharp or quick in intellect; possessing judgement | Arabic: yanjūd; munajjad; najūd |
| Fighter, combatant    | Fighter, combatant            | Arabic: munājid; nājduh |
| Conquering           | Overcame, conquered, subdued, overpowered, surpassed, prevailed over; To go forth to him to fight or combat; Suspensory cords or strings of a sword | Arabic: najadah; manjūd; nijād |

**Full Chart of Potential Translation Values for Analysis**

The following is a chart of the translation values based upon the previous cognate lists. Please note: the alignment of the *ezer* and *neged* rows is not intended as a guide. These are not yet deeply examined to determine whether these actually fit within the Eden context. A final, reduced translation chart will be included following the analysis of these potential cognates.

Please note: some of the definitions provided by dictionary entries fall into multiple semantic ranges. These semantic ranges have been categorized into eight meta-groups, which are presented here in the order in which they will be analyzed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meta-group</th>
<th>Ezer</th>
<th>Negd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness and Communication</td>
<td>Catalyst of awareness, instigator of understanding; one who makes known, shows, discloses, reveals, expounds</td>
<td>To be attentive, to listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Honest; honest things, forthright things</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covering and Forgiveness</td>
<td>Cloth, covering, to gird, bind; clothed, enrobed, veiled</td>
<td>Covering, clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forgiver, one who brings forgiveness</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An excuser, one who exempts from blame, one who justifies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>One who is strong through experience, one who is well informed through experience, one who is sound in judgment, one who teaches through experience</td>
<td>Worry, fear, anxiety, concern, distress; to be in a dangerous situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fatigue, sweat from work, sorrow, grief, or anxiety; Stupid, dull, wanting in intelligence; ineffective; soft, weak, without endurance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help and Leadership</td>
<td>Help, aid, ally, assistance</td>
<td>Succorer, aider, helper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Liberator, savior, liberation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(May be divine appellative); prince, ruler, leader, king, commander, chief officer (may be in temple); noble things, royal dignitary; divinely appointed leader, exalted ruler</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shepherd, leader of a group</td>
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<td></td>
<td>One who moves, one who sets out Leader, one who draws forth, one who proceeds</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To discipline, chastise, correct, punish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beating or flogging less than prescribed by law</td>
<td>To pull about, prolong, stretch out</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stretching out, protraction, punishment, castigation, torment, pain, torture</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Blow, affliction, strike, scourge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To cause another to turn away from evil conduct</td>
<td></td>
<td>To draw back, remain behind, hold back, go backwards; to prevent, withhold, hinder, forbid, restrain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military/Conflict</td>
<td>Warrior, strong one, strength, might, valor, hero, champion</td>
<td>One who overcomes, conquers, subdues, overpowers, goes forth to fight</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fighter, combatant</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Suspensory cords or strings of a sword</td>
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<tr>
<td>One who joins together, one who brings together, assembler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanctuaries/Temples/Construction</td>
<td>Foundation, wall, fortification, house/dwelling place, enclosure, fold</td>
<td>One who is readily courageous, one who is strong and able</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Courage, strength, potency; effective in carrying out what others cannot; willing to assent with valor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Temple, sanctuary; temple courtyard, border around altar; personnel of temple</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Plan, (divine) design, concept, ordinance; plan of destiny</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High, elevated land; a small mountain</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tree</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To swear a big oath</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexuality/Femaleness</td>
<td>Woman, maiden</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virgin</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Illicit sexual encounters, adultery, fornication; ravished, taken sexually</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>Prosperity, abundance, (may be for good or evil)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To curse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The angel of death</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
It has not yet been established whether these semantic ranges are suitable translation values for *ezer kenegdo*. It has merely been established that they are not obviously unsuitable. Thus, the semantic ranges included in this chart require further analysis to determine which, if any, grammatically and contextually fit the Genesis 1-3 account. The focus of the coming section will be to determine this suitability and to develop readings based upon text-centered analysis rather than upon traditional views of *ezer kenegdo*. The analysis of these semantic ranges will be organized in eight main semantic groupings, which are presented in alphabetical order by main group, and then by theme within each meta-group. The only group not presented in alphabetical order is the Miscellaneous group, which will be presented last. It should be noted that due to significant overlap in the potential cognates’ semantic ranges, this analysis will not be divided by *ezer* and *neged*. At times, the same analysis will apply to potential cognates of both *ezer* and *neged*. This is the primary reason for organizing the analysis by semantic grouping, rather than by root letter.

The eight meta-groups into which potential cognates of *ezer* and *neged* are grouped are Awareness and Communication, Covering and Forgiveness, Experience, Help/Leadership, Military/Conflict, Sacred Structures/Temple/Constructions, Sexuality/Femaleness, and Miscellaneous. These meta-groups are for organizational purposes, and the analysis in the next chapter will focus on subsections of these groups. Following the analysis of these larger groups, there will be a chart illustrating the semantic ranges that are deemed suitable. Moreover, it will be demonstrated that these suitable semantic ranges reframe the conversation surrounding *ezer kenegdo*, and do not support the retention of a focus on gender hierarchy.
Analysis of Cognates

The research of the previous chapters does not yet give useful results for approaching the conceptualization of gender roles in Genesis 1-3. This is primarily because at this point, the research has only provided a list of words, with no indication of whether these words can appropriately be applied to the Genesis text. To that end, this chapter will analyze the semantic ranges of the potential cognates identified in the previous chapter against the context and linguistics of the Genesis 1-3 account. The aim of this is to discover which, if any, of these semantic ranges can suitably be applied to the creation narrative. As a part of this discussion, interpretive implications will occasionally, of necessity, be considered. The semantic ranges will be divided into eight meta-groups; these groups will be treated alphabetically, except for the Miscellaneous category, which will be considered last. The internal organization of each of these eight categories will be thematic. Following this analysis, a chart will be presented containing all of the semantic ranges deemed suitable.

The eight meta-groups for analysis are as follows:

Awareness and Communication
Covering and Forgiveness
Experience
Help and Leadership
Military and Conflict
Sanctuaries, Temples, and Constructions
Sexuality and Femaleness
Miscellaneous
Awareness and Communication

This section is distinguished by cognates that all have something to do with awareness and communication. In some cases, this is actual communication and awareness. In other cases, it has to do with elements of communication, such as listening, or honesty.

Communication/Awareness, One Who Makes Known, Reveals, Expounds (*neged*)

This semantic range has great applicability to the Genesis 1-3 context. Much of the narrative is concerned with the humans’ knowledge and awareness. This examination will begin by utilizing the concept of liminal space, as set forth by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner, and look at how awareness functions in the account before looking at *ezera* (*neged*) in light of the concept of awareness. (This is the only examination here that will employ a theory of religion to the reading. It serves as an example of how different semantic ranges can be developed in reading the text. The other semantic ranges will be examined against the philological and contextual markers within the Hebrew Bible text.)

Van Gennep discusses rites of passage as liminal spaces, and defines them as “rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position, and age.” Rites of passage, or liminal processes, begin with the pre-liminal, or separation phase, in which individuals must separate themselves from where they fit within their social structure and cultural condition. They then pass through the liminal phase, which is ambiguous, and has few of the markers that define either the pre-liminal or post-liminal states. Then in the post-liminal phase, the individual(s) reassimilate into normal society; while they may have responsibilities that differ from those of

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their pre-liminal phase, they are nonetheless expected to conform to the social and ethical norms of their society. Turner expands upon Van Gennep’s theory, and writes that those in the liminal state are ambiguous, in that they do not function in normal social, cultural, or legal capacities. Moreover, they are often described as having nothing, and even being naked. Liminal persons may have strong senses of comradeship and egalitarianism amongst themselves, and social ranks and structures cease to exist in the liminal space. This comradeship is the fundamental bond of humanity, without which society could not exist. Moreover, liminal beings are expected to be obedient to their instructors, and “accept arbitrary punishment without complaint. It is as though they are being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station in life.”\(^{139}\)

Although this review of liminal space is brief, it gives sufficient overview for further application. Certainly Eden can be viewed as a liminal space: in the narrative, the humans do experience a change of place (expulsion from Eden), state (becoming mortal), social position (society is created, and by extension, social positions as well) and age (the humans cease to be ageless upon leaving Eden). However, there are some aspects in which the Genesis account does not perfectly align with every aspect of Van Gennep’s and Turner’s framework. For instance, there is no pre-liminal phase: there is no separation from prior social and cultural roles. This is because there is no human existence in Genesis prior to their creation. However, as an origin story, this narrative is meant to be viewed in retrospect, through the lens of the later readers’ social framework. The absence of this theoretical element should not be cause for concern, provided that the narrative aligns sufficiently with other theoretical elements, as will be demonstrated.

Despite not having a pre-liminal phase, the Eden narrative nevertheless can be seen as a liminal space, since it does fit the theoretical second and third phases. As one would expect in a second, liminal phase, Eden contains few markers of the post-liminal phase (or the hypothetical pre-liminal phase). To begin with, life in Eden explicitly has no death and no hard work. Implicitly, there is no famine, starvation, disease, or social conflict; and perhaps no need even to build structures for shelter because there is no fear of attack by animals or other humans, or threat of natural disaster. In short, Eden is a location foreign to typical human experience by its utopic nature. In addition, the humans in Eden do not function in social, cultural, and legal capacities. However, while these roles do not exist at this point in the narrative, the creation of the woman does seem to signal the creation of a bond fundamental to human society. This bond is not marriage, as some theologians might suggest. In writing this, the intent is not to discount the important function that marriage may play in social structures; however, there is a bond even more fundamental to human society than marriage: it is the bond between humans, regardless of marital relation. For example, a society comprised entirely of single, non-partnered celibates can still be a successful (though short-lived) society, provided that those within it maintain a connection to their fellow humans. In contrast, any society, even one built upon marriage partnerships, will devolve into chaos if there is no fundamental human-to-human bond. When one acknowledges this, it becomes clear that the lack of normal social structures, and the presence of the human-to-human connection in the Eden account align with Turner’s and Van Gennep’s theories of liminal space.

Another aspect of the Eden account that might not fit into the liminal framework is that of comradeship and egalitarianism. While overt social ranks do not appear to exist in the garden, there has been much ink spilled over whether or not the man and woman are equal. Much of this
conversation has centered around the phrase *ezer kenegdo*. Thus, there will be no conclusive claim made regarding this liminal element at this point in the analysis. Although if one accepts the generalities of liminal theory as applying to the Eden narrative, then it would follow that the relationship between the man and woman in the garden is one of equality and comradeship.

Another pre-liminal element that is lacking in the Eden account is that the humans own nothing, and they are naked in the Garden of Eden. Again, because there is only an implied pre-liminal phase, there is no mention of prior clothing. However, the humans’ nakedness in the garden does fit the central liminal portion of the narrative. In fact, nakedness plays a large part in the narrative.

Another way that the narrative fits that theory is that the humans seem to be in a controlled environment that is overseen by “instructors” (as Turner puts it), and aside from partaking of the fruit, appear to be obedient to these instructors and accept the consequences of partaking the fruit.

After the liminal section of the Eden account, there is a section which serves as the transition from the liminal origin story to the post-liminal narration. This is found in Genesis 3:9-24, after the humans eat the fruit of knowledge. The deity seeks out the humans and declares consequences for their actions. Among these consequences are verses that describe much of human life throughout history: women bear children in pain, and men work hard to provide sustenance for survival. The humans are clothed and sent out of the liminal space with the expectation that they begin to conform to normal social and ethical norms. It is perhaps notable that the post-liminal markers only appear in the text during the consequence section, when new social roles are being established.
While this analysis of Eden as a liminal space is brief, based on these features, it is possible to see that Genesis 1-3 can appropriately be treated as a liminal space. Using this as a backdrop, it is now possible to proceed with the analysis of *ezer kenegdo*, with an eye toward how *ezer kenegdo* fits within the context of the entire narrative.

**Awareness**

For this reading, the translation of *kenegdo* that will be used is as follows: “like his awareness.” Thus, we should expect to see that elements of awareness in the text are tied to the woman, her creation, and her actions.

The first element that will be discussed further here is ambiguity in the garden of Eden, in particular, ambiguity with regards to gender. When the first human shows up on the scene, the text tells us, “God created man (Hebrew: *adam*) in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”

Perhaps a better translation would be: “Elohim created the human in his own image; in the image of Elohim he created it; he created them, masculine and feminine.” But translating the personal pronoun referring to *adam* as “it” deserves explanation.

It is possible to apply the reading that upon creation, the human (*adam*) was not yet gendered. Phyllis Trible writes, “ambiguity characterizes the meaning of [adam] in Genesis 2–3. On the one hand, man is the first creature formed (2:7). . . . On the other hand, [adam] is a generic term for humankind. . . . Until the differentiation of female and male (2:21–23), [adam] is basically androgynous: one creature incorporating two sexes.”

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140 Genesis 1:27, King James Version.
141 Genesis 1:27—author’s translation.
142 Due to different methods of transliteration, I have inserted one standard transliteration (*adam*) for the sake of consistency.
Meyers further elucidates the passage: “Certain words may be rendered as masculine in places where they are not meant to specify gender. Perhaps the best example is the generic word for ‘human,’ [adam], which permeates the creation tales and appears frequently elsewhere in the Bible. This word is usually, if not universally, translated as ‘man.’ In most cases the gender specific value of the word ‘man’ is thereby erroneously attached to a collective singular Hebrew word designating ‘human’ life, as a category to be distinguished from God on the one hand and animals on the other.”

Trible and Meyers highlight two relevant points. First, there is a differentiation made between the animals created earlier in day six and the adam. Although the reader is meant to understand that the adam is different from the animals, that demarcation is apparently not obvious to the adam. It is only as the adam names the surrounding animals that the fact becomes inescapable that the adam lacks a counterpart. This is the first indication of a growing awareness in the human: the adam becomes aware that s/he is different from the other creatures. This only becomes possible as the adam engages in the process of naming the animals. S/he is forced to not only see but to observe and actively differentiate the animals one from another. It is of utmost importance for this reading to note that this exercise was initiated by the deity, evidently to enable (or even force) the human to gain higher perception: “And Yahweh Elohim shaped from the ground each life of the field, and every bird of the heavens; and he brought them unto the human to see what he would call it.”

Second, the adam itself is ambiguous. I would argue that the lack of demarcating

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146 Genesis 2:19.
elements becomes painfully obvious when in juxtaposition with the other creations. The *adam* becomes aware of the lack of a matching companion, perhaps even aware that s/he is not gendered as the other animals are. The *adam* is a living liminality—a creature that defies categorization, that is neither one thing nor the other. It is only the deity’s confronting the human with this fact that enables the *adam* to gain this awareness, and it is in preparation for the separation into two genders that this awareness is necessary. Thus, in some sense, the impending creation of the *ezer kenegdo* becomes a motivator for the deity to promote human awareness, and the creation of the *ezer kenegdo* decreases the humans’ ambiguity, beginning their development into non-liminal beings.

Later on in the text, we find even more examples of the dawning of awareness. The very fact that deity singles out the Tree of Knowledge creates an awareness of the option to choose to partake. Again, the deity creates a climate in which the humans can continue to grow in awareness, and decrease in ambiguity. However, the KJV translation of the divine injunction does not adequately represent the Hebrew text, as will be illustrated shortly.

In the KJV, Genesis 2:16-17 reads, “of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” In the KJV, this passage seems to indicate a soft invitation to eat of other trees, followed by a very strong command to *not* partake of a certain tree, with the statement of a very strong consequence (death) if this command is not obeyed. However, the Hebrew text itself indicates something different. It is true that grammatically, there is a negative imperative: “do not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” It is also true that there is an

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147 Genesis 2:20. “But for the human—he did not find an *ezer kenegdo.*”
intensive grammatical form used to state the consequence: “you shall die.” But the preceding phrase is not a soft invitation. It uses the same intensifying grammatical structure as is used in the consequence language, “you shall die.” Perhaps a better translation would be, “You shall indeed eat of every tree in the garden.” 149

In addition, these injunctions are prefaced as follows: “And Yahweh Elohim commanded upon the human, saying. . .” This is much more than a strong declaration. It is a strong declaration, identified as a command that the humans surely will eat of every tree. This command, immediately followed by the conflicting command to not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Bad sets the humans up for further growth in their awareness. If they do, indeed, eat of every tree in the garden, then that necessitates that they eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But if they do not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, then they are not eating “of every tree of the garden.” Thus, once again, the deity has created a situation to serve as an initiation of further awareness. At the beginning, humans do not appear to be aware of these contradictions, although later developments indicate that they do have the mental capacity to grasp the implications of these contradictions, as one sees once the serpent enters the scene.

At this point we might question, “what does one do with a deity who purposely gives contradictory instructions?” Seeing the contradiction does seem to paint a trickster, or a malicious deity. One could certainly explore such a possibility. However, I posit that it is also possible to read this narrative as indicating that the deity always intended for the humans to gain moral awareness and leave the garden, while at the same time, allowing the humans to grow

through experiencing life without direct oversight. In other words, in this narrative, the divine creator/parent is not functioning as a helicopter parent. The events unfold according to divine intent, while allowing for others to act as agents.

The serpent performs an interesting literary role in the narrative by verbalizing the disruption of the humans’ perception of the “straightforward” the command given by deity. The first thing that the serpent says to the woman focuses on the contradiction in the divine injunction. The KJV translates this as, “Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” This sentence begins with the Hebrew particle *af*, which according to *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, is perhaps better translated as “really” or “indeed.” Thus, an appropriate translation could be, “Really God said, ‘you shall not eat from every tree in the garden.’”¹⁵⁰ The phrase the serpent uses, “you shall not eat,” is a command form. Thus, the serpent is rephrasing the tripartite injunction into one phrase: *do not* eat of all the trees.

In this paraphrase, the serpent’s words become the exact opposite of what the deity had said in 2:16: “you will surely eat of every tree in the garden,” or in other words, “*do eat of all the trees.*” This rephrasing highlights the contradiction in the deity’s original instruction to “eat of all the trees,” and also to “not eat of that one tree.” Thus, the serpent’s primary function in the narrative is to accelerate the human’s realization of the choice before them: they could obey one or the other. If they are to truly eat of *every* tree in the garden, that would include the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But if they don’t eat from the tree of knowledge, then they won’t actually eat from every tree.

In this reading, it is this realization—that choices exist, and that choices have

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consequences—that produces moral awareness in the humans, not the partaking of the fruit. The fruit itself is secondary. The humans’ acquisition of moral awareness is the final step away from ambiguity, and the humans are, therefore, no longer liminal beings. They are incapable of developing further without tainting the liminal space, and thus, need to leave. Therefore, if deity is not merely tricking the humans, then one can conclude that deity’s plan all along is for the humans to gain moral awareness and to leave Eden, which deity sets in motion by creating conditions that will eventually force the humans to develop mentally.

Another question that arises from this reading is whether it was really necessary to expel Adam and Eve from the Garden. However, if Adam and Eve were meant to remain as liminal beings within a liminal space, then it would seem that the deity would not have set Adam and Eve on a trajectory towards knowledge and the ability to make distinctions themselves. But through the development of the story, we see the process of Adam and Eve becoming more and more aware of distinctions: awareness of aloneness; difference from the other animals; lack of distinction of gender followed by a division of genders; and awareness of the option to choose to partake of the fruit. The pinnacle of the entire experience is their access to the knowledge of good and bad, or the ability to make moral distinctions. Zevit writes, “On the day of their eating, their eyes opened themselves (Gen 3:5, 7). They achieved a new type of consciousness—discerning self-consciousness.”

A relevant aside has to do with the interpretation of the phrase “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad.” More than just an ability to discern qualities, Adam and Eve’s knowledge, their newfound awareness, gave them the potential to know everything. Gordon and Rendsburg

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observe: “The knowledge imparted by the fruit of this tree is the ‘knowledge of good and evil,’ a much misunderstood phrase. Again we must reckon with the literary device of a merism.\textsuperscript{152} The antonyms ‘good and evil’ mean ‘everything’ here. . . . Thus man obtained universal knowledge, and to that extent shares with God a faculty that had been a divine prerogative.”\textsuperscript{153} It does not appear that the humans immediately obtained full comprehension of good and evil, let alone universal knowledge. However, it does seem that in the humans’ gaining of moral awareness, the text suggests the potential for fully understanding good and evil, and eventually, everything.

This gradual awakening is one of the markers of the narrative. As Adam and Eve gain awareness, they cease to fit within the liminal context. They no longer are beings with ambiguous identity or with ambiguous mental awareness. Eden is no longer “safe” for them, because they have moved beyond the need to rely on demarcations other than their own. They have harnessed the power of discernment—specifically discerning for themselves—which appears to have been the purpose for being in Eden to begin with. In other words, Adam and Eve, by gaining the ability to create their own demarcations, no longer belong in the space of the Garden of Eden.

This reading radically shifts the responsibility for the growth of human awareness. Traditional interpretations have squarely placed the responsibility for instigation upon the serpent, and responsibility for sin upon the woman’s shoulders because she listened to the serpent’s seduction. However, I would question: with the humans’ potential for understanding,


would it not be inevitable that they eventually realize the contradiction inherent in deity’s command? If that is the case, then the serpent only accelerates deity’s plan. Regardless of whether one views the serpent as the devil or as merely the most intelligent of the creatures created by deity, according to this reading, the serpent’s actions do not actually frustrate the deity’s purpose. At the very least, it is not the partaking of the fruit that creates any complications; if anything, it is the serpent’s potential insinuation that deity should not be trusted because of the contradiction in deity’s command. Thus, there may be problems that arise due to the serpent’s involvement, but the partaking of the fruit is not one of them.

Now to apply ezer kenegdo to this reading. If one accepts “instigator of understanding,” or “catalyst of awareness” as an appropriate translation of ezer kenegdo, then a few things become clear: at every junction, the woman serves as a catalyst for increased awareness. In 2:18, when the need for an ezer kenegdo is first mentioned, it is not directly followed by a creation of the ezer kenegdo. Rather, it is followed immediately by the adam naming the animals, and once the adam finishes naming the animals, the text comments, “But for the adam, he did not find an ezer kenegdo.”

It appears that the naming of the animals effectually caused the human to gain awareness of their uniqueness and singularity among the animals, and to gain awareness of self and other. The very impending creation of ezer kenegdo serves as a catalyst for greater awareness.

Likewise, the woman once again is the instigator in the process of gaining the potential for knowledge of good and evil/knowledge of everything. She perceives the contradiction, she makes the choice, and she invites the man to also become aware of choice and consequence.

154 Genesis 2:20.
Thus, I argue that the woman serves as a divinely appointed agent to fulfill the divine plan. This contrasts with Deutschmann’s position that Genesis serves as an “anti-wisdom” narrative, which discourages humanity from the independent search for wisdom. Moreover, this reading creates a very different foundation for theologically understanding woman than the traditional view of woman as a weak and inherently evil entity who fractured the deity’s plan.

In addition, the text potentially highlights the woman as having to do with communication and awareness: the deity refers to the woman as ezer kenegdo in 2:18, and in 3:20, the man named the woman Eve, from the root hwh. The typical etymology of hwh connects it to the semantic range of “life.” However, as O’Connell notes in NIDOTTE, hwh in Hiphil is used in poetic contexts and corresponds to ngd in Hiphil. In other words, lehavor and lehagid both mean “to communicate, to inform, to tell;” their only difference is that one is poetic and one prosaic. Thus, if one accepts that ngd in Genesis 2:18, 20 has to do with bringing awareness, there is a strong connection in the text to the name “Eve,” which can also be understood as

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155 For a similar discussion, see Karalina Matskevich, *Construction of Gender and Identity in Genesis: The Subject and the Other*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 647 (T&T Clark, 2020), 7, 12, 15-16.


157 A side note: there is a potential linguistic connection based on what the woman is called. Deity calls the woman ezer kenegdo. The adam calls the woman “Eve.” The biblical text links this name, Eve, with the Hebrew root havah, “life.” However, if one accepts the semantic range of neged to be “communication, awareness,” then there may be a play on words in the name of Eve. According to The New International Dictionary of Theology and Exegesis, the intensive (piel) conjugation of the root havah is the poetic counterpart of the causative (hiphil) conjugation of nagad. In other words, the root used in kenegdo and the root used in Eve are synonyms. Their main differences are than one is used in prose (nagad), and one in poetry (havah). See Robert H. O’Connell, “志强 (ngd),” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2014), vol. 3, pg. 16. This reading could indicate that the adam understood deity’s view of the woman’s ability to increase awareness.

indicating an instigator of awareness.

One of the strengths of this reading is that the textual evidence supports it, regardless of theoretical approach. This reading used Liminal Theory as a convenient framework to present the reading. However, even if one does not accept Eden as a liminal space, one still has to grapple with the fact that deity creates conditions that will eventually lead to moral awareness, and the woman’s choice initiates the process of gaining that awareness.

Other theological implications of this reading could have huge effect on religious adherents. In this narrative are the seeds for creating religious belief that embraces critical thinking, and that allows for a deity that may not make sense, yet is not malicious. In fact, the deity’s issuance of contradictory instructions actively carves space for cognitive dissonance, which may be one of its most important contributions. This origin story gives permission for humans to explore and learn and challenge the frontiers of their understanding, even when such discovery confronts the very way in which they perceive the world. Having religious institutions who embrace such a philosophy at a fundamental level could, perhaps, affect the number of individuals who leave religion due to concerns regarding high-control elements and cultural requirements for conformity.

*To Be Attentive, To Listen (ezer)*

This semantic range could have strong connections to the consequence section of Genesis chapter three, and potential connections to other areas in the text.

The first passage where this could have connection is immediately following the woman’s creation, when the man calls the woman, “woman.” However, the focus of this section is the man’s understanding of the woman, not actually the woman’s listening to the man. In fact, in this section, it is not even clear whether the woman is part of the conversation. Rather, this
section is focused on the male perception, not the female response. The woman may or may not be listening, and there is certainly no overt reference to her listening to anyone. Therefore, these verses do not act as evidence either for or against *ezer* being in the semantic range of “to be attentive, to listen.”

The next place where this might have contextual evidence would be in the beginning of chapter three. In these verses, the serpent carries on a conversation with the woman, with the result that the woman eats the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The fact that the serpent converses with the woman, and she actually responds in a relevant manner does indicate that she hears the words of the serpent, and that she was aware of the words of Elohim as well. If one accepts *ezer kenegdo* does indeed mean that she is meant to be a listener, then *ezer*, along with the fact that the woman is created in a space of cosmic order, would imply that the woman’s listening to the words of the serpent is fulfilling her divinely appointed task. Either that, or the woman has utterly failed in fulfilling a task by listening to the wrong source (something for which she is *not* cursed). However, one could counterargue that the man’s ruling over the woman in Genesis 3:16 could be her punishment for listening to the serpent. However, as will be developed further in the section, “Prince, Ruler, Divinely Appointed Leader,” this verse is not jussive or imperative. This is *not* a command. Therefore, it is not possible to indisputably claim that this aligns with a divine ideal. Thus, while one can argue that this is a valid reading, it is not unequivocally so, and grammatically, the text would suggest otherwise.

One other problem with this reading would be the fact that the man listens to the woman. She gives fruit to her husband, who eats with her. Later on, Elohim indicates that the man’s choice is linked to his listening to the woman: “Because you listened to the voice of your wife
and you ate from the tree which I commanded you, ‘Don’t\textsuperscript{159} eat from it,’ the ground will be cursed because of you.”\textsuperscript{160} This passage indicates that the man is \textit{not} cursed for listening to the woman. In fact, the man has made the exact same choice as the woman in eating, and his consequence is in response to \textit{his} action, not the woman’s. An argument against this reading could be that the woman is meant to listen to the man, not the serpent, and that the man is meant to listen to deity, not the woman, and in this sense, both have sinned by listening to the wrong sources. This interpretation, however, would be dependent on how \textit{neged} is translated.

I propose that if \textit{ezer kenegdo} is translated as “a listener, like his awareness,” then the woman, in listening to the serpent, is doing exactly what she is supposed to do. Likewise with translation values of “a listener, like his succorer,” “a listener, like his leader,” “a listener like his courage,” “a listener like his building,” “a listener, like his mountain,” “a listener, like his fighter.” Thus, \textit{ezer} “listener,” by itself, can (imperfectly) support the idea that the woman listened to the wrong source. However, when taken in context with \textit{kenegdo}, this is more likely to fit the interpretation in which listening to the serpent is something that the woman is created (and expected) to do. In the end, this will be included in the final chart of potential cognates, although the support both for and against this semantic range is inconclusive.

\textit{Honest; Honest Things, Forthright Things (neged)}

There are elements regarding honesty in the Eden text, primarily having to do with the trustworthiness of the deity, and reliability of deity’s word. For all of chapter one, deity’s word is law—perhaps in the sense that gravity is law: it inevitably happens. The way deity is presented

\textsuperscript{159} My translation utilizes contractions in the deity’s commands to the humans, as well as in the conversation between the serpent and the woman. This is a theological choice: in using less formal, simpler language, it highlights the unawareness and possible naivete of the humans.

\textsuperscript{160} Genesis 3:17.
in chapters one and two is consistent with this. It is not until the serpent comes upon the scene that this changes: the serpent immediately casts doubt upon the deity’s honesty: “Did Elohim really say, ‘Don’t eat from every tree in the garden?’”\textsuperscript{161} This question seems designed to elicit a response from the woman, clarifying the injunction as she understands it: “We will eat from the fruit of the tree of the garden, but from the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, Elohim said, “You shall not eat from it, and don’t touch it, lest you die.”\textsuperscript{162} It is notable that the woman’s reproduction of deity’s instruction differs from deity’s actual instruction. The only part that is accurate is the command not to eat from the tree in the midst of the garden. The woman does not retain the emphasis on the inevitability of the humans eating from every tree; and she adds a warning against even touching the fruit, which is lacking in deity’s original statement. It is not clear how the serpent is aware of deity’s words, or the serpent’s motivations in conversing with the woman. But it does seem clear that the serpent has knowledge the humans lack, and claims knowledge to information that deity withheld or misrepresented: “And the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not inevitably die, for Elohim knows that in the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like Elohim, knowing good and evil.’”\textsuperscript{163} This is a direct contradiction of deity’s word, and in the end, the serpent seems to be correct: according to biblical narrative, the humans are exiled from the garden after eating the fruit, but go on to live for centuries, rather than dying on that same day. In addition, deity acknowledges that the humans have become like Elohim: “And Yahweh Elohim said, ‘See—the human is like one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he send forth his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever— And Yahweh Elohim sent them forth from the Garden of Eden to

\textsuperscript{161} Genesis 3:1.
\textsuperscript{162} Genesis 3:2-3.
\textsuperscript{163} Genesis 3:4-5.
work the ground, where he was taken from.”¹⁶⁴ There may be theological ways of explaining this disparity between what Elohim said, and what actually happened, but in the most straightforward reading, the serpent appears to be one who speaks the truth, while deity withholds information, and perhaps even misrepresents information entirely.

The purpose of this dissertation is not to determine the relative trustworthiness of the deity or the serpent. This aspect of the text is mentioned only to establish that this theme occurs in the Eden context. However, the fact that the truthfulness of the deity and the serpent may be in question does not necessarily indicate that the woman is (or is not) truthful. In the immediate context of the woman’s construction, there is no mention or implication regarding her trustworthiness. In the beginning of chapter three, she appears to be naïve, fully trusting her comprehension of deity’s word, and then implicitly trusting the serpent’s contradiction of deity, and thus partaking of the fruit. When questioned further by deity, there is no indication that she lies: she does not deny having eaten the fruit, and she accurately identifies the source of the information that influenced her choice to eat. Thus, although the woman may be naïve, she is still honest. However, even though she is honest, there is no emphasis placed on this quality. Therefore, utilizing this semantic range in the translation and interpretation of ezer kenegdo would be a stretch and is not well supported contextually. Thus, this semantic range will not be included in the final list of potential cognates.

Covering and Forgiveness

Covering and forgiveness are combined into one section here, due to the close association of these two ideas in Hebrew: the root caphar means “to cover” as well as “to atone.” This

¹⁶⁴ Genesis 3:22-23.
atonement implies divine forgiveness. Since both themes may be occurring in the Genesis 1-3 narrative, these two themes are included in the same larger category.

**Cloth, Covering (ezer and neged)**

The obvious connection with “cloth, covering” has to do with the humans’ initial nakedness, their attempt to cover themselves with fig leaves, and their eventual covering with clothing made of skins. Therefore, one can see that there is general contextual support; however, it remains to be seen whether there is contextual support specific to the woman being seen as a covering.

In Hebrew, the word *caphar* has two meanings: “to cover,” and “to atone.” Thus, in Hebrew, the idea of atonement is fundamentally associated with the idea of covering. Obviously, if either *ezer* or *neged* is being used to mean “to cover,” then “to atone” is not an explicit association. However, it is possible that there is an implicit suggestion. However, it may prove useful as a thought exercise in examining the suitability of “cloth, covering” as a semantic range for either *ezer* or *neged.*

The text is very clear: both the man and woman are naked upon their creation, and they are not ashamed.\(^{165}\) If “nakedness” is synonymous with “uncoveredness” or “unatonedness,” then it is possible that their lack of shame has to do with the fact that they have no awareness of sin at this point, and thus have no need of atonement. After the humans partake of the fruit of knowledge, they see their nakedness/unatoned state. It is at this time that they feel fear and hide from deity, after trying to cover their nakedness with girdles made of fig leaves.\(^{166}\) This response—trying to cover up and then hiding—juxtaposed against the statement that they were

\(^{165}\) Genesis 2:25.

\(^{166}\) Genesis 3:7-10.
originally naked and felt no shame, implies that the humans also felt shame upon seeing their own nakedness. Both fear and shame are common enough responses to those who realize they have made mistakes. Thus, the humans’ realization that they are naked could also be interpreted as a realization that they are unatoned. Their attempt to make girdles fails to cover, or atone for, their mistake, and they hide in fear. The deity arrives, and after assessing the situation and declaring consequences, creates coats of skins for the humans and covers them. If covering means atonement, then it logically follows that the deity’s clothing of the humans signifies divine forgiveness.167

Seeing that the deity provides atonement, however, does not strengthen the argument for the woman as a covering. In the text, the woman does no more covering than the man. She is equally as naked and unashamed, and then later on, the humans appear to be equally naked and ashamed. Perhaps there is a resonance for the woman as a covering in Genesis 3:19-12, in which the deity asks the man why he is hiding. The man responds that he was afraid because he was naked. Deity responds by asking, “Who told you that you are naked? Did you eat of the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” To this, the man responds by redirecting attention to the woman: “the woman who you gave to be with me—she gave me from the tree, and I ate.” This could be viewed as the man attempting to use the woman as a cover—so he does not get into trouble with the deity. However, this attempt fails: deity does not treat the woman as ultimately responsible. Rather, the deity curses the serpent for its involvement, but not the woman. The

167 If the deity always intended that the humans gain awareness, it makes sense for the deity to then forgive the humans for disobeying divine command. See chapter on “Communication/Awareness (neged)” for further discussion of this point. However, even if one does not accept such a reading, the divine prerogative to forgive still changes the theological implications of the passage. In this reading, the deity in the text is not vengeful regarding the humans’ choice; rather, this reading points to a deity with mercy towards human foibles.
woman simply does not function as a cover or atonement for the man. Ultimately, only deity provides true atonement/covering. Therefore, it does not make sense for the deity to refer to the woman at the time of her creation as a “cloth” or “covering,” if she never functions in that role.

Even when viewed from a more literal viewpoint of nakedness (not figurative atonement), the woman never functions as a covering. The only phrases that could maybe serve as justification are in Adam’s exclamation after the woman’s creation: “This time—this is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. . . . Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother and stick to his woman and they will be for one flesh.” The closest that this could get to covering could be in the two cleaving together (sexual imagery). However, while in such imagery, one body may obscure another, there is still no covering for either of their nakedness. Thus, the usage of the semantic range of “cloth, covering” for either ezer or neged does not fit the specific context of the woman.

Forgiveness (ezer)/One Who Excuses, Exempts from Blame (ezer)

The same arguments used for “cloth, covering/atonement” also apply for “forgiveness,” and “excuser.” Although there is debate as to whether the text indicates a hierarchy between the man and the woman in the garden, there is one clear hierarchical relationship in the text: deity is obviously superior to the humans, and the humans are indisputably subordinate to deity. Thus, the only being with the cosmic ability to excuse or forgive is the deity. Moreover, the humans almost always act together. The woman only acts entirely alone once, and it is in her conversation with the serpent. Otherwise, the humans act in concert: they eat the fruit together, they attempt to cover their nakedness together, and they stand before deity together. In their

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togetherness, there is no indication that the woman is functioning as a forgiver or one who exempts from blame. Her conversation with the serpent is a conversation of discovery, not forgiveness.

But what if this semantic range is not taken as a justification in a positive sense, but rather as a pejorative term? Perhaps it could refer to when the woman makes excuses, justifying her actions by redirecting attention to the serpent. This claim should be examined. To begin with, it must be acknowledged that, once again, the humans are acting in concert. It is actually the man who is the first to redirect deity’s question; the woman follows his example. If viewed as a game of culpability, the woman is just as deceived as the man, and holds no more nor less culpability than the man does. As discussed later, the deity does acknowledge that the man listened to his wife in partaking of the fruit, but the woman is not cursed for inviting the man to eat. Rather, the consequence given to the man centers upon *his choice* to listen and to partake of the fruit, not upon the woman’s choices. What the text indicates is that each are responsible solely for their own decisions. Ironically enough, each makes the exact same decision: to partake of the fruit. Thus, it does not contextually fit that the term describing the woman, *ezer kenegdo*, is referring specifically to her attempt to justify her decision, since both humans employ the exact same tactic.

As an aside, I am not sure that the attempt to redirect deity’s questions should be viewed in a negative light. When asked for an explanation of potentially questionable actions, it would be expected that an individual actually attempts to illustrate why they made the choices they made. It would be foolish for an individual to take responsibility for actions or influences beyond

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170 For further discussion of cursing and responsibility, see the section entitled, “Worry, Fear, Anxiety, Concern, Distress.”
their control. It is possible that both the man and the woman are acknowledging the actions and influences that impacted their choices, not merely trying to deflect attention from their own responsibility. In the end, the only figure in the text who exercises forgiving or atoning power is the deity. Thus, both “forgiveness” and “one who excuses” are contextually untenable semantic ranges of *ezer*.

**Experience**

This section has to do with two separate elements of experience: first, it includes semantic ranges that have to do with an individual’s level of experience and ability to function based on that experience. Secondly, it includes semantic ranges that have to do with the internal experience inherent to human life, including emotions, and the effects of hard work.

One Who Is Strong through Experience, One Who Is Well-informed through Experience, One Who Is Sound in Judgment, One Who Teaches through Experience (*neged*)

This semantic range is quite similar to “catalyst of awareness, instigator of awareness (*neged*).” It has to do with attributes gained through experience, and thus falls within the general semantic range of knowledge/awareness. In addition, this sense implies some sort of motivation provided by an individual that sparks another’s growth in knowledge through experience. However, one key difference here is that this semantic range (strong through experience; one who teaches through experience) implies that the person teaching/leading has walked the path already and is facilitating another’s journey to learn. The facilitator has a general idea of what is coming next. In contrast, “catalyst of awareness, instigator of awareness” does not imply that the instigator knows what is coming. The instigator does make choices that initiate a process of learning, but the catalyst herself may or may not be aware of what is coming.

In the Eden account, the woman does not appear to know what is coming. She is deceived
by the serpent. She does learn through experience, and so may become well-informed/having sound judgment through experience, but she does not come across as experienced in the garden. She certainly does not seem to know more than the man. Both of them do not have knowledge, and are not aware of their nakedness until after eating the fruit of knowledge.

Even immediately after the garden, the woman does not come across as experienced: she “buys a man from Yahweh,”\textsuperscript{171} which possibly indicates her hope for great things from her son. Eve obviously has not experienced the sorrow of having Cain kill Abel. After Abel’s death, when she names Seth in Genesis 4:25, she has more experience: “she called his name Seth, because ‘Elohim founded for me another seed in place of Abel, because Cain killed him.’” This is an action motivated by experience, much different from what we see in the garden, and this is also the final action made by Eve in the text. All of the woman’s other actions (partaking of the fruit, becoming aware of nakedness, deflecting to the serpent when questioned by deity, bearing Cain and Abel) are not motivated by previously gained experience. That is part of the point of the Eden account: the humans are inexperienced and unknowledgeable, but through gaining moral awareness, they have the potential to become experienced and knowledgeable. The words in this semantic range all have to do with using one’s experience to guide others, which is not what we see the woman doing in the text. We see her learning through experience herself. Therefore, this semantic range will not be included in the final list of potential cognates.

Worry, Fear, Anxiety, Concern, Distress (neged)

Prior to eating the fruit, there are no indications in the text of any sort of negative emotion, and none exist surrounding the creation of the woman. Even the serpent does not elicit an overtly negative reaction. It is only upon eating the fruit that the humans feel fear, and

\textsuperscript{171} Genesis 4:1.
potentially shame, because of their nakedness.\footnote{Genesis 3:8-10.} This would seem to preclude the woman being referred to as a cause of worry. However, the divinely stated consequences of eating the fruit deal with pain in childbirth for the woman, and pain and hard labor for the man.\footnote{Genesis 3:16-19.} Could the naming of the woman be a foreshadowing of these effects, rather than a reflection of the original cosmic order?

In Genesis 2:18-20, deity appears to desire an \textit{ezer kenegdo} for the human, and it appears that the human desires this as well. At the very least, after naming all the animals, the text writes, “but for the \textit{adam}, he did not find an \textit{ezer kenegdo}.”\footnote{Genesis 2:20.} After the woman is built, the man exclaims, “this time—this one is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. . . . Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and stick to his woman.”\footnote{Genesis 2:23-24.} Such an exclamation seems to indicate excitement on the part of the man. It appears that the \textit{adam} has finally found what he was looking for. I would argue that if \textit{neged} truly has something to do with worry, fear, and anxiety, then the human would be less joyous upon finally meeting the woman.

Later on in Chapter 3, when deity pronounces the consequences of partaking the fruit, it should also be noted that there is no blame cast upon the woman, nor is there a presupposition of sin.\footnote{See discussion in Carol Meyers, “Eve,” in \textit{Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament}, ed. Carol Meyers (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 80.} The serpent is cursed, and the woman is informed that she will conceive and bear children in pain.\footnote{Genesis 3:14-16.} To the man, deity says, “Because you listened to the voice of your wife and you ate of
the tree... The ground is cursed because of you." \(^{178}\) It is of note that the responsibility for the man’s eating of the fruit is not placed upon the woman. The text does not say, “Because the woman gave you the fruit... the ground will be cursed.” Instead, the woman is responsible for her choice, and the man is responsible for his, regardless of what the woman may have said. Individual responsibility is also reflected in the wording of the curse upon the ground: “the ground is cursed because of you.” The “you” in this verse is a masculine singular pronominal suffix, meaning that it cannot be referring to the woman. It can only be referring to the man. This is not to say that deity is blaming the man; the deity does not seem to blame anyone. Rather, the deity gives responsibility to the man for his own actions, and declares consequences for the man because of those actions. Moreover, the stated source of the man’s sorrow is the ground and the need to work hard. The stated source is not the woman. \(^{179}\) The way that deity deals with the humans’ choices, holding each individually accountable for their own actions, as well as the fact that the woman is not credited as being the source of the man’s sorrows, are a form of evidence. Based on this, one can conclude that this section does not support the idea that ezer kenegdo is

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\(^{178}\) Genesis 3:17.

\(^{179}\) This contradicts Clines’ argument that a “helper” provides only tangential assistance, while agency and responsibility remain with the person being helped. The traditional view of the woman being “responsible” for the man’s choice to eat the fruit is problematic in that it reduces the agency of both parties. This is because in blaming the woman for man’s choice, the woman becomes fated towards weakness and evil. In the same move, the man becomes morally weak, because he is incapable of making his own decisions. Rather, he becomes reliant on his ability to react to the woman’s choices. This belief in man’s inability to take responsibility for his own actions and to proactively act rather than merely react is an issue fundamental to modern-day rape culture. However, rather than giving the man greater agency, it disempowers the man in the very moment it suppresses the woman. In addition, it accepts the presupposition that agency only exists for one in an obvious position of power. It does not acknowledge that agency exists in a complex dialectic relationship with social dynamics, cultural perceptions, and individual motivations. There can be greater or lesser amounts of agency, but rarely is agency fully absent. For an excellent discussion on agency, see Catherine A. Brekus, “Mormon Women and the Problem of Historical Agency,” in Journal of Mormon History, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Spring 2011), pp. 58-87.
foreshadowing the anxieties brought about by the woman’s partaking of the fruit. Thus, the usage of the semantic range of “worry, fear, anxiety, concern, distress” for neged is not warranted.

Fatigue, Sweat from Work, Sorrow, Grief, or Anxiety; Stupid, Dull, Wanting in Intelligence; Ineffective; Soft, Weak, Without Endurance (neged)

This semantic range also has connection to the consequences stated by deity in Genesis 3:16-19, namely the man’s necessity to only survive through hard work and sweat. The logic in this instance is similar to that in the section on stretching out, protraction, punishment (neged), and the reader would do well to read both sections in conjunction with each other.

The immediate context surrounding the construction of the woman is positive, and contextually has no resonance with grief, anxiety, or fatigue. Rather, the deity views her as a necessity and the man views her as a long-awaited arrival with whom he can be united. The context and wording suggests that the human’s exercise in naming the animals enabled him to be aware of differences between humans and animals, and engendered a desire for another human: “This time—this one is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.”

In addition to the positive presentation of the woman’s creation, the appellation of the woman does not seem to be foreshadowing future events. Rather, until the humans partake of the fruit of knowledge, the Eden account contains no indications of sorrow, hunger, grief, death, or any other difficulty associated with typical human life. If one accepts this semantic range for neged, then ezer kenegdo would be the only reference to sorrow before the Fall, and it would be contextually an outlier. Thus, due to the absence of contextual resonance with the woman’s construction, as well as the disconnect between her construction and the later declaration of

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180 Genesis 2:23.
consequences, this semantic range is not deemed tenable and will not be included in the final list of potential cognates.

Help and Leadership

This meta-group includes semantic ranges that have to do with impacting others through overt leadership, and also through determining and carrying out consequences, influencing others’ decisions, or initiating actions that will affect others’ subsequent choices.

Help, Aid, Ally, Assistance (ezer)/Succor, Aider (neged)

For ezer, the semantic range of “help, aid, ally, assistance,” is an acceptable fit. The majority of occurrences of the root ezer in the Hebrew Bible fall within this semantic range, making it statistically the most likely choice of translation. “Help, succor” is also a semantic range found in the Hebrew for the word neged. Therefore, this section will examine how the ezer kenegdo helps. If the answer to how the woman functions as a help is to be found in the immediate context of the narrative, then there are several potential interpretations. She may help the man by fulfilling his sexual needs, through the propagation of the human race (bearing children), by aiding in tending the garden, or by serving as the catalyst of awareness, as discussed above.

Sexual needs

Viewing the woman as a help through fulfilling the man’s sexual needs may be contextually supported. Prior to her creation, the adam names all the animals, but he does not

182 Clines, What Does Eve Do To Help?: And Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament, 34-37.
find an ezer kenegdo. It is possible that he views the pairs of animals as sexual partners, although there is no overt linguistic evidence indicating this. Thus, this context is inconclusive. We must examine the context after the woman’s creation. Immediately following her creation, the man exclaims, “This time—this one is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. This one will be called woman because this one is taken from man. Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother and stick to his woman, and they will be one flesh.”¹⁸⁴ This is fairly clear sexual imagery, of two bodies joining together to become one body. However, the man’s declaration actually focuses more on his reaction to her creation, and his need to commit to her through leaving his parents. The sexual imagery exists, but the man’s attention is not on the woman’s purpose; rather it is primarily on his responsibilities, and secondarily on the relationship itself. Therefore, this is not supportive to a reading of ezer meaning “a help through filling sexual needs.” In the end, it is inconclusive whether this reading is justified through the text.

**Bearing children**

The sexual imagery in the adam’s declaration is inconclusive when applied to the woman as a mother. However, in context of the injunction to multiply and replenish the earth,¹⁸⁵ as well as the woman being named Eve “because she was the mother of all life,”¹⁸⁶ there is justification for viewing the woman as being a help by bearing children. However, she never actually fills that role until after the garden narrative. Thus, this can be viewed as a way that she helps, but it is not the way that she helps in the garden itself, since there is no mention of Eve bearing children before leaving Eden.

¹⁸⁵ Genesis 1:28.  
¹⁸⁶ Genesis 3:20.
Working the land

Just because there is an argument that men make better workers of the land\textsuperscript{187} does not verify the idea that only men can be workers of the land. Yes, males are generally physically stronger than females, but women can be just as hardy and determined as men, and also have capacity for great strength. Conditioning oneself to hard labor takes time, but if both are well conditioned, it is entirely possible that a female could contribute in a significant way to the work of the land.

The assertion that the woman’s help could not be in tending the garden is only viable if one views her as helping in only one sphere. There is no indicator in the text that she is only meant to bear children, or only meant to help tend Eden. Indeed, the reflex to assign the woman to a single role or function reduces her to a caricature of a person. However, within this semantic range, if one accepts that she may contribute in multiple ways, it follows that one can read the woman as being a complex, dimensional character, with multifarious contributions.

Bringing awareness

Another way that the woman may function as a help is by prompting the man to develop in awareness. This reading particularly fits if one views the partaking of the fruit as the realization of deity’s purpose in creating the garden and issuing instructions and edicts (see discussion above, under “Communication/Awareness”).\textsuperscript{188} With this in mind, it is possible to argue that the woman is indeed a helper, but perhaps not a helper to the man. Rather, she is a helper to the deity: her function is to help deity lead and direct the acquisition of knowledge and

\textsuperscript{187} David J. A. Clines, \textit{What Does Eve Do To Help?: And Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament} (Sheffield: JSOT, 1990), 37.
\textsuperscript{188} See also chapter six in Barbara Deutschmann, \textit{Creating Gender in the Garden: The Inconstant Partnership of Eve and Adam} (T&T Clark, 2022).
awareness. This is not contradictory to the text, since the -o of ezer kenegdo is vague. It can be translated as him or his, but its referent is vague: it can refer to any grammatically masculine singular referent. Since both Elohim and Yahweh take masculine singular verbs, the -o of kenegdo could possibly be interpreted as referring to deity. In addition, in 3:20, “And for the human—he did not find an ezer kenegdo,” it is not clear who is failing to find an ezer kenegdo. It could be the human, but it could also be deity who does not perceive an ezer kenegdo among the animals.\textsuperscript{189} The text simply does not clearly indicate the referent, meaning that the woman could be read as benefiting multiple entities.

As illustrated here, there are multiple ways that the woman helps. Perhaps the key for interpretation in this case is to resist the urge to choose only one primary function, instead allowing the woman in the text to be layered and complex.

Liberator, Savior (ezer)

This semantic range has no clear textual support; however, it also does not have any indicators against it. This translation may still be valid, due to the fact that this semantic range occurs in Hebrew,\textsuperscript{190} and is not merely an analogous borrowing from a related language. If this translation is used, it may imply that the adam, without greater knowledge, is trapped. If this is so, he is freed by gaining awareness. Thus, the woman would function as a liberator.

\textsuperscript{189} See Edwin Good, \textit{Genesis 1-11: Tales of the Earliest World} (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 26-27. When read this way, one can see the creative development of the deity.

This section of analysis will discuss three potential semantic ranges together. The semantic range of “shepherd” will be included due to Glücks argument that “shepherd” can be related to the idea of a leader, since the shepherd leads the flock. In addition, the semantic range of “one who moves/sets out” will be included since this range implies taking the initiative in some new venture, much as a leader might do.

There is contextual evidence for this semantic range. In the first creation account, deity makes humanity: “And God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, as our likeness. And they will rule over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens, and over the livestock and over all the earth, and over everything creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’ And God created the human in his image; in the image of God he created him: he created them male and female. And God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Bear fruit and become great, and fill the earth. And subdue it, and rule over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens and over all life that creeps upon the earth.’” 191 In this passage, the text is very clear: according to deity, both of the humans are to rule the earth. Each word used here indicating leadership or ruling is a plural verb—thus, deity is commanding not only the man to rule the earth, but both the male and the female.

Some scholars would argue that the first creation account is unrelated to the second creation account. This argument is dependent upon the approach to the text. According to this approach, the construction of the woman in Genesis 2 is indicating a different social order—one that is described in more detail in Genesis 3, when the humans learn the consequences of

partaking of the fruit. These verses read as follows: “To the woman he said, ‘I will surely multiply your pain and your conception. In pain you will bear children. And your desire will be to your husband, but he will rule over you.’ And to the man he said, ‘Because you listened to the voice of your wife and you ate from the tree which I commanded you, ‘Don’t eat from it,’ the ground will be cursed because of you. In pain you will eat from it all the days of your life. And it will sprout thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the dust of the ground. In the sweat of your nose you will eat bread until you return to the ground, because you were taken from it—for you are dust, and you will return to dust.’”

Indeed, there are elements of this passage that appear to support the idea that the woman is not meant to be a leader: this passage does overtly say that the man will rule over the woman, and the man’s consequence is given because he listened to the voice of his wife. This could be interpreted as implying that the man should never have listened to her, and that the man should lead the woman, having the final say in everything, since he did not initiate the eating of the fruit. In this reading, deity’s comments about how the woman and the man will live is taken as an injunction: the man should rule over the woman, and he should not listen to the woman again.

However, in each case, when deity is speaking to a 2nd person singular recipient, rather than using an imperative form, the Hebrew uses a future (non-volative) form. It is true that sometimes the Hebrew future is used in an imperative sense. However, if this were the case, then one would expect to also find the jussive (3rd person volative form) when deity informs how the man will rule over the woman. However, this is also a normal future form. Thus, there is no command inherent to the gender or social roles described in this passage.

With this in mind, I would suggest that this passage is better read in light of the timeline of Eden. After all, this takes place after the humans eat the fruit. The perfection that deity has created has been tainted, and human social practices no longer align to that standard. It would appear that there is an ideal for which humans should strive, and there is human nature which exists in opposition to that. It is grammatically possible that deity is describing human nature, and not describing a divinely sanctioned ideal. Rather, because there is no indication in the text that the humans forget their time in the garden, it is possible that the humans are meant to remember the guidelines established in the garden. This could indicate that the humans understand that just because something might be the norm in their new, fallen reality, does not make it an appropriate standard of behavior. In other words, this phraseology could very well be a warning of what to expect in a fallen world, and not a command to engage in such behavior. Thus, the fact that the woman is told that the man will rule over her does not mean that neged cannot appropriately be translated in the semantic range of leadership. In fact, when neged/leader is applied to the text, there are ways in which the woman does fill the role.

Because the woman takes initiative, she leads the human pair to knowledge. She draws the man forth with her in her decision. If neged does mean leadership, this reading would make sense. The fact that it is deity who first calls her ezer kenegdo would imply that she is a divinely appointed leader. In addition, fully embracing the idea that the woman is also a leader negates ideas of hierarchy within the text, since the woman would no longer be viewed as being required to follow rather than lead. Accepting the woman as a leader does not mean that the man is not also a leader; just because one leads, does not mean that another cannot. Moreover, it should be remembered that the point of this dissertation is to talk about the ezer kenegdo/woman. Therefore, deep analysis of the man simply is not the primary scope of this research.
Shepherd/leader

If *ngd* indeed connotes a shepherd, then what impact does this root have on the reading of Genesis 2:18 and 20? First of all, there may be a strong parallel with the shepherd-king motif found throughout the remainder of the text, in which the unobvious choice—the sheep herder who lives in the wilderness—becomes the ideal ruler. In fact, if we do acknowledge this literary resonance between *ezer kenegdo* with the later shepherd-kings, then the first woman is also the first shepherd-leader of the entire textual tradition. Indeed, when we examine the reception history of the first woman, it is very clear that she has nearly always been viewed as an unobvious choice for a ruler or leader. Yet the entire textual arc builds toward the awareness that the woman engenders through her choice.

To put it even more strongly, as argued in the section “Catalyst of Awareness,” narratively the entire arc fails—the deity’s purpose in creation is for nothing—if the woman never partakes the fruit and serves as a catalyst for awareness/knowledge and the departure from the garden. Thus, in this reading, the woman functions as the divinely appointed ideal leader to bring the intent of the deity to fruition. This means that she is the example of ideal leadership. Those who fall within this trope in the text—the patriarchs, the children of Israel, David (and in Christianity, Jesus himself) all would follow in her footsteps. The type of leadership she espouses is that of learning through experience, and of guiding her followers as they gain their own knowledge and experience.

In addition, the duties of caring for sheep are also similar to those of parenting, specifically those of mothering.\(^{193}\) Thus, as the prototypical shepherd-leader in the narrative

\(^{193}\) My thanks to Ruth Turnbow Call for this observation.
the use of *neged* suggests that any leader, whether male or female, should seek to emulate shepherd/mother traits in order to achieve the ideal.

In summary, the evidence regarding the semantic range of *neged* having to do with leadership depends on one’s angle of approach. If one insists upon only viewing the text through source analysis, then the evidence is inconclusive. However, if one is willing to approach the text intertextually, as single compiled unit, then the evidence is more than sufficient. As this dissertation is not applying a source analysis methodology, the semantic range of *neged/leader, shepherd* will be included in the final list of potential cognates.

To Discipline, Chastise, Correct, Punish (*ezer*)

The only place in the narrative in which there is any sense of disciplining, chastising, correcting, or punishing, is after the humans eat the fruit, and only the deity exercises the right to discipline. If one considers the words meaning “to rule” as indicators of administering correction or punishment, then it is possible to argue that the sun and moon,\(^\text{194}\) as well as the humans\(^\text{195}\) have the right to discipline. Similar arguments apply to this semantic range as to the afore-discussed semantic range of “prince, ruler, leader, shepherd.” The humans are commanded to rule over the earth, and in the text, deity uses an imperative second person plural verb. But when the woman is informed that the man will rule over her, there is no imperative or jussive. Rather, the deity in the text uses an indicative verb. Thus, if chastising, disciplining, or punishing is

\(^{194}\) Genesis 1:16, “And Elohim made the two great lights: the large light to oversee the day, and the small light to oversee the night; and also the stars.”

\(^{195}\) Genesis 1:26, “And Elohim said, “Let us make humanity in our image, like our reproduction. And let them [masc. pl.] rule over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps over the earth.”

Genesis 3:16, “To the woman, he said, “I will surely make your pain great, and your conception will be in pain. You will bear children, and your desire will be to your man, but he will rule over you.”
considered to be a part of leading, then both humans are commanded to exercise this right, not just the man or the woman. Since ruling or disciplining can be applicable to both the man and the woman, and are not specific to the ezer kenegdo, this semantic range will not be included in the final cognate chart.

Stretching Out, Protraction, Punishment, Castigation, Torment, Pain, Torture, Blow, Affliction (neged)/Beating or Flogging Less than Prescribed by Law (ezer)

The obvious contextual connection to this semantic range is in Genesis 3:16-19, when the woman is told she will conceive and bear children in pain, and the man is informed that he will survive only through pain and hard work. However, the immediate context surrounding these consequences does not seem related to the immediate context surrounding the creation of the woman. As mentioned in the section on curse (ezer), the way the woman is referred to before and immediately following her creation is positive. The deity does not view her as a punishment, and the man does not seem to view her as a source of pain. It is true that her choices bring knowledge and consequent sorrow, but the text does not seem to view her nature as inherently bringing pain, punishment, torment, or affliction. Thus, this semantic range will not be included in the final potential cognate list.

To Cause Another to Turn Away from Evil Conduct (ezer)

The Eden account does have strong thematic ties between the woman and understanding good and evil. She is the first to partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and she does give that fruit to the man. In a traditional reading of the text, this semantic range could be read as proof that the woman is weaker and more evil than the man: if she is created to cause the man to turn away from evil, but then leads the man to eat the fruit, then she has completely failed in the purpose of her creation. In this reading, one must also consider that for a person to turn from evil
implies that they are turning instead toward good. However, before the humans eat of the fruit, the text indicates that they understand neither evil nor good. It does not seem reasonable for deity to expect the woman to cause the man to turn from evil and toward good when she herself cannot recognize evil or good. Therefore, if she is created to cause the man to turn from evil, then she cannot fulfill that destiny without eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In other words, in this reading, the woman must eat of the fruit in order to be able to understand good and evil, and guide the man towards good instead of evil. Moreover, in this reading, the woman has not failed in her purpose by eating the fruit or giving it to her husband. Rather, she is equipping herself with the ability to perceive exactly what she was created to perceive, and also enabling the man to have the awareness necessary to choose good or evil.196

In examining this semantic range, one must beware of viewing the woman as being responsible for the man’s choices. As discussed in “Worry, Distress, Anxiety” and in “To Draw Back, Hold Back, Hinder,” I argue that it is very clear that the deity holds the man solely responsible for his own choices. Therefore, if this semantic range is utilized, it should be viewed more in a leadership or guiding sense, in which she may influence the man, but he is ultimately responsible for himself. This semantic range will be included in the final cognate chart.

This semantic range implies one person exerting influence on another person. If applied to the woman in the garden, this could either be referring to an action done to the woman (e.g. deity/the man restraining the woman), or an action the woman takes (e.g. the woman restraining

196 This reading contradicts Coleman’s view of the woman as being the first femme fatale. It also rejects his reading of the Genesis narrative as being one of human failure. See Roche Coleman, “Was Eve the First Femme Fatale?” *Verbum et Ecclesia* 42, no. 1 (2021) 1-9.
the man). It must be kept in mind that since ezer kenegdo refers to the woman, then if ezer does fit within this semantic range, the subject or object of the action should be solely the woman. In other words, if both the humans are equally prevented by deity, or both the humans hold back, then it is not specific to the woman and will not be viewed as evidence in favor of this semantic range.

This semantic range has several nuances, which will be discussed here.

To draw back/hold back: in general, the text depicts the humans as taking action decisively, not retreating from speech or action. The only time the humans are explicitly not forthright, is when they hide from deity after partaking the fruit of the tree of knowledge. However, both the man and the woman hide together. This is thus not specific to the woman.

To remain behind: there is no place in the text in which the woman remains behind, or causes the man to remain behind. Rather, the humans stay together: they eat of the fruit together, they receive consequences together, they are clothed together, and they leave the garden together. While the woman may be the first to eat of the fruit, the man eats as well, in the same narrative breath.

To withhold: the only place in the text where there is any act of withholding is when the deity withholds information from the humans (which the reader discovers due to the serpent’s involvement). This is, however, specific to deity, not the woman. Moreover, there is no conclusive indication that this information was withheld solely from the woman, but given to the man. Thus, this particular range is not applicable as an appellation to the woman.

To restrain, hinder, prevent: there are several clear cases of prevention or hindering within the Eden narrative. The first is in the consequence section, when the serpent is prevented from further association with the humans, due to deity placing enmity between the species. The
second is when the woman is prevented from bearing children easily, and the third is when the 
man is prevented from having ease in life. Lastly, the humans are prevented from eating the fruit 
of the tree of life when deity placed cherubim with swords to hinder their approach to the tree.

It is true that the woman is specifically prevented from certain outcomes—such as eating 
from the tree of life and living forever, or pain-free childbirth—but this occurs within the 
consequence section, and both the serpent and the man also receive consequences. Likewise, 
both the man and the woman are equally prevented from partaking of the tree of life. Thus, this is 
not unique enough to the woman to justify using the semantic range of ezer “to prevent, restrain, 
hinder.”

Another argument that should be considered is whether the woman prevents the man 
from remaining in the garden by giving him the fruit. However, the text itself does not seem to 
support this idea. It is true that the woman gives the fruit to the man, but the man himself 
chooses to eat. As discussed in the section on “Worry, Anxiety, Distress,” the deity does not hold 
the woman responsible for the man’s actions; rather, deity holds the man responsible for his own 
actions. The language used in the man’s consequence is, “Because you listened to the voice of 
your wife and you ate from the tree which I commanded you, saying, ‘Do not eat from it,’ the 
ground is cursed because of you: in pain you will eat from it all the days of your life.”

According to this section, the woman is not responsible for the man’s choice. She may have been 
an influence, but the man is ultimately responsible for his own actions.

But what if deity is communicating with both the humans? To determine the viability of 
this claim, we must check the grammar of the Hebrew.

197 Genesis 3:17.
It should be noted that the phrase, “you ate from the tree which I commanded you, saying, ‘Do not eat from it,’” serves as an indicator that the man is responsible for himself. Deity is not emphasizing a command given to both humans; rather, deity is emphasizing the command that the man received. In the Hebrew of the phrase, “I commanded you” in verse 17, the grammatical form of “you” indicates a masculine singular object. Thus, deity refers to what the man understood when he partook of the fruit, not what the woman understood, or even to what they both understood.

Similarly, deity’s reasoning for cursing the ground, “The ground is cursed because of you,” also employs the masculine singular form of “you.” Thus, the text itself emphasizes that the man is solely responsible for the consequences of his own choices, not the woman. Regardless of her actions, the text does not view her as a source of hinderance to the man.

Each of the above instances of “you” are masculine singular, and therefore cannot be used as evidence in favor of female responsibility for the man’s actions. The man receives a consequence for his actions, and the woman receives a consequence for hers.

It is useful to also examine the actual command in which deity forbids the human from eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge:198 “And Yahweh Elohim commanded upon the human, saying, ‘From every tree of the garden, you [masc. sing.] will surely eat; But from the tree of knowledge of good and evil—do not eat [masc. sing.] from it—for in the you [masc. sing.] eat from it, you [masc. sing.] will surely die.’” In this passage, “you” refers to a masculine singular object. If one views “the human” as referring to an androgynous entity, then both the man and the woman receive this command. However, if one views the man as being created first and the

198 Genesis 2:17.
woman as being created second, then the man is the only one who receives this command. This would also be evidence supporting the man’s responsibility for his own actions.

Ultimately, it makes no difference whether one considers the object of the Genesis 2:17 injunction to be the man only, or whether it refers to the woman and the man in androgynous form. In either scenario, it is not unique enough to the woman to justify its semantic range being used as an appellative referring to the woman.

As demonstrated above, this semantic range, while it does occur in the Eden narrative, does not fit as an appellative of the woman, and will not be included in the final list of potential cognates.

One Who Joins Together, One Who Brings Together, Assembler (ezer)

This semantic range does occur in context of the woman’s creation. Immediately after she is built, the human declares, “This time—this one is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. This one will be called woman because this one is taken from man. Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother and stick to his woman, and they will be one flesh.”199 However, in this imagery, the joining of the humans is not done by the woman. At the very least, it appears to either be a joint action—not conducted solely by the female, or else an action initiated by the male, since the male takes the action of leaving parents and sticking to the woman.

It is possible to view woman as bringing the humans together by giving the fruit to the man, thus ensuring that they would eat and receive consequences together. She also is told that a consequence of eating the fruit is that she will desire her husband, perhaps indicating that she will attempt to bring the two of them together. There are no overt textual cues that either support or disprove this reading.

One thing, however, is clear: the deity is a joiner and assembler. Deity assembles the earth, brings the humans together, gathers them to discuss their eating of the fruit, and joins together skins for their clothing. However, while this evidence is strong, it does not apply uniquely to the woman.

In conclusion, this semantic range will be included in the final list, however, it must be noted that while it can potentially fit the context, the evidence is neither clear nor strong.

Military/Conflict

This grouping includes semantic ranges with any connection to conflict, both overt, such as semantic ranges dealing with warriors, combatants, and fighters, as well as less overt ranges that include ideas of courage, valor, and strength.

Warrior, Strong One, Strength, Might, Valor, Hero, Champion (ezer)/ Fighter, Combatant; One Who Overcomes, Conquers, Subdues, Overpowers, Goes Forth to Fight (neged)/Suspensory Strings of a Sword (neged)

This semantic range falls within a general military context, therefore, the presence of military elements could possibly support the usage of this semantic range. The most convincing evidence in favor of this semantic range is conditional upon an intertextual reading: if ezer is examined primarily within its Hebrew bible context, there is plenty of evidence for viewing it as a military term.

The word ezer is usually translated as “help,” “aid,” or “assistance.” It occurs within the text of the Hebrew Bible 122 times.200 Of those occurrences, 115 appear in the context of military aid or help in time of conflict. Every occurrence of the word from the beginning of the Hebrew Bible through Proto-Isaiah (with the exception of Genesis 2:18 and 20) is in an overtly

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200 This excludes all uses of ezer as a proper name.
military context, as in Joshua 10:4: “Come up to me and aid me, and let us strike Gibeon because it [Gibeon] has made peace with Joshua and with the descendants of Israel.”

From Deutero-Isaiah to the end of the Prophets, ezer is used in a broader military context: this still includes open battle, but it also appears in passages about destruction and the aftermath of battle, such as Hosea 13:9: “You have destroyed yourself, Israel. For your help is only in me.” There are no battle words (sword, bow and arrow, soldier, army, etc.) in the chapter, but the broader context of Hosea 13 is the exile of the Northern Kingdom and Israel’s idolatry—the aftermath of conquest. In the Writings, the more figurative aspects of hardship, trouble, and deliverance appear more frequently than outright mentions of war and destruction: “Do not distance yourself from me, for distress is close by; for there is no assistance.” This Psalm is a reflection on one individual’s difficulties, and makes no references at all to themes commonly found in the context of battle or exile.

There are only seven exceptions to the rule placing ezer in the context of battle or trouble: Genesis 2:18 and 20; Isaiah 44:2 and 49:8; Ezra 10:15; 1 Chronicles 15:26 and 22:17. Out of these, the Isaiah verses deal with peace, plenty, and prosperity: “Thus says Yahweh who made you, and shaped you from the womb. . . . I have poured my spirit on your seed and my blessing on your offspring.” The verses in Isaiah 49 are also along the same lines of thought. The imagery of the womb, combined with the proliferation of crops indicated in the surrounding

202 Ps. 22:12.
203 Isaiah 44:2.
204 Isaiah 49:1, 8: “From the womb, Yahweh has called me; from my mother’s womb he mentioned my name. . . . Thus says Yahweh, in a time of favor I answered you, and in a day of salvation I helped you.”
verses could be interpreted as a symbol of fertility. The verses in Ezra\textsuperscript{205} and Chronicles\textsuperscript{206} are all associated with the temple. Genesis 2:18 and 20 serve as an unexpected connector for the remaining five non-military verses: as Eden is the primordial temple,\textsuperscript{207} the verses in Genesis have definite temple connections. In addition, Eve is \textit{the mother of all living},\textsuperscript{208} and as such, has ties to the womb and fertility. But the temple connection with the word \textit{ezer} extends much farther: of the 115 “military” uses of \textit{ezer}, 24 also contain temple language. From this, we see that \textit{ezer} has undeniable connections to military contexts, and an affiliation with temple and feminine imagery.

Based on this, from an intertextual point of view, \textit{ezer} has a strong correlation with military activity. However, this only provides limited and indefinite support for the semantic range of “warrior, strong one, champion.” Thus, to make a stronger argument, we must look at other possible sources for support. To this end, there are three main word usages within the account that could potentially support this premise: \textit{ševa}, \textit{šamār}, and \textit{ḥagoroth}.

At the end of the first creation account, the narrator notes: “Thus the heavens were finished, and the earth, and all of their hosts.”\textsuperscript{209} The word “hosts” comes from the Hebrew \textit{ševa},

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{205}“And Ezra arose and made all the ministers of the Cohens, and the Levites, and all of Israel swear to do according to this word. And they swore.” (Ezra 10:5.)
  \item \textsuperscript{206}“And it was, as the God helped the Levites who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh, that they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams.” (1 Chr. 15:26.)
  \item \textsuperscript{207}“And David commanded all of the ministers of Israel to help Solomon his son [to build the temple.]” (1 Chr. 22:17.)
  \item \textsuperscript{208}Genesis 3:20.
  \item \textsuperscript{209}Genesis 2:1.
\end{itemize}
which literally means “armies.” According to Ringgren, the usage of this root is almost always military. On occasion, it refers to doing service (which may or may not be military in nature). It also is used to refer to the people of Israel; this is not always in immediate context of conflict, although Ringgren seems to view these as being military companies. Only one other usage exists, and it refers to the “host of heaven,” which almost always refers to the stars, and on occasion, other celestial bodies. It can also refer to Yahweh’s divine court.\(^\text{210}\) Ringgren connects Genesis 2:1 to this usage; however, this occurrence in 2:1 appears to refer to much more than just the stars, moon, and sun, or the exalted beings of Yahweh’s court. It also refers to all the geography, plants, animals, and humankind created by deity. It therefore is most likely simply indicating that the multitude of life was created, although it could potentially be functioning similarly to the numbering of the people of Israel in military companies. However, this reading would only be viable with other supporting evidence. Thus, the usage of ṣeva is inconclusive at best.

The second word that may provide support is the root šamar. Genesis 2:15 notes that deity placed humanity “in the Garden of Eden to work it and to šamar it.” The word “keep” comes from the Hebrew šamar, which can mean “to observe, keep” in context of rituals or commandments. However, the primary, non-figurative usage is “to guard, protect.”\(^\text{211}\) Since this context is referring to non-figurative activity in the garden, it is a logical step to understand 2:15 as indicating that deity placed the humans in the garden to work it and guard it. In addition, the creation of the woman is in the immediate context of guarding the garden: the need for an ezer


*kenegdo* is mentioned just three verses after the human is placed in the garden to work and guard it. This would then overtly support the creation of the woman as a champion to help in protecting the garden space.

The final word that may support a military context is found in Genesis 3:7, immediately after the humans eat of the fruit of knowledge: “And both of their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves and made for themselves *hagoroth.*” The word *hagoroth* comes the root *hagar,* which has to do with the concept of girding. There are three different forms of this root in the Hebrew Bible: the verbal form of *hagar,* and two nouns: *ḥagorah,* and *hagor.* The contextual usage of all three forms is similar.

The noun *ḥagorah* occurs five times. Of these, one is in Eden,\(^{212}\) which as the instance under consideration, will not be assigned a context. Of the remaining four, two are overtly referencing military garb,\(^{213}\) and one mentioned in context of military action.\(^{214}\) The final occurrence has to do with wearing sackcloth (a sign of mourning).\(^{215}\)

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\(^{212}\) Genesis 3:7.
\(^{213}\) 1 Kings 2:5– during a time of peace, Zeruiah put the blood of war on the *ḥagorah* on his waist and on his sandals.
2 Kings 3:21–all of the Moabites who could gird a *hagorah* (all who were capable of fighting) came to the border.
\(^{214}\) 2 Sam 18:11–ten pieces of silver and a *hagorah* mentioned as a reward for killing Absalom, who was caught by his hair in a tree.
\(^{215}\) Is. 3:24 In a day of judgement, there will be a rope instead of a *hagorah,* baldness instead of lush hair, and sackcloth instead of fine clothing.
The noun ḥa
gor occurs four times. Of those four, three are overtly referring to military accoutrements,\textsuperscript{216} and one is referring to belts in general.\textsuperscript{217}

The verb ḥag
ar occurs 44 times. Of these, 14 have to do with military garb;\textsuperscript{218} 13 have to do with girding on sackcloth;\textsuperscript{219} seven with temple clothing;\textsuperscript{220} four figuratively indicating being filled with emotion or a quality;\textsuperscript{221} three indicate preparedness to travel;\textsuperscript{222} and twice referring to clothing or belts in general.\textsuperscript{223}

\textsuperscript{216} 1 Samuel 18:4–Jonathan takes off all of his military gear (robe, armor, sword, bow, and ḥag
or) and gives them to David. 2 Samuel 20:8–Joab girded in tunic, wearing a ḥag

\textsuperscript{217} Proverbs 31:24–wisdom delivers belts to the merchants.

\textsuperscript{218} Deuteronomy 1:41–the people girded their weapons of war; Judges 3:16–Ehud girded a sword on his right thigh; Judges 18:1, 16–17; 600 men girded with weapons of war; 1 Samuel 17:39–David girded his sword over his armor; 1 Samuel 25:13–David and followers gird on their swords (3x); 2 Samuel 20:8–Joab girded with a tunic with a ḥag
or with a sheathed sword; 2 Samuel 21:16–Warrior girded anew with weapons; 1 Kings 20:11–those who gird armor should not boast as those who have already prevailed; 2 Kings 3:21–all of the Moabites who could gird a ḥagora
h (all who were capable of fighting) came to the border; Psalm 45:3–gird a sword on the thigh.

\textsuperscript{219} 2 Samuel 3:31; 1 Kg. 20:32; Isaiah 15:3; 22:12; 32:11; Jeremiah 4:8; 6:26; 49:3; Ezekiel 7:18; 27:31; Joel 1:8, 13; Lamentations 2:10.

\textsuperscript{220} Exodus 29:9; Leviticus 8:7, 13; 16:4; 1 Samuel 2:18; 2 Samuel 6:14; Ezekiel 44:18.

\textsuperscript{221} Psalm 65:12–hills are gird with joy Psalm 76:10–gird with wrath Psalm 109:19–filled with cursing like being gird in a garment Proverbs 31:17–gird with strength

\textsuperscript{222} 2 Kings 4:29–gird clothing and prepare to travel 2 Kings 9:1–gird clothing, prepare to travel Exodus 12:11–eat Passover with your loins girded, with shoes on, in haste.

\textsuperscript{223} 2 Samuel 22:46; Daniel 10:5.
Taken as a group, one can see that the root $hgr$ has a total of 53 occurrences. Of these, 20 have to do with military garb or military context, 14 refer to sackcloth, seven refer to temple clothing, four are used figuratively, three indicate preparedness, and three refer to clothing in general. Thus, we can see that the most common usage has to do with girding oneself with military accoutrements (which intersects with “suspensory strings of a sword” from Arabic), and the second most common being in context of mourning (girding sackcloth). While both readings can be fruitful for the Genesis context, it is the military context that is most relevant here. While this word alone is not sufficient to definitively support the usage of $ezer$ “warrior, hero, champion,” it does add support to the usage of $\šamar$, enriching its reading.

If this reading is employed, then $\hagorah$ changes the reading of the clothing of the humans. Aside from one usage (2 Sam 20:8), $\hagorah$ always refers to a belt or strap. If $\hagorah$ is indeed a weapon strap, then it is possible that this passage is not referring to a covering of the genitalia, since a strap, even one made of wide fig leaves, would not be likely to fully cover the humans’ nakedness. However, if the strap is in symbolic preparation for facing a threat, the humans might not be as concerned with making sure specific body parts are covered for modesty.

In addition, if we read $ezer$, $\šamar$, and $\hagorah$ as being military terms, this would imply that when the humans partake of the fruit, they immediately gain two types of knowledge: first, they become aware that they are naked, and second, they perceive an imminent threat, as evidenced by putting on a weapon belt. What exactly this threat might be is unclear: it could be the serpent, the deity, or another entity outside the text.

In conclusion, of the evidence presented here, only $\šamar$ is strong enough to support an argument for including $ezer$ “champion, warrior, hero” in the cognate list. The remaining
evidence (contextual usage of ezer throughout the Hebrew Bible, seva, and hagorah) may enrich the reading present through šamar, but on their own, they do not provide enough justification to keep ezer “warrior, champion, hero” on the list of potential cognates. However, due to the usage of šamar and the other tangential support, the semantic range of ezer “warrior, champion, hero” will be retained.

One Who Is Readily Courageous, Strong, and Able; Strength, Potency; Effective in Carrying Out What Others Cannot; Willing to Assent with Valor (neged)

These words fill a very similar semantic range as ezer “warrior, champion, hero.” These words do have more to do with ability and strength, and may seem unrelated. However, part of the sense of “warrior, champion, hero” also has to do with strength, might, and valor, these semantic ranges seem to be closely related in Semitic linguistics. Therefore, it is deemed that the same arguments relevant to ezer “warrior, champion, hero” apply here, and this semantic range will be retained in the final list of potential cognates.

This semantic range also has potential connections with the semantic range of leadership and ruling.

Sanctuaries/Temples/Constructions

This semantic group combines all structures, such as buildings and temple complexes. However, it also includes any temple imagery, regardless of whether that imagery directly relates to a structure. Thus, potential temple images of trees, oaths, mountains, and cutting are included in this section.

Foundation, Fortification, House/Dwelling Place, Enclosure, Fold (ezer)

This word has an interesting connection to the text. There is no overt discussion of any sorts of buildings in the creation and Eden accounts. However, there is implied reference in the
creation of the woman, and in Hebrew, this implication is quite obvious. In order to more effectively see how the text highlights the construction of the woman, we will now examine the different verbs of creation that occur in Genesis 1-3.

*Asah*

There are four separate roots meaning “to create” used in the creation account. The most frequently used word meaning “to create” is *asah*. It also is the most general in its sense, with the meaning of “to do, make.” In the creation context, these can be further distinguished as “to fashion” (handiwork), “to produce” (plants produce seeds), or “to bring about” (to make something happen), “to act.”

Thus, *asah* is used in a variety of ways in the creation/Eden account:

*Making or fashioning by deity:* the deity makes/asah the expanse, \(^{225}\) the sun and moon, \(^{226}\) and the animals; \(^{227}\) after the humans partake of the fruit, deity also makes/asah coats of skins to cover their nakedness. The text mentions that the serpent is more cunning than any other creature that deity *asah*. \(^{228}\) *Asah* is used when deity reviews creation: “God saw all that he had *asah*.” \(^{229}\) It is also used formulaically in discussing the creation overall; \(^ {230}\) in these formulaic usages, it is always paired with *bara*.

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\(^{225}\) Genesis 1:7.

\(^{226}\) Genesis 1:16.

\(^ {227}\) Genesis 1:25.

\(^{228}\) Genesis 3:1.

\(^{229}\) Genesis 1:31, 2:2; see also Genesis 2:3, “God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because in it he rested from all his work that God had *bara* to *asah*.”

\(^{230}\) Genesis 2:3-4, and later on retrospectively in Genesis 5:1 and 6:6-7.
Propositions of creation: the root *asah* is never used in the actual process of the creation of humans. The only times that *asah* is used in context of the humans being created is when deity proposes creative action: “let us *asah* humankind in our image;”\(^{231}\) and “it is not good for the human to be alone; I will *asah* an *ezer kenegdo.*” However, in the actual creative process, other roots are invariably used, as will be discussed shortly.

Making or fashioning by other entities: deity makes the plants so that they can *asah* (produce) fruit.\(^{232}\) The man and woman *asah* girdles after eating the fruit.\(^{233}\)

Acting: deity asks the woman about what she *asah* in partaking the fruit;\(^{234}\) deity curses the serpent because of what it *asah.*\(^{235}\)

As this investigation shows, *asah* is by far the most general of the terms of creation appearing in the text, with many types of possible nuance.

Bara

The second most frequently used word is *bara*; it likely has the base meaning of “to separate, divide,” and refers solely to divine creation.\(^{236}\) This is the word used in Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God *created* the heavens and the earth;”\(^{237}\) it also appears in reference to the creation of sea life and birds.\(^{238}\) Interestingly enough, this root occurs three times in Genesis 1:27, regarding the creation of humanity: “God *bara* the human in his own image; in the image

\(^{231}\) Genesis 1:26.
\(^{232}\) Genesis 1:11-12.
\(^{233}\) Genesis 3:7.
\(^{234}\) Genesis 3:13.
\(^{235}\) Genesis 3:14.
\(^{237}\) This is also used in Genesis 2:3-4, in reference to the creation of the heavens and the earth, as well as creation as a whole.
\(^{238}\) Genesis 1:21.
of God he *bara* him; he *bara* them, male and female.” It is also used in echoing phrases regarding the creation of humankind in Genesis 5:1-2, and 6:7. The other usages of *bara* have to do with creation as a whole, and are paired with *asah*.239

*Yašar*

This root is used three times in the creation account. The basic meaning is “to shape, form,” and is used frequently in regards to pottery, craftsmanship, or handiwork.240 It occurs in Genesis 2:19 when deity shapes/*yašar* the animals. Both other occurrences have to do with the creation of the human: “God shaped/*yašar* the human, dust from the ground;”241 and “God planted a garden in Eden, from the east, and there he placed the human, who he had shaped/*yašar*. ”242

Throughout the narrative, the verbs used to describe the creation of the humans suit the materials from which they are made. In Genesis 2:8-9, the first human is shaped/*yašar* from the dust of the earth. *Yašar* has strong connections to pottery, so it is fitting that the human is made from *aphar*, a root which has connections to dust, soil, dirt, and clay.243 Thus, the human is like pottery, and shaped from clay. In contrast, the woman is built/*banah*.244 This instance is the only occurrence of the root *banah* in the creation account, and it is remarkable in its singularity.

239 Genesis 2:3-4; 5:1.
242 Genesis 2:8.
Banah

According to the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, the base meaning of *banah* is the act of building. This most frequently has to do with houses or other structures, cities, walls, sacred spaces, or even war structures, such as siege works or ships. The act of *banah* utilizes stones, wood, foundations, and decorative materials. The word can also be used figuratively in the “‘building’ of a family, people, dynasty, or individual, and to describe the creation of the world in theological contexts.” According to Wagner’s article, *banah* “always has to do with ‘creating’ and ‘bringing into existence,’ and it implies the functioning of creative powers.” This last sense is an overarching statement of usage, and the creation of the woman in the garden fits this definition.

As mentioned in TDOT, *banah* is also used to denote the building of people—most frequently in the collective sense. However, as the primordial first woman, perhaps the text is pointing to something more than the creation of an individual; it may be directing the reader to the creation of a people, family, or dynasty. If this passage is viewed in this way, then the woman becomes the first overtly acknowledged member of the human dynasty. Seeing the woman as the leader of a dynasty invites the reader to explore interesting matriarchal elements, which may include the woman’s initiative in eating the fruit, as well as the fact that the woman names her children. Eve’s naming of her children is perhaps even more notable when juxtaposed with the

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246 See Genesis 4:1, “And the human knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and she said, ‘I bought a man with the Lord.’ The name Cain comes from the root *kanah*, which means “to buy, purchase.” Thus, the woman’s explanation of Cain’s name, with its personal (first person singular “I”) description of how the name was chosen indicates that Eve named Cain. See also Genesis 4:25, “And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son, and she called his name Seth, ‘because God founded another seed for me in place of Abel, whom Cain killed.’” In this
process of naming in the garden of Eden, in which the human names the animals,\textsuperscript{247} and even names the woman Eve.\textsuperscript{248}

Thus, it is possible to see that the usage of \textit{banah} in the creation of woman is contextually appropriate due to other figurative usages of \textit{banah}. However, there is also non-figurative evidence that can enrich the interpretation of the building of the woman. As Wagner mentions in the \textit{Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament}, the root \textit{banah} is almost always used to denote the literal building of structures of materials used for construction. This invites discussion of the material of which the woman is built. Translations usually render this material as “rib,” which comes from the Hebrew word \textit{sela}.

The basic meaning of \textit{sela} in Hebrew is unclear, and analogy to other Semitic languages does not elucidate the matter. In other Semitic languages, it seems to have something to do with “plank,” or “side,” which may refer sides of objects such as mountains, flanks of animals, or planks of wood. Fabry discusses the history of its interpretation in Genesis 2, and notes that all of these different interpretations presuppose the meaning of “rib,” of which Fabry is unsure based

\footnote{passage, Eve actively names Seth. (Note that Seth comes from the root meaning “base, foundation,” which accounts for Eve’s explanation of Seth’s name.) In a deviation from expectations, we find that Abel is born, but not named: Genesis 4:2 notes, “And she additionally bore [Cain’s] brother, Abel. And Abel was a shepherd of a flock, but Cain was a worker of the ground.” The text does not mention Abel’s naming or why he is called Abel. This may be because Abel’s name means “to work in vain;” or “breath” (meaning something transitory). In not discussing Abel’s name, the text seems to acknowledge that as most parents would likely not name their child such a thing, Abel’s name is a symbolic one, reflecting the fate of Abel and his (nonexistent) posterity.}

\textsuperscript{247} Genesis 2:19.

\textsuperscript{248} See Genesis 3:20.
upon contextual and etymological evidence. In fact, he states, “the only certain thing, however, is that if \( \text{sela} \) does mean ‘rib,’ it does so only in this one passage.”

Not including the two instances in the creation account, \( \text{sela} \) appears in the Hebrew Bible 48 times. Out of these, the overwhelming majority of instances of \( \text{sela} \) are in building contexts, specifically the construction of the Ark of the Covenant and the tabernacle (19 occurrences),

and the construction of the temple (18 occurrences). Of the remaining 11 occurrences, two are person or location names and give us no clues as to the semantic range of the root. Eight have to do with the idea of limping or stumbling; and the final instance is unclear: it could refer to the side of a mountain, but could just as well be translated as limping or stumbling.

The idea of the man’s stumbling or limping serving as the source of woman’s creation is simply not supported in the context. The only argument I can see in favor of this interpretation is the idea that it foreshadows the woman’s partaking of the fruit, thereby causing the man to stumble. However, this presupposes that the partaking of the fruit is a negative element in the text, which the text itself does not indicate: the woman is not punished for eating the fruit; neither is the man. Neither receive curses. The only entities that are cursed are the serpent,


\[ \text{251} \] 1 Kings 6:5, 8, 15, 16, 64; 7:3; Ezekiel 41:5-9, 11, 26.

\[ \text{252} \] Joshua 18:28; 2 Samuel 21:14.

\[ \text{253} \] Genesis 32:31; Jeremiah 20:10; Micah 4:6-7; Zephaniah 3:19; Psalm 35:15; 38:17; Job 18:22.

\[ \text{254} \] 2 Samuel 16:13. KJV: And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill’s side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.” The larger context is as follows: “\( \text{ve-shimei holech b’ṣela ha-har l’umato haloch} \).” This translation treats “\( \text{b’ṣela ha-har} \)” as a construct form, and the entire sentence as one phrasal unit. However, if one splits this into two phrasal units, then the translation would be as follows: “And Shimei walked, stumbling—walking on the mountain opposite to him.” Not only does this translation work grammatically, it also resolves what would have been a hapax legomenon in the text.
because of its actions, and the ground, for the sake of the man. So while the man is required to
deal with the cursed ground, there is no such implication for the woman. This only separates the
woman even further from any sort of punitive action in the text.

Another potential reading is that the humans were commanded not to eat of the fruit, and
their disobedience is the grounds for the negative interpretation of eating the fruit. However, in
the Hebrew, it is clear that the deity gave contradictory instructions regarding which fruit(s) to
eat/not eat. (This is discussed further in the section “Catalyst of Awareness.”) Thus, when the
presupposed elements inherent to traditional interpretation are removed, there is no contextual
justification for viewing the woman as being the stumbling block of man. Thus, translating ṣela
as “stumbling, limping” in this context is not appropriate.

We are, therefore, left with two options: first, one may rely on the sparse evidence from
other Semitic languages, according to which ṣela would mean “plank” or “side.” This is an
option, and harmonizes well with some traditional interpretations. Alternatively, ṣela may be
viewed as a construction term, just as in the 37 instances throughout the rest of the Hebrew
Bible. (The possibility of viewing ezer kenegdo as sacred architecture will be further elucidated
in the section “Sanctuary, Temple; Temple Personnel.”255)

At the very least, the text supports the possibility that the woman is built of a plank or
beam. How exactly this relates to human anatomy is unclear; but as with many other elements of
the text, it is possible that this is not intended to be literal, but rather allegorical. Regardless of

255 Due to its usage in tabernacle and temple building contexts, scholars have deemed ṣela to be a
term for “sacral architecture,” since every occurrence outside of Genesis 2:21-22 is in context of
sacral architecture (Solomon’s temple, Ezekiel’s temple plans, and the wilderness sanctuary. See
Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids,
whether this is literal or not, the fact that the woman is built—not shaped or created—from a šēla does contextually support the semantic range of neged “dwelling place/fortification,” or of ezer “foundation, wall, house.”

Temple, Sanctuary; Temple Personnel (ezer)/Object/Building Made of Wood (neged)

Another type of building that warrants attention is that of a temple or sanctuary. Both banah and šēla occur as construction terms in contexts of sacred architecture, and šēla often refers specifically to building elements within a sanctuary that are made of wood.²⁵⁶ Thus, if this semantic range is accepted, the woman could be functioning either as a symbolic temple structure or symbolically as temple personnel. Research already exists linking Eden to temple ideology,²⁵⁷ and Adam and Eve to priestly roles within the temple.²⁵⁸ While this research is not unanimously received,²⁵⁹ the majority of research at least agrees that some sort of connection exists. Therefore, this study will accept the majority opinion in scholarship that Eden can be

²⁵⁸ Beale, God Dwells Among Us, 51; see also Meredith Kline, Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006), 54.
viewed as a temple space, and that the man and woman can be viewed as functioning as temple personnel. As for whether the woman can function as a temple herself, the most prominent evidence supporting reading the woman as a temple is the aforementioned discussion: namely, the construction of the woman using banah, “to build,” along with šela, “wooden beam, side support within a sacral space.” As discussed above, both of these words are used in context of sacral architecture, and since the woman is constructed using these terms, it is contextually appropriate to view her as a sacral structure.

Plan, (Divine) Design, Concept, Ordinance, Plan of Destiny (ezer)

The idea of a plan or design does have relevance in Genesis 1-3. I would argue that the deity appears to have some sort of plan or design in mind during the process of creation. Examples of this can include the creation of dry land necessary for later plant and animal life, and the usage of solar and lunar patterns to establish days, months, seasons, and years.260 This could be simply the nature of a creation story told from the point of view of humans, reflecting their cultural conditions; however even so, the text presupposes a divine plan for the creation.

Some have argued that the woman seems like an afterthought: everything else is created before the woman comes along; the human has already received the commandment regarding the fruit of the tree, and even the animals are all named before she is constructed.261 Because of this, her creation can appear derivative. If the woman is an afterthought, then she is certainly not a part of a cosmic plan. On the other hand, if the woman is not an afterthought, then in the second creation story, the creation of humanity bookends the creation of all other life. In this sense, and as the final element of creation, the woman could be viewed as the pinnacle of the divine plan of

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260 Genesis 1:10-18, 24-25.
261 See Kevin Harris, Sex, Ideology and Religion: The Representations of Women in the Bible (Brighton, Sussex: John Spiers, 1984), 39-41.
creation. Ultimately, the narrative requires more analysis to determine whether the woman fits into the semantic range of “plan, design, concept.”

One factor in the text that supports the woman being called a plan or design is the fact that the woman is a “built” being (see “Foundation, Fortification, Dwelling” for further discussion). The idea that she is constructed from a building block brings to mind blueprints, or at the very least, some sort of concept after which she is modeled. I suggest that in this sense, she is very much a divine design.

Perhaps the greatest narrative evidence in favor of the woman being an integral part of a plan is the way that the narrative pushes toward human awareness: the organizing force itself, deity, establishes conditions that necessitate the gaining of awareness. The two main ways that deity ensures this is by first, forcing the human to gain awareness of self and other by naming the animals. This exercise is in preparation for the creation of the woman. Deity’s second act is to give the humans contradictory statements: “you will surely eat from every tree in the garden; do not eat from the tree of knowledge.” These contradictory declarations set the stage for the humans to realize that they have a choice: they can do one or the other of deity’s instructions, but not both. (See discussion of “Catalyst of Awareness” for further details.) In these conditions, the woman plays an essential role in bringing the narrative to its foreshadowed conclusion. Based on these elements, I submit that regardless of whether the woman is initially an afterthought, she becomes an important part of the deity’s plan. This is especially highlighted if one chooses the phrase “plan of destiny” as the translation value for ezer. With this translation, the woman’s

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actions set a destiny, and deity’s appellation of her from before her very creation as a “plan of
destiny” also implies that her desired action is to partake of the fruit.

Based on these arguments, the semantic range of “plan, (divine) design, concept,
ordinance, plan of destiny” will be retained in the final list of potential cognates. However, if one
chooses this semantic range as a translation value for ezer, a word of caution might be advised:
while she plays an important part of deity’s design, the woman herself is not the entire plan, but
only a part of it. To interpret otherwise ignores features of divine design that permeate all of the
creation narrative, and not only the woman’s creation.

High, Elevated Land; A Small Mountain (neged)

Mircea Eliade pioneered the idea of the cosmic mountain. Since then, scholars have
discussed Eden as a cosmic mountain, and reflective of Israelite temple space and ritual. Thus,
viewing Eden itself as a mountain is already established in literature. The question here is
whether the woman can be viewed as a small mountain. Considering that mountains are
connected to temple ideology, and since it is already established that the woman is contextually
connected to a sacred space, it also follows that it is possible to read the woman as being a
cosmic mountain. It is important to note that in the languages in which neged denotes elevated
land of some sort, none view neged as being a very tall mountain. This could possibly indicate
that Eden is the primary sacral space, and the woman is a secondary sacral space that exists
within the larger sanctuary.

263 Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion (San Diego, California:
World Congress of Jewish Studies 9 (1986); Seung Il Kang, “The Garden of Eden as an Israelite
When examining the Eden account for evidence of the woman as a tree, the first contextual elements to stand out are the many trees within the garden. The humans are told that they will eat of every tree within the garden, and are told not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil; they are also blocked from eating of the tree of life by the presence of cherubim. In addition, the woman is built from a šela, which in Hebrew Bible context, is most frequently a structural element made of wood. Thus, at the very least, the woman is linked to trees by virtue of the implication that she is made of wood; additionally, it is possible to view that she is made of wood because she herself is a tree. The fact that she is built from the man’s šela creates a double imagery: she is made of flesh (from the man) and from wood (from the šela).

Reading wood or trees as a source material for the woman raises interesting questions about how the woman functions within the text. One can query regarding what type of wood the source wood might be. It could be a normal tree; it could also be the tree that is the source of knowledge or the tree that is the source of life. It could even be a combination of the two, since the woman has clear connections to both ideas: as the first to partake of the tree of knowledge, she is a source of knowledge; and as Eve, “the mother of all life,” she is a source of life. Alternatively, viewing the woman as a tree herself creates an interesting trifecta with the other two main trees in the garden, in which the woman stands as a type with the source of knowledge and the source of life. This could imply that since trees serve as sources, the woman is a source

\[265\] Genesis 2:16-17.
\[266\] Genesis 3:22-24.
of something other than knowledge or life. In conclusion, the Eden context supports viewing the woman as made of wood, and even possibly being viewed as a third tree in the garden.

To Swear a Big Oath *(neged)*

As discussed above, Eden has been accepted as a sacral location, with potential temple connections. Temples were locations in the Ancient Near East where covenants or treaties might be read and remembered, especially as oaths and covenants were often overseen by divine witnesses. This raises the question of whether the Eden account has contextual elements indicating oaths or covenants.

Ancient near eastern lord-vassal covenants contain several elements: the introduction of speaker/covenant giver, a historical prologue, highlighting their majesty and why the vassal should remain in a covenant with the lord, stipulations, statement concerning the document, witnesses, blessings and curses, and a sacrifice. Some of these elements are not always present in Ancient Near Eastern treaty documents, however, the Introduction of the Speaker, and Stipulations are always present; without these, a text cannot be considered a covenant treaty.²⁶⁷ Presence of these elements may provide evidence supporting the presence of oaths in the Eden context.

The first element is always present in all ancient near eastern treaty texts from all Ancient Near Eastern locations, and in all periods. This is the description of the treaty’s author, or lord. This typically contains titles, attributes, and genealogical data. The only time this less prominent is in parity treaties, when both parties are described and introduced.²⁶⁸ In the Eden account, there

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is no direct information identifying either the narrator or the deity. The reader knows nothing at all about the narrator, and the only information one receives about the deity is based upon actions that the deity takes in the text, such as creating, speaking, shaping, etc. None of these are introductions or descriptions of the deity, although they do paint a picture of a very powerful entity.

The second element is the historical prologue. This element is almost always present in Ancient Near Eastern treaty contexts, with the exception of some Hittite treaties. The prologue describes the generosity of the lord toward the vassal; this section establishes why the vassal should accept the stipulations of the covenant due to gratitude for the lord’s kindness. In Genesis 1-3, this could possibly be the creation account, describing how deity created abundance of life, and gave rulership to the humans. If viewed in this way, then it makes sense for the humans to swear loyalty to the deity, since deity is their benefactor, as the source of their fortune.

The third element of Ancient Near Eastern covenant documents is the Stipulations section. This occurs in all treaty texts, and is the heart of the treaty. Stipulations describe what is required of the vassals, and usually takes the form of if/then statements, imperatives, or precatives ("Let no man do..."). The Eden account definitely contains commands regarding what to eat, and it also contains precatives about the humans’ role when deity creates the humans, saying, “And let them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps over the earth." The one difference between the Eden narrative and general treaty stipulations is that in Genesis 1-3, there is no stipulation regarding loyalty to the deity who created the earth.

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270 Walton, Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context, 103.
271 Genesis 1:26, “
The fourth element found in typical treaty documents is a blessings/cursing section. This describes what deity will do, should the vassal break their treaty. Blessings are not always present, but curses nearly always are, and are actions taken by deity “either for or against the vassal.”

The Eden account describes great abundance that is given to the humans, but does not contain an overt blessing section. It does however contain a curse section, when the serpent is cursed and the ground is also cursed. However, the humans, while they receive consequences, are not cursed. The fact that the earth and the serpent are cursed may actually account for the lack of some other covenant elements. Their cursing may imply that they, but not the humans, were the ones who broke some treaty. The humans also are affected by this, but they themselves are not cursed because they themselves did not break the existing treaty.

Another way of looking at this is to view the curse of the humans as being the fact that the ground is cursed because of the human, and the human’s expulsion from the garden. This relies on indirect evidence, since the humans are never overtly cursed. Moreover, this reading presupposes that the choice to eat the fruit is contrary to divine desire, making it something deserving of a curse as a consequence. This presupposition overlooks elements in the text indicating that the deity set up conditions that would lead to a most likely outcome—that of partaking the fruit. For more discussion of this, see the section, “Communication/Awareness (neged).”

The fifth element is the presence of witnesses, which may be divine witnesses, or even instances of natural features, such as mountains, rivers, earth, and heaven being called to witness.

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This is nearly always included in Ancient Near Eastern covenant formulas. While elements of nature are mentioned in the creation, there is no overt mention of any witnesses.

One final element that may occur in the establishment of Ancient Near Eastern covenants is that of Sacrifice. This often includes the cutting, tearing, or crushing of an animal offering, and use of the blood and body to both signify the establishment of the treaty, and act as a visual threat of what consequences may be if the treaty is violated. There are no overt mentions of sacrifice, however, it is possible that the creation of coats of skins for the humans could be a form of sacrifice sealing a treaty, and that the humans’ wearing of the skins may indicate the acceptance of the covenant. If this is the case, then the covenant itself, with its terms, is not mentioned in the body of Genesis 1-3. In fact, it would be a covenant made after partaking of the fruit, not before.

Based on this analysis, it appears that if Genesis 1-3 has covenant/treaty elements, they are oblique, and do not cleanly follow other Ancient Near Eastern covenant formulas. In addition, these would either apply to the serpent and the ground, or else to the humans after partaking of the fruit. If there are covenant formulas in the text, then the placement of the creation of the woman would be part of the historical prologue, not part of the stipulations, or part of the oath process associated with the witnesses or sacrifice. Therefore, the evidence does not appear to support the semantic range of “to swear a big oath” (neged) in the translation of ezer kenegdo, and this will not be included in the final list of potential cognates.

Sever (ezer)

The Eden narrative has only one oblique reference to cutting—when the deity makes clothing from skins to clothe the humans. This implies that an animal was killed and skinned in

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order to obtain the leather to cover the humans. However, this is not a direct reference, and cutting is not necessarily the same as severing. It is possible to read the idea of severing as referring to the cutting of a covenant (as mentioned in “to swear a big oath”), but again, the evidence is only indirect.

If viewed figuratively, it could be argued that the humans are severed from the presence of deity, and that the woman is responsible for this act of severing. There is no linguistic support for this, but the reading could work, provided that one not blame the woman. As discussed in the sections on “Worry, Anxiety, Distress,” and in “To Draw Back, Forbid, Hinder,” the text indicates that the man is responsible for his own action in eating the fruit. Thus, the woman can be seen as an instigator, but not ultimately responsible for more than her own actions.

Because of lack of strong supporting evidence, this semantic range will not be included in the final list of potential cognates.

Sexuality/Femaleness

This section has to do with the state of being female, and the sexual ideas attached to being female.

Woman, Maiden (ezer)

This semantic range fits the context well. Regardless of whether one views the first human as male or androgynous, it is clear that upon the creation of the ezer kenegdo, there is a division of genders, with the adam being male and the new creation being female.

Virgin (ezer)

This semantic range is, in many ways, similar to that of “woman, maiden.” The main difference is that it emphasizes the sexual state of the individual. This emphasis exists both in English and in Arabic (the language from which this cognate/semantic range is borrowed
through analogy). Thus, to determine whether this is a valid translation option, we must look for sexual markers within the text.

The following passages contain sexual imagery, even if only obliquely. In the first creation account, after creating the humans, deity says, “bear fruit, and become great, and fill the earth.” This is most commonly translated as, “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” While this apparently refers to bearing children, which is an effect of sexual activity, there is no overt sexual imagery in this passage. Moreover, this passage does not provide convincing evidence for ezer meaning “virgin,” since it would focus on fertility. Whether one is a virgin has no bearing on fertility; a virgin may be infertile, while a very sexually experienced individual may be capable of bearing many children.

The next relevant passage is after the creation of the ezer kenegdo, when the adam exclaims his view on her creation: “And the adam said, ‘This time—this is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. This one will be called woman because this was taken from man. Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother and stick to his woman and they will be for one flesh.’” These verses do have overt sexual imagery in the idea that the man and the woman combine as though they are one body. The immediate construction of the ezer kenegdo from the body of the adam could indicate that the woman is a virgin, since she remains in the readers’ view. Therefore this passage could be used to support the translation of ezer as “virgin.”

The next contextual element that should be examined here is the serpent. Immediately following the creation of the woman, we read that “the adam and his woman were naked, and were not ashamed in front of each other. But the serpent was more naked/cunning than all the

275 Genesis 1:28.
animals of the field that the LORD God had made." In these verses, the word *arum* is used as a play on words to describe both the humans and the serpent. *Arum* can mean either “naked” or “cunning.” For examining this reading, we will utilize the translation of “naked,” since it is relevant to the conversation regarding the usage of *ezer*/*virgin*. The usage of this word, *arum*, brings up the question of whether their nakedness is suggestive of undocumented sexual activity.

Before proceeding, it may be helpful to include a note on lexical intertextual analysis in the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible was composed over the course of hundreds of years and reflects normal linguistic development (including semantic change). However, it can still provide an effective lens for examining how words are used across time in Hebrew. Thus, regardless of any single passage’s authorship, if a word is overwhelmingly used in particular contexts throughout the Hebrew Bible, one can safely conclude that it retained some sort of semantic regularity throughout the development of the Hebrew language.

Now to return to *arum*: there are two words for nakedness in the Hebrew Bible text. The first, as already mentioned, is *arum*, which, outside of its usage in Genesis 2 and 3, occurs 25 times in the text. Of those occurrences, 10 have to do with knowledge or skill. Of the remaining 15 occurrences, *arum* is used five times referring to prophets prophesying naked, usually in context of prophesying impending conquest and the results of conquest; twice to illustrate lack of clothing in the aftermath of conquest; three times to describe the nakedness of babies at birth; twice in reference to nakedness because of poverty or oppression; and once

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277 Genesis 2:25, 3:1.
279 1 Samuel 19:24; Isaiah 20:2-4; Micah 1:8.
280 Amos 2:16; Micah 1:8.
281 Hosea 2:5; Job 1:21; 5:15.
282 Job 24:7, 10.
declaring the underworld to be fully visible (naked) to God.\textsuperscript{283} Regardless of how this root may have evolved over time, one thing is indisputable: \textit{arum} never occurs in context of any kind of sexual activity.

\textit{Ervah}, the second word for nakedness, contrasts with \textit{arum}. \textit{Ervah} occurs 55 times in the text. \textit{Ervah} is overwhelmingly sexual in nature, and frequently is associated with divine displeasure. Out of the 55 instances of \textit{ervah}, 37 are a divine injunction against uncovering a family member’s nakedness, referring to incest and other forbidden sexual acts, such as prostitution.\textsuperscript{284} An additional four occurrences have clear sexual reference: once as an insult when referring to the conception of Jonathan,\textsuperscript{285} and twice referring to marriage: “Spread the corner of a garment to cover nakedness.”\textsuperscript{286} One occurrence cites the uncovering of nakedness as legal justification for divorce,\textsuperscript{287} which may refer to adultery. Three other occurrences may have sexual overtones, when Ham sees Noah’s nakedness, and his posterity is cursed because of it.\textsuperscript{288} Of the remaining 11 occurrences, three are divine injunctions against nakedness in the tabernacle sanctuary or camp of Israel;\textsuperscript{289} five are referring to disgrace, occasionally in context of marital infidelity;\textsuperscript{290} and three times refer to famine or devastation in the phrase “nakedness of the land” (famine/devastation).\textsuperscript{291} Thus, one can see that there is a word for nakedness in the Hebrew Bible that carries definite sexual overtones; however, this is not the word used in the garden account in Genesis.

\begin{footnotesize}
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\addcontentsline{toc}{footnote}{Footnotes}
\footnotetext{283}{Job 26:6.}
\footnotetext{284}{Leviticus 18:6-18; 18:19; 20:11, 17-21; Ezekiel 16:36; 22:10; 23: 10, 18, 29.}
\footnotetext{285}{1 Samuel 20:30.}
\footnotetext{286}{Ezekiel 16:8; Hosea 2:11 (vs. 9 in English).}
\footnotetext{287}{Deuteronomy 24:1.}
\footnotetext{288}{Genesis 9:22-23.}
\footnotetext{289}{Exodus 20:26; 28:42; Deuteronomy 23:14.}
\footnotetext{290}{Isaiah 47:3; Ezekiel 16:37; Lamentations 1:8; Ezra 4:14.}
\footnotetext{291}{Genesis 42:9, 12; Isaiah 20:4}
\end{footnotesize}
Rather, the word in the Eden account never carries sexual overtones; thus, the nakedness of the man, the woman, and the serpent cannot be used as contextual evidence supporting the reading of ezer as “virgin.”

One other phrase that should be examined as regarding the woman’s sexuality is in Genesis 3:12 (KJV): “And the LORD God said unto the woman, ‘What is this that thou hast done?’ And the woman said, ‘The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.’” While the English word “beguile” may have implications of seduction, the Hebrew word nasha (nun, shin, aleph) has no such connotation. According to TDOT, nasha has to do with “persuading someone into a false sense of security.” This most frequently occurs in political discourse about which neighboring powers would be the wisest choice for an alliance, and which are untrustworthy. This is yet another example of a root that has no sexual overtones. The serpent did not sexually seduce the woman; she was merely tricked into a false sense of security regarding the consequences of partaking the fruit.

Even in the passage describing the consequences for the woman and the man, there is no indication of presence or lack of virginity. The woman is informed that she will have pain in conception and childbearing, but there is no reference to any retention or loss of virginity. The only time when we know for sure that the male or female cease to be virgins is in Genesis 4:1, after they leave the garden: “And the adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived.”

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292 This contradicts Clines’ assertion that the focus on nakedness in the account is one of the markers indicating that the way Eve helps is through procreation. See Clines, What Does Eve Do to Help?, 37.


294 Genesis 3:16.
The text has no problem being open about sexual activity (see Genesis 4:1, 17, 25). Since there is no justification for reading innuendo into arum, and no sexual connotation to nasha, the only evidence could be the passage previously discussed, in which the adam exclaims that a man and woman should be one flesh. While this does have sexual overtones, there is no clear indication that this sexuality indicates virginity. Thus, it would appear that the Eden context does not support the translation of ezer as “virgin.”

Beyond contextual considerations, I will also speculate on how the translation of “virgin” might impact the reading of the account. The word virgin focuses on the sexual state of the female. However, in the context of ezer kenegdo, it may not make sense. After deity declares that the human should have an ezer kenegdo, rather than creating it, deity first has the adam name the animals. After seeing the animals, the text states, “but for the adam, there was not found an ezer kenegdo.”295 If ezer does indeed mean virgin, then that means that the adam is focused on finding a sexual partner who lacks sexual experience. There are a few potential implications of such a reading:

1) The adam has full sexual awareness, otherwise he/it would not know to seek such an individual. The adam also has full awareness of gender differences. Seeing the example of the animals, the adam realizes that he also needs a sexual partner. If the animals are celibate, then the adam might want a virgin to follow in their example. This would imply that the truest state of cosmic order demands celibacy. Or, if the animals are not celibate, then the human wants a partner of his own, not one sullied by the animals.

2) Alternatively, perhaps the human is not actually aware of the differences between animals and humans and would have been satisfied with an animal partner. However, he sees

that all of the female animals are “taken.” Thus, his need for a virgin is motivated by his observing animal behavior.

Regardless of precisely how one reads the passage, the fact that the human desires a virgin requires mental gymnastics around other contextual elements in the passage, and this semantic range will not be retained.

Illicit Sexual Encounters/Fornication/Rape (neged)

The same contextual elements regarding the sexuality of the woman apply here; as discussed above, the nakedness of the humans is non-sexual, and the woman’s beguilement is non-sexual. Therefore, the only overt elements of the text that could support this reading of neged are the human’s statements immediately following the creation of the woman, and the consequences stated by deity following the partaking of the fruit.

In the first case, the man declares that a man should leave his father and mother, and cleave to his woman, and they should be one flesh. However, in this statement, any sexual activity refers to both the female and the male, and the wording of the phrase appears to indicate that this is desirable, and even potentially divinely sanctioned sexual activity. Thus, this contextually is not fornication or illicit sexual activity.

The second element in the text to consider is in the deity’s explanation to the woman that she will conceive and bear children in pain. However, this statement makes no reference to whether or not the sexual encounter is illicit; there will be pain in childbirth regardless of the woman’s “sexual purity.” Therefore, this also cannot be used as contextual evidence supporting the translation of neged as “illicit sexual encounter/rape/fornication.”

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296 Genesis 2:24.
There is only one other element that could possibly be used to justify this translation. It is the partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It could be argued that this is sexual knowledge, since the same root, *yada*, can refer to general knowledge, and also sexual intimacy. In this reading, if the woman partook of sexual knowledge not with the *adam*, this could be viewed as the first biblical recording of fornication. To justify the use of this textual element as evidence for *neged* “rape, fornication,” one would need to look more closely at the usage of *yada* “to know sexually.”

The word *yada* “to know sexually” occurs 17 times in the text.\(^{297}\) These break down into several main patterns: a man knows a woman,\(^ {298}\) a woman knows a man,\(^ {299}\) and homosexual relations.\(^ {300}\) In every single occurrence, this type of knowledge occurs between a subject and a direct object. In other words, both sexual parties are identified. There is never a general idea of sexual experience with an unknown entity. While the knowledge gained from eating the fruit could certainly include sexual knowledge or awareness, the grammar in the text does not indicate


\(^{298}\) Genesis 4:1, 25, Adam knew his wife; Genesis 4:17, Cain knew his wife; 1 Samuel 1:19, Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; Genesis 24:16, Rebekah was very beautiful, a maiden whom no man had known; Genesis 38:26, Judah did not know Tamar again; 1 Kings 1:4, David did not know Abishag, who kept him warm; Judges 19:25, the men of Benjamin knew the man’s concubine all the night (until she died).

\(^{299}\) Genesis 19:8, the daughters of Lot had never known a man; Numbers 31:17, command to kill all women who had known a man by laying with him; Numbers 31:18, 35, command to spare all women who have not known a man by laying with him; Judges 11:39, Jephthah’s daughter had never known a man; Judges 21:11, command to kill every woman who has known a man by laying with him; Judges 21:12, virgins who had never known a man by laying with him are spared.

\(^{300}\) Genesis 19:5, the people of Sodom demand for Lot to send out his male guests (Lot offers his daughters instead). Judges 19:22, Benjaminites demand for the concubine’s husband to be sent out so that they may know him (the concubine is offered instead).
that the woman had a sexual experience. Rather, the woman and the man gain knowledge together: “and both of their eyes were opened, and they knew/yada that they were naked.” The knowledge they receive is not sexual; as established above, the word naked/arum is never used in a sexual context. This may indicate that the humans are aware of an unatoned state, or aware of their bodies in a new way. In that sense, it could mean that they have a new awareness of their sexuality, or a new awareness of sexual function.

In conclusion, the most that the text can support is that the humans (not just the woman) may become aware of their sexuality upon eating the fruit. However, there is nothing in the text pointing to a sexual encounter on the part of either individual. Therefore, contextually the usage of “fornication, illicit sexual encounter, rape” as a semantic range for neged is untenable.

**Miscellaneous**

This section includes three semantic ranges that did not easily fit within any of the other categories.

**Prosperity, Abundance (ezer)**

This semantic range does occur within the Genesis 1-3 context. Deity creates an abundance of life, and commands the plants, animals, and humans to be abundant and to fill the earth. The woman is part of that, but since all living things are commanded to be abundant, one would need to find evidence particular to the woman to separate her from the rest of created life. This is especially so because the text appears to emphasize the woman’s uniqueness—the human names all of the animals, but does not find an ezer kenegdo.

Prior to the woman’s creation, the deity instructs the human to work and guard the garden.\(^{301}\) The act of gardening could certainly lead to an abundance of produce. In the

\(^{301}\) Genesis 2:15.
immediate context surrounding the woman’s construction, this is the strongest evidence for ezer “prosperity, abundance.”

The section after her creation does not relate to prosperity: the man speaks of his commitment to the woman, but even though his declaration contains sexual imagery, there is no mention of the effect of the woman’s creation.

In chapter three, it could be that the woman perceives the fruit of the tree of knowledge as being a source of abundance. However, if this is the case, it is not necessarily referring to an abundance of food, possessions, or resources. Rather, it is pointing to an abundance of wisdom: “And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and it was delightful to the eyes, and the tree was desirable to be prudent. So she took from its fruit and ate, and she also gave to her husband with her to eat.”

The only other section of the text which might point to abundance is the end section of the Eden account. In Genesis 3:16-19, the woman is told that she will have much pain in childbirth; the man is told that the ground is cursed because of him and will only bring forth edible plants after much labor. These verses refer to abundance of pain and work, but do not indicate presence or lack of prosperity. Hard work and pain may lead to prosperity, but do not always do so.

The final point that may relate to prosperity or abundance is in Genesis 3:20, when the text notes that “The human called the name of his woman ‘Eve,’ for she was the mother of all life.” This verse does indicate both abundance and prosperity. It is not contextually close to the woman’s creation since it occurs nearly at the end of the narrative. Therefore, the usage of this semantic range would presuppose a connection between deity’s usage of ezer kenegdo and the

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human’s usage of *Eve*. Whether the connecting thread between the two would be deity’s prophecy, or the human’s making a connection to deity’s appellation of the woman is unclear.

In summary, the woman being created as an additional worker in the garden, her choice to eat of the fruit to gain abundance of understanding, the abundance of work and pain for both the man and the woman, as well as the woman being named “Eve” (the mother of all life), this semantic range will be included in the final chart. However, it should be noted that the supporting evidence for this semantic range is not conclusive.

**Curse (*ezer*)**

This semantic range does occur within the Eden account: the serpent is cursed for its actions,\(^{303}\) and the ground is cursed to bring forth thorns and thistles.\(^{304}\) However, as mentioned in the section on “Worry, Fear, Anxiety,” neither the man nor the woman is cursed for their actions. Some might argue that the woman is the curse of the man, because she led him to eat the forbidden fruit, which brought about the consequences. This would necessarily mean that even before her creation, the deity views the woman as a negative entity, since deity refers to the woman as *ezer kenegdo* before she is ever built. However, the text itself views the impending creation of the woman as unequivocally positive: it is a divinely mandated necessity, and the fact that her absence is *lo tov* (“not good”) implies that her presence is *tov* “good.” In addition, after her creation, the man’s exclamations upon meeting her are positive, pointing toward a desired unity between the man and woman. In short, the context surrounding the construction of the

\(^{303}\) Genesis 3:14.

\(^{304}\) Genesis 3:18.
woman simply does not support the semantic range of ezer “curse.” Therefore, this semantic range will not be retained in the final potential cognate list.

Angel of Death (ezer)

This semantic range could potentially fit the narrative. The Genesis/Eden account contains themes of life and death: the tree of life brings eternal life, while the tree of knowledge brings death. In addition, there are heavenly beings (cherubim, perhaps a type of angel) who are charged to prevent the humans from partaking of the tree of life. It remains to be seen whether these themes can appropriately be applied to the woman in the text.

Woman as angel

The woman in the garden does not seem to have been granted supernatural abilities that separate her from the adam (literally, “human”). In fact, while the woman is constructed instead of shaped, on a fundamental level, the two humans are made of the same substance: the woman

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306 See Genesis 3:22-23. And Yahweh Elohim said, “See—the human is like one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he send forth his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever—” And Yahweh Elohim sent him forth from the garden of Eden to work the ground, where he was taken from.

307 See Genesis 2:16-17. And Yahweh Elohim commanded upon the human, saying, “From every tree of the garden, you [masc. sing.] will surely eat; But from the tree of knowledge of good and evil—do not eat [masc. sing.] from it—for in the you [masc. sing.] eat from it, you [masc. sing.] will surely die.” See also Genesis 3:2-5. And the woman said to the serpent, “We will eat from the fruit of the tree of the garden; But from the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, Elohim said, ‘You [masc. pl.] shall not eat from it, and don’t touch [masc. pl.] it, lest you [masc. pl.] die.’” And the serpent said to the woman, “You [masc. pl.] will not inevitably die; For Elohim knows that in the day you eat from it, your [masc. pl.] eyes will be opened, and you [masc. pl.] will be like Elohim, knowers of good and evil.”

308 See Genesis 2:24.
is built from the *sela* of the *adam*. In addition, it is implied that both, in their original created state, will not die. Death only comes after eating the fruit, an action which both take. As a consequence, both receive pain and sorrow. In these ways, the humans are presented as a pair. These elements suggest that the woman is not supernatural, and should not be read as being an angel.

In contrast, there are ways in which the two differ. Only the *adam* is commanded not to eat of the tree, and only the *adam* is promised death.\textsuperscript{309} The verbal forms and prepositions in Genesis 2:16-17 are clearly masculine singular, meaning that they refer to a single masculine being. In addition, the *adam*, not the woman, is driven out from the garden and blocked from the tree of life.\textsuperscript{310} Once again, these verses focus on a masculine singular referent, not a plural referent. This could perhaps imply that the woman *does* have some sort of supernatural abilities, but it is not certain. In the narrative, both the man and woman leave the garden and do not return. Finally, Adam eventually dies;\textsuperscript{311} Eve’s death is not recorded. However, in Genesis and throughout the Hebrew Bible, the deaths of women are recorded with much less frequency than those of men. Therefore, these differences are not conclusive.

\textsuperscript{309} Genesis 2:16-17. And Yahweh Elohim commanded upon the human, saying, “From every tree of the garden, you [masc. sing.] will surely eat;”
“But from the tree of knowledge of good and evil—do not eat [masc. sing.] from it—for in the you [masc. sing.] eat from it, you [masc. sing.] will surely die.”
\textsuperscript{310} Genesis 3:22-25. And Yahweh Elohim said, “See—the human is like one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he send forth his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever—“
And Yahweh Elohim sent him forth from the garden of Eden to work the ground, where he was taken from.
And he drove out the human. And he caused to dwell from the east of the garden of Eden the two cherubim and the flame of the sword constantly twisting to guard the path of the tree of life.
\textsuperscript{311} Genesis 5:5.
Woman and death

The woman could be seen as the bringer of death, since she eats the fruit and gives it to her husband. However, as mentioned above, the adam is promised death upon eating the fruit, not the woman. Although her understanding is that she should not eat or touch the fruit on pain of death, this may be second-hand information for her, since deity never actually instructs her regarding these points. This is perhaps reflected in her flawed quotation of deity, when she claims that even touching the fruit will bring death, something that deity never declared in the original command.

It is, therefore, entirely possible to read the text as indicating that the woman is under no pain of death, but chooses to leave the garden and undergo death as a communal act with the man. In addition, as mentioned in “Forgiveness/One Who Excuses or Exempts from Blame,” deity treats the man as being solely responsible for his own choices. Therefore, even though the woman is the first to partake, she is not responsible for the man’s consequences. Only the man is responsible for his choice to eat the fruit. Although the woman gave him the fruit, he chose to eat it. As a result, it does not make sense to view the woman as the bringer of death.

Because the text does not clearly support the view that the woman is a supernatural being, or the view that the woman is responsible for the man’s death, this semantic range will not be included in the final cognate list.

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312 Genesis 3:6.
313 Genesis 3:2-3. “And the woman said to the serpent, We will eat from the fruit of the tree of the garden; But from the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, Elohim said, ‘You [masc. pl.] shall not eat from it, and don’t touch [masc. pl.] it, lest you [masc. pl.] die.’”
Conclusion

As demonstrated in the above discussion, many of the potential semantic ranges can very effectively be applied to the context of *ezer kenegdo* in the Genesis 1-3 narrative. These alternatives can vastly expand the conversation surrounding *ezer kenegdo* and gender roles. This conversation is relevant to the creation account, to the larger narrative of the Hebrew Bible, and to the broader conversation surrounding gender roles in society. A chart with the suitable semantic ranges will be included below for ease of reference.
Chart of Analyzed Translation Values

The following is a chart of the translation values based upon the previous analysis. Please note: the definitions are listed in the order in which they were analyzed, and the alignment of the ezer and neged rows is not intended as a guide or indication of greater or lesser suitability.

Potential translations can be made by combining any single ezer element with any other single element from each column.

Italicized definitions indicate semantic ranges for which the evidence in the text is inconclusive. In other words, for italicized entries, there is enough contextual support to validate the reading, but there are also obvious contextual elements that may be used to argue against it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ezer</th>
<th>ke-314</th>
<th>negd-</th>
<th>-o</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be attentive, to listen</td>
<td>As, like (comparison)</td>
<td>Catalyst of awareness, instigator of understanding; one who makes known, shows, discloses, reveals, expounds</td>
<td>Their (non-count noun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help, aid, ally, assistance</td>
<td>After the manner of (comparison)</td>
<td>Succorer, aider</td>
<td>His</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberator, savior, liberation</td>
<td>As it were (approximation)</td>
<td>(May be divine appellative); prince, ruler, leader, king, commander, chief officer (may be in temple); noble things, royal dignitary; divinely appointed leader, exalted ruler</td>
<td>Its</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>About, around (approximation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At, when, as (indicating time)</td>
<td>Shepherd, leader of a group; Leader, one who draws forth; One who moves, one who sets out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To cause another to turn away from evil conduct</td>
<td>Of (possessive)</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>One who joins together, one who brings together, assembler</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Warrior, strong one, strength, might, valor, hero, champion</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fighter, combatant; one who overcomes, conquers, subdues, overpowers, goes forth to fight; Suspensory cords or strings of a sword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>One who is readily courageous, one who is strong and able; Courage, strength, potency; one who is effective in carrying out what others cannot; one who is willing to assent with valor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foundation, wall, fortification, house/dwelling place, enclosure, fold</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temple, sanctuary; temple courtyard, border around altar; personnel of temple</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Object/building made of wood</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plan, (divine) design, concept, ordinance; plan of destiny</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High, elevated land; a small mountain</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Woman, maiden</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prosperity, abundance</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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So What?

The key question that remains after this analysis is, “So what?” We are left asking why this research is important, and what, if anything, it contributes. True, it provides a number of alternative translations for ezer kenegdo. But what do these new semantic ranges change for us? What should be done with these results? And what does ezer kenegdo mean?

Going into writing this dissertation, I thought that ezer kenegdo would prove to be a phrase describing conflict, with strong military overtones. For much of my research process, that is exactly what I searched for, mulled over, and struggled to elicit from my analysis. Difficulties with this approach caused me to finally release my death grip on military overtones and expand my approach to include a comparative linguistic analysis. Upon doing so, something became abundantly clear: it may not be feasible to pinpoint a single translation of ezer kenegdo, but it is possible to definitively say what it does not mean.

Based upon the research in this dissertation, ezer kenegdo does not mean “help meet” or “partner equivalent to;” it has nothing to do with establishing hierarchical relationships between genders. This phrase is not describing an individual who is viewed as lesser or deserving of chastisement or punishment for choices by the man; the ezer kenegdo is not stupid, ineffective, weak, or without endurance. Ezer kenegdo is not a deadweight imposed upon the man: it is not a punishment, beating, torture, danger, or anxiety. It is also not referring to a negative experience for the woman; in addition to the aforementioned, it is also not fatigue, grief, or concern. The translation of ezer kenegdo does not support abuse toward either party, as beating, flogging, scourging, and rape do not fit the context. In addition, the context does not support the idea of the woman as a succubus or seductress; one cannot even make statements regarding the woman’s virginity or sexuality based on the phrase. The woman is clearly not responsible for the man’s
choices but is solely responsible for her own. Based on this dissertation’s analysis, the woman is not a bringer of death, or a hindrance to the man. She is not cursed, nor is she a curse to the man. *Ezer kenegdo* does not imply a severance from deity. In short, the traditional negative views towards women based upon *ezker kenegdo* are simply not supported by the actual text of Genesis.

That the text does not support the active demeaning of women is not the only thing that this dissertation indicates. The analysis also illustrates that the *ezker kenegdo/woman* is not meant to be held to an impossible standard. The phrase is not describing a covering or an atonement; it is not describing a forgiver or an act of forgiveness. The woman is not created to be an excuser or an excuse for the man’s actions. She is not the man’s lifelong mother: the one who is strong through experience, always sound in judgment, or teaches through experience. Nor is she required to be unfailingly forthright and honest. She is not a token of a covenant with deity. In short, the woman is allowed to be human, just like the man. Certainly, she *can* teach, have great experience, and be forthright in her dealings. But it is not the inherent purpose of her creation.

And so, I argue that when the woman has shortcomings (just as the man), she need not be condemned for not living up to her creation. The *ezker kenegdo* is created to be human—neither fully bad, nor fully perfect, but a complex being filled with potential. In brief, *ezker kenegdo* is *not* what tradition has imagined it to be—she is neither a weak, evil creation, nor is she a paragon of beauty and virtue. For this reason, discussion of what *ezker kenegdo* is *not* can be just as enlightening as the discussion of what it *is*.

So what is *ezker kenegdo*? This dissertation cannot give a single answer to that question. However, it can provide a range of appropriate answers. The *ezker kenegdo* can be one who listens. She can be one who brings awareness and understanding, or who reveals or expounds. She can be an ally or a liberator. Even more than that, an *ezker kenegdo* can be a warrior or
champion, willing to face combat with courage and strength, and capable of carrying out difficult tasks—even ones which may be impossible for others. *Ezer kenegdo* can be a leader, or a divinely appointed ruler, a shepherd, or a person who makes things happen. An *ezer kenegdo* can be one who influences others away from evil conduct, implying a person of sound moral character. The phrase can mean a person who brings together, an assembler, or an organizer; such a translation has elements that could be tied to leadership and administration, but also to endeavors such as engineering or architecture. This implies that the *ezer kenegdo* is intelligent. In a more figurative sense, *ezer kenegdo* can be a foundation, wall, fortification, or house, which might indicate that the woman can be a safe, protective, reliable space. The translation value of “temple, sanctuary, mountain” expands the female essence to include spiritual authority that exists according to divine designs and plans. As a tree, an *ezer kenegdo* is a source of food, a marker for where water can be found, and especially in desert locations, a sign of civilization and prosperity. In sum, detailed analysis suggests that the traditional interpretation of *ezer kenegdo* is wrong, and the semantic ranges that remain for further study are brimming with potential for meaningful examination.

This conclusion—that the text supports female-positive readings rather than traditional interpretation—was perhaps the greatest surprise for me in the dissertation process. In examining the semantic ranges, I fully expected for many of the negative ranges to provide very strong, indisputable readings, and for many of the positive ranges to be unsupported. It was, therefore, a shock and delight to discover that deeper probing only revealed textual support for viewing woman as a complex individual, a many-layered person who is not objectified or simplified merely for ease of interpretation. In utilizing a complex phrase such as *ezer kenegdo*, it is possible that the text is inviting, or even demanding readers to stop seeking easy answers to
complex questions. The text is calling for nuanced understandings of humans and the challenges of humanity. Perhaps most importantly, the text is advocating for equitable interpretations for all individuals.

In the end, what this dissertation means is that we have been engaging in the wrong conversation. We have fixated on to what extent women are lesser, subordinate, or weaker. We have argued that women should not be viewed as lesser, subordinate, or weaker. But in the end, even when trying to disprove traditional interpretations, the conversation has never fully escaped the shadow of millennia of tradition, which mandates a gender hierarchy. This research shines a spotlight on a completely reframed perspective. It invites us to disengage from less useful conversation and to start engaging in a productive one.
Conclusion

This dissertation does not seek to prove what ezer kenegdo means. But it has been able to prove what ezer kenegdo cannot mean and has opened the door to discovering what it can mean. In doing so, this dissertation has established that the traditional translations, definitions, and interpretations of ezer kenegdo do not stand on irrefutably stable ground. Rather, the lack of scholarly consensus indicates that further research is needed. Many of the contextual problems of the text can be resolved, or at least ameliorated with the introduction of different semantic ranges.

This dissertation intersects with the current conversation in more than one way. It expands greatly upon the work of Freedman, Rendsburg, and Zevit through a comparative Semitic linguistic approach. Although its major methodology differs from nearly all other literature, it clarifies and reframes the existing commentaries; many of prior interpretations have either been dismantled or else shown to have actual textual support. In some sense, this research fits within the scope of Trible’s conversation—not that it continues in the vein her argument, but rather that it builds upon the intent of Trible’s conversation. Much of Trible’s writings were completed with the aim of providing perspectives that gave authoritative basis for readings honoring women. It is the hope that this dissertation succeeds in this aim, not by proving that women are equal or superior to men, but by reframing the conversation outside of the arena of gender competition or hierarchy.

The analysis of Hebrew, Akkadian, Arabic, Ugaritic, and Aramaic produced dozens of potential cognates for further analysis. Of these potential cognates, only roots without other closer cognate relations to Hebrew, as well as roots having conceivable contextual relation to Genesis 1-3 were examined further. The analysis of these potential cognates has not only
challenged many traditional presuppositions about gender roles in Genesis 1-3, but it has also demonstrated that many of the proposed semantic ranges fit the text well. This “fit” is supported by grammatical and lexical evidence in the text itself. Due to this textual support, many of these readings may even be superior to traditional readings of the text. Ultimately, this dissertation functions only as a preliminary foray into new perspectives when looking at gender roles in Eden. It is hoped that other scholars will interact with, and further prove, or refute these findings.

This dissertation has aimed only to establish viability of readings, and has not attempted a value judgement on those viable readings. In further examining and producing readings, particularly for a devotional audience, I caution that an eye toward potential theological effects of interpretations may be in order. For example, traditional discussion regarding the woman in Eden has often been built on narratives regarding the woman’s sexuality, based on the following elements of the text: the woman is created only after the man realizes he lacks a mate/sexual partner; the man exclaims that man must leave his parents and cleave to his wife, making two bodies become one (sexual imagery); the deity commands to multiply and replenish the earth; the humans are naked and the woman is “seduced” by the serpent; the woman is known as the “mother of all living,” and promised pain in childbirth. These elements of the text have been used as an argument to focus interpretations around the woman’s sexuality in the garden. Moreover, traditional discourse regarding the Garden account has tended to view female sexuality in a negative light. Much of this conversation has been dismantled in this dissertation.

In addition to the above, for those desiring to explore such potentially negative cognates, the theological repercussions must be considered. Keeping in mind that deity refers to the woman as *ezer kenegdo* prior to the fall, what are the theological ramifications of a deity who creates cosmic order, and whose cosmic order includes abuse, familial dysfunction, and
oppression? It is one thing to claim these as effects of the fall, and quite another to claim that these are inherent to how the deity created the genders. In the first case, one can acknowledge that abuse, dysfunction, and oppression are part of living in an imperfect world, but that humankind’s charge is to rise above such injustices, as they are not consistent with the original cosmic order established in Eden. In the second case, if such injustice is inherent to the genders, then the theology implicitly accepts the ideas that deity intends for such oppression and suffering, that humankind has no divine injunction to resist violence or abuse, but that gender-based oppression exists in accordance with cosmic order and divine decree.

If one accepts such a premise, then familial harmony, individual and communal peace, and social justice become concepts that are incongruous with the deity of Genesis. Perhaps some may disagree with such a strong statement. However, accepting ideas that women are created merely to service men’s desires, that female happiness and achievement is of lesser importance than that of males, and that women’s primary role is to sacrifice their very sense of identity for men sets the stage for a society in which only half the population find personal fulfillment and feel divine favor. Such a society cannot maintain a semblance of individual, family, and communal peace and justice. Granted, not all such discussion generates such a dire social outcome. However, even mild aspects of such a theology can produce insidious effects religiously and culturally.

With this in mind, the research presented here becomes even more valuable. I have used comparative Semitic linguistics, along with close contextual analysis of Genesis 1-3, to demonstrate that the text simply does not support many traditional aspects of the conversation surrounding ezer kenegdo. Moving forward, potential cognates established here could fruitfully be explored in light of a variety of approaches; they certainly would harmonize well through
feminist methodologies, but might also intersect in interesting ways with other gender studies approaches, or with indigenous perspectives. Intertextual analysis could also bring rich results, through examination of whether the elements in *ezer kenegdo* play out in other female characters in the text.

For example, one might examine how frequently female activity in the Hebrew Bible connects to some form of awareness. One might study whether female activity stems from knowledge the female holds which the other characters do not, or whether female action precipitates greater awareness in male counterparts. Examples in the text that might align with such an investigation might be Rebekah’s trickery of Isaac, when she ensures that Jacob receives the birthright; Ja’el’s defeat of Sisera, or Abigail’s maneuvering with David and Nabal. In each case, the women have superior knowledge and act on it, changing the course of events in significant ways. Questions such as this could bring greater understanding to the Hebrew Bible as a whole, and promote greater balance in understanding motivators (including female ones) in the text.

Perhaps the most important contribution of this dissertation is found in how it reframes the conversation. The provision of new semantic ranges for both *ezer* and *neged* means that the scope of the conversation has fundamentally changed. Focusing on the nature of gender hierarchy, or whether such hierarchy even exists in Genesis 1-3 is no longer a mandatory element in the conversation surrounding *ezer kenegdo*. In fact, in the majority of the newly proposed readings, questions of hierarchy simply do not exist. In essence, what these new semantic ranges provide is more than a means to avoid beating the dead horse in the arena—these can be a method for exiting the arena altogether, by producing readings that value diversity and complexity in all individuals, rather than devaluing one sex in favor of another.
Appendix

Translation of Genesis 1-3

Genesis 1

1) In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth.

2) And the earth was formless and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.
   And the spirit of Elohim fluttered over the face of the waters.

3) And Elohim said, “Let there be light!” And there was light.

4) And Elohim saw the light, for it was good. And Elohim divided between the light and between the darkness.

5) And Elohim called the light “day,” and he called the darkness “night.” And there was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.

6) And Elohim said, “Let there be an expanse in the middle of the waters, and let there be separation between the waters and the waters.”

7) And Elohim made the expanse and divided between the waters that were below the expanse and between the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so.

8) And Elohim called the expanse “heavens.” And there was an evening, and there was a morning: a second day.

9) And Elohim said, “Let the waters underneath the heavens be gathered unto one place, and let the dry land be seen.” And it was so.

10) And Elohim called the dry “earth,” and he called the place of the waters “seas.” And Elohim saw that it was good.

11) And Elohim said, “let the earth cause to sprout grass: a plant sprouting seed, a fruit tree making fruit of its own kind, with its seed in it, upon the earth.” And it was so.
12) And the earth sent forth grass: a plant sprouting seed of its own kind, and a tree
making fruit that had its see in it, of its own kind. And Elohim saw that it was good.
13) And there was an evening, and there was a morning: a third day.
14) And Elohim said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to divide between
the day and between the night, and to be for signs and for seasons, and for days and
years.”
15) “And let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens, to shed light upon the earth.”
   And it was so.
16) And Elohim made the two great lights: the large light to oversee the day, and the
    small light to oversee the night; and also the stars.
17) And Elohim set them in the expanse of the heavens to shed light upon the earth,
18) And to oversee in the day and in the night, and to divide between the light and
    between the darkness. And Elohim saw that it was good.
19) And there was an evening, and there was a morning: a fourth day.
20) And Elohim said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of breathing life, and fowl
    flying over the earth, upon the face of the expanse of the heavens.”
21) And Elohim created the great sea creatures, and all the breathing life that creeps, that
    which swarm, the waters, of their own kinds; and each winged bird of its own kind.
    And Elohim saw that it was good.
22) And Elohim blessed them saying, “Bear fruit [masc. pl.], and be great [masc. pl.], and
    fill [masc. pl.] the waters in the seas, and let the fowl be great upon the land.”
23) And there was an evening, and there was a morning: a sixth day.
24) And Elohim said, “Let the earth bring forth breathing life of its own kind: livestock and creeping things, and the life of the earth of its own kind.” And it was so.

25) And Elohim made the life of the earth, of its own kind; and the cattle, of its own kind; and every creeping thing on the earth, of its own kind. And Elohim saw that it was good.

26) And Elohim said, “Let us make humanity in our image, like our reproduction. And let them [masc. pl.] rule over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps over the earth.”

27) And Elohim created the human in his image; in the image of Elohim he created it. He created them, male and female.

28) And Elohim blessed them, and Elohim said to them, “Bear fruit [masc. pl.] and become great [masc. pl.], and fill [masc. pl.] the earth, and subdue [masc. pl.] it; and rule [masc. pl.] over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens, and over all life that creeps upon the earth.”

29) And Elohim said, “See! I have given to you every plant that sows seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree that has on tree-fruit on it that sows seed, will be for you to eat.”

30) “And for all life of the earth, and for all fowl of the heavens, and for every creeping thing upon the earth that has in it the breath of life: every green plant is for food.” And it was so.

31) And Elohim saw all that he made, and see! It was very good. And there was an evening and there was a morning: a sixth day.
Genesis 2

1) Thus the heavens were finished, and the earth, and all of their hosts.

2) And on the seventh day, Elohim completed his workmanship that he made, and ceased on the seventh day from all his workmanship that he made.

3) And Elohim blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because in it he ceased from all his workmanship that Elohim created to make.

4) These are the generations of the heavens and the earth in their creation, in the day that Yahweh Elohim made the earth and heavens,

5) And every bush of the field—before it was in the earth; and every plant of the field—before it sprouted, for Yahweh Elohim had not caused it to rain upon the earth. And there was no humankind to work the ground.

6) And a mist rose up from the land, and caused the whole face of the ground to drink.

7) And Yahweh Elohim shaped the human—dust from the ground, and breathed into his nose the breath of life. And the human became a living breath.

8) And Yahweh Elohim planted a garden in Eden, from the east; and he placed there the human whom he had shaped.

9) And Yahweh Elohim caused to sprout from the earth every tree desirable to look at and good for food, and the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

10) And a river went out from Eden to water the garden, and from there it separated, and it became four sources.

11) The name of the one was Pishon—it surrounds the entire land of Ḥavilah, where there is the gold.
12) And the land of that land is good—there is the bdellium, and the onyx stone.

13) And the name of the second river is Giḥon—it is the one that surrounds the whole entire land of Cush.

14) And the name of the third river is Ḥiddekel—it is the one that goes east of Assyria; and the fourth river—it is Euphrates.

15) And Yahweh Elohim took the human and placed him in the Garden of Eden to work it and to keep it.

16) And Yahweh Elohim commanded upon the human, saying, “From every tree of the garden, you [masc. sing.] will surely eat;”

17) “But from the tree of knowledge of good and evil—do not eat [masc. sing.] from it—for in the you [masc. sing.] eat from it, you [masc. sing.] will surely die.”

18) And Yahweh Elohim said, “It is not good that the human be alone. I will make for him an ezer kenegdo.”

19) And Yahweh Elohim shaped from the ground each life of the field, and every bird of the heavens; and he brought them unto the human to see what he would call it. And for each, what the human called it—breathing life, that was its name.

20) And the human called names for all the livestock, and for the fowl of the heavens, and for each life in the field. But for the human—he did not find an ezer kenegdo.

21) And Yahweh Elohim caused a deep sleep to fall upon the human, and he slept. And he took one of his building blocks, and closed flesh in its place.

22) And Yahweh Elohim built the building block that he took from the human into a woman, and he brought her to the human.
23) And the human said, “This time—this one is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. This one will be called woman because this one is taken from man.”

24) “Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother and stick to his woman, and they will be one flesh.”

25) And the two of them were naked, the human and his woman, and they were not ashamed in front of each other.

Chapter 3

1) And the serpent was naked, more than all the life of the field that Yahweh Elohim had made. And it said to the woman, “Did Elohim really say, ‘Don’t eat [masc. pl.] from every tree in the garden?’”

2) And the woman said to the serpent, “We will eat from the fruit of the tree of the garden;”

3) But from the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, Elohim said, “You [masc. pl.] shall not eat from it, and don’t touch [masc. pl.] it, lest you [masc. pl.] die.”

4) And the serpent said to the woman, “You [masc. pl.] will not inevitably die;”

5) “For Elohim knows that in the day you eat from it, your [masc. pl.] eyes will be opened, and you [masc. pl.] will be like Elohim, knowers of good and evil.”

6) And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and it was delightful to the eyes, and the tree was desirable to be prudent. So she took from its fruit and ate, and she also gave to her husband with her to eat.

7) And the eyes of the two of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed the leaf of a fig and made girdles for themselves.
8) And they heard the voice of Yahweh Elohim walking around in the garden for the breeze of the day, and the human hid, and his wife, from the face of Yahweh Elohim, in the middle of a tree of the garden.

9) And Yahweh Elohim called to the human and said to him, “Where are you?”

10) And he said, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I myself am naked. So I hid.”

11) And he said, “Who told you [masc. sing.] that you are naked? Did you [masc. sing.] eat from the tree that I commanded you [masc. sing.] not to eat from it?”

12) And the human said, “The woman who you gave to be with me—she gave to me from the tree, and I ate.”

13) And Yahweh Elohim said to the woman, “What is this you [fem.sing.] did?” And the woman said, “the serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

14) And Yahweh Elohim said to the serpent, “Because you did this, you are cursed—more than all the livestock, and more than all the life of the field. You will go upon your belly, and you will eat dust all the days of your life.”

15) And I will place enmity between you and between the woman and between your seed and between her seed: he will bruise you—head, and you will bruise him—heel.”

16) To the woman, he said, “I will surely make your pain great, and your conception will be in pain. You will bear children, and your desire will be to your man, but he will rule over you.”

17) And to the human he said, “Because you listened to the voice of your wife and you ate from the tree which I commanded you [masc. sing.], saying, ‘Do not eat [masc.
...sing.] from it,” the ground is cursed because of you [masc. sing.]: in pain you will eat from it all the days of your life.”

18) “And it will sprout thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the dust of the ground.”

19) “In the sweat of your nose you will eat bread until you return to the ground, because you were taken from it—for you are dust, and you will return to dust.”

20) And the human called the name of his woman “Eve,” for she was the mother of all life.

21) And Yahweh Elohim made for the human and his wife tunics of skin, and he dressed them.

22) And Yahweh Elohim said, “See—the human is like one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he send forth his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever—“

23) And Yahweh Elohim sent him forth from the garden of Eden to work the ground, where he was taken from.

24) And he drove out the human. And he caused to dwell from the east of the garden of Eden the two cherubim and the flame of the sword constantly twisting to guard the path of the tree of life.
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