Genealogy as a Means of Historical Representation in the Torah and the Role of Women in the Genealogical System[*]

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1. Introduction: Problematization of Terms and Concepts

"God reveals himself in history," and "the Old Testament is a book of history." These theologically justified expressions lead to a fundamental dilemma: on the one hand, the Old Testament deals chiefly with the history of the people of Israel with its God; on the other hand, an analysis of this representation, made under the conditions of the modern conception of reality, indicates that, behind the exegetical tradition and the kerygmatic actualization, it has become practically impossible to recognize the facticity of what actually happened. Like all the other ancient sources, the Old Testament must be considered critically. This is the only way to determine intersubjectively the historical information that may be found in it: this implies knowledge of what occurred at a particular place and what did not occur.[1] The Bible

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1. On this and for the following exposé, see, among others, Jan-Christian Gertz, "Konstruierte Erinnerung: Alttestamentliche Historiographie im Spiegel von Archäologie und literarhistorischer Kritik am Fallbeispiel des salomonischen Königtums," *BTZ* 21 (2004): 3–5, with bibliography. On the rapport between fact and fiction, see also the contribution of Gerd Häfner, "Konstruktion und Referenz: Impulse aus der neueren geschichtstheoretischen Diskussion," in *Historiographie und fiktionales Erzählen: Zur Konstruktivität in Geschichtstheorie und Exegese* (ed. Knut Backhaus and Gerd Häfner; Biblisch-Theologische Studien 86; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2007), 67–96. Concerning this problem, see also the fundamental study of John Van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), esp. 24–44.

shares with the historiography of antiquity and the ancient Near East the fact that its conception of "history" is not the same as that of modern or contemporary historiography:[2] biblical and ancient authors make no distinction between historical "facts" and the "exegetical" use of the sources. Of course, describing the Old Testament texts "exclusively" as "stories" and denying them any value as sources is a tendentious and methodically naïve ultimate demand. Yet it is better not to speak of Old Testament *Geschichtsschreibung* (historiography) and rather about its *Geschichtsdarstellung* (representation of history). Its historical value frequently does not manifest itself directly in the events it relates (and which occasionally prove to be fictional or constructed) but in the way it narrates them, or the manner it represents history and reflects God's action in it.[3] Therefore, the real challenge does not lie in indicating the fictional elements in many biblical "stories" but in describing how, in them and through the construction of memories, the identity of a solid relationship with God is outlined and an eternal message from God transmitted.[4]

These fundamental reflections, from a perspective of the theory of history, on the value and the quality of the historical representations in the Bible shall not be presented in depth here; on the contrary, the background will be presented as the focus on the presentation of Old Testament history in the form of *genealogies*, or rather a *genealogical system*. As Fitzenreiter writes, "The genealogical relationship is the joint of the historical draft… Through the "genealogical," the past becomes a logical part—the source—of the present.[5] Before considering the Bible itself, possible analogies will be sought in the surrounding ancient Egyptian, ancient Near Eastern, and Greek world.

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2. Alongside Gertz's "Konstruierte Erinnerung," see also Donald B. Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals and Day-Books: A Contribution to the Study of the Egyptian Sense of History* (The Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities Publication 4; Mississauga, Ont.: Benben, 1986), xiii. This fundamental question is also dealt with by Stuart D. Beeson, "Historiography Ancient and Modern: Fact and Fiction," in *Ancient and Modern Scriptural Historiography/ L'historiographie biblique, ancienne et moderne* (ed. George J. Brooke and Thomas Römer; BETL 207; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007), 3–11; and, in the same volume, Philip R. Davies, "'Another Country?' Biblical Texts and the Past," 13–24; and Christophe Nihan, "L'écrit sacerdotal entre mythe et histoire," 151–90.

3. Among others, see Beeson, "Historiography Ancient and Modern," 9.

4. See, among others, Davies, "Another Country," 19–20.

5. Martin Fitzenreiter, "Einleitung. Genealogie—Realität und Fiktion sozialer und kultureller Identität," in *Genealogie—Realität und Fiktion von Identität* (ed. Martin Fitzenreiter; Internet-Beiträge zur Ägyptologie und Sudanarchäologie 5; Berlin: Humboldt-Universität, 2005), 1 (unless otherwise indicated, all translations from languages other than English are mine); online: http://www2.hu-berlin.de/nilus/net-publications/ibaes5/

This does not suggest direct historical, religious, or even literary dependencies; the differences are often much greater than the similarities. However, the basic abstract idea appears in conjunction with the fact that relations between entities such as gods, kings, or peoples should be classified according to genealogical principles in many cultures. In a synchronic retrospection of cultural phenomena, analogies attract attention. Against this background, the specific profile of the biblical world—in which time periods and spaces are organized by means of genealogical family relations and their proximity or distance—stands out more clearly. The outer aspect in the patrilineages, that is, genealogies containing only men and going from father to son, may suggest a view exclusively reserved for men. However, the documents reveal that, in the biblical representation of history, women played a specific and very significant role. For this reason, this study will concentrate on the role of women in the genealogical system.

2. Ancient Egyptian, Ancient Near Eastern and Greek Surroundings

2.1. Egypt

The family structure as a community of sexes and a succession of generations is a basic anthropological experience that lends itself as an analogy useful for the organization of other relationships. Behind the "genealogical representation of history," there is possibly an essential idea that people returned to at various periods in different places: the arrangement of relationships between entities in the form of family histories and lines of descent. Such entities may be, for example, deities, but also protagonists of a history belonging to the distant past. An example known to us from ancient Egypt is the theogony of the nine gods that presents a principle of order of the first gods at the time the universe was created:

> From the first being Atum proceeds, through self-generation, the first sexually differentiated divine couple—Shu and Tefnut—they give birth to the next generation of gods Geb and Nut, and from this union of the god of earth and the goddess of heaven finally are born the siblings, Osiris, Seth, Isis and Nephthys, who bring the number to nine.[6]

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publikation/ibaes5_fitzenreiter_einleitung.pdf. Fitzenreiter also discusses the fictionality, or reality, of the genealogical constructs in his contribution.

6. Erik Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen: Altägyptische Götterwelt* (6th ed.; Darmstadt: Primus, 2005), 236.

However, this ennead is neither the only principle of order of the world of the Egyptian gods nor a closed canonical system; it can be extended and modified.[7]

The genealogical order of the group of nine gods is interrupted after this number. Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris, and the four sons of Horus are not counted. It must be noted that Osiris's line would have ended with his death and dismemberment, had his sisters Isis and Nephthys not seen to his reconstitution, so Osiris and Isis, as his wife, can have a son: Horus. The initiative of the women, or of the goddesses, allows the maintenance, or rather prolongation, of the masculine genealogical line. This "basic model" shall reappear with the question of the role of women in Genesis (and related literature, such as the book of Ruth).

In Egypt, the mythical genealogy of the gods is prolonged through the earthly monarchy: the king of Egypt is recognized as the son of the sun-god and the king's mother and as "Horus": the new king and successor of the deceased king, who assumes the role of "Osiris." Thus, the monarchy in Egypt is the earthly representation of the world of the gods and has a fundamentally dynastic structure. The genealogical principle also extends its influence through political history.[8]

Consequently, Ludwig D. Morenz shows that the Theban king Mentuhotep (II) (Eleventh Dynasty, beginning of the second millennium B.C.E.), for example, was represented both as the descendant of the gods (Amun-Re or Month and Hathor) and as the successor of the regional Theban sovereigns. His status surpasses the latter, as he is depicted with a double crown as the pan-Egyptian king, at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom.[9] In the setting of Mentuhotep (II) as king, a genealogical program is developed for him in which his descent is attached, through three kings, all named Antef, to the

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7. For example, through the replacement of Seth by Horus or that of Atum by other manifestations of the sun-god, or the precedence of another chief deity such as Ptah in Memphis. On this, see "The Theology of Memphis" (*ANET*, 4–6); Benedikt Rothöhler, "Neue Gedanken zum Denkmal memphitischer Theologie" (diss., Universität Heidelberg, 2004), online: http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/archiv/7030; see also Van Seters, *Prologue to History*, 27.

8. On this subject, see the Turin king papyrus from the period of Ramesses II (Nineteenth Dynasty); see also Alan H. Gardiner, *The Royal Canon of Turin* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1959); Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists*, 2–18; Van Seters, *Prologue to History,* 26–27, 36; fundamental reflections on the form of representation in Ludwig D. Morenz, "Die doppelte Benutzung von Genealogie im Rahmen der Legitimierungsstrategie für Menthu-hotep (II.) als gesamtägyptischer Herrscher," in Fitzenreiter, *Genealogie*, 109–12.

9. See Morenz, "Die doppelte Benutzung," 116, who explicitly refers to the analogy in Jesus' genealogy in Matt 1. For the following summary, see 119–20.

founder of the dynasty: Mentuhotep I, who is not mentioned in the contemporary sources. Consequently, it is suspected that this figure, if not invented, was only progressively stylized as a great sovereign by a local Theban ruler. The intention was "to give dynastic legitimacy to the ruling Theban house and to anchor the new monarchy's claim to pan-Egyptian sovereignty more solidly in history.[10]

In dealing with the topic of "genealogical representation of history," it is very instructive to ask how the signification of descent was conceived in ancient Egypt.[11] (1) To establish the identity of an individual, filiation is used probably from the Fifth Dynasty on. For this, either the name of the father or the names of both parents (in the Middle Kingdom and later) are given.[12] Moreover, in the Middle Kingdom (twentieth–eighteenth century B.C.E.) sometimes only the mother's name is cited. In the fourteenth century B.C.E., the princesses of Amarna, the daughters of king Amenophis IV Akhenaten, are also called "carnal daughter, loved by him (i.e., the king), born of the great royal wife Nefertiti."[13] The mention of the filiation (descent) from the mother is not evidence of a matrilineal concept, that is, suggesting that the lineage passes through the mothers. The indication of descent from the mother does not concern the lineage, which always runs through the fathers/men (patrilineal), but rather differentiation among the male descendants. The Egyptian king usually has other wives alongside his chief wife, and hence the naming of the mother serves the particular legitimization of the chief successor. Regional monarchs also practiced polygamy. So, since, as can be seen in the later texts, the children of the first marriage had greater inheritance rights than the children of following marriages, the naming of the mother was important for the clarification of the legal claims.

(2) This leads to the second function of the genealogical indication: the grounding of a moral or legal claim. Such a claim to a position,[14] in the kingdom or the priesthood, usually runs through the father. Now, when the ruling

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10. Ibid., 120. See also Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists*, 28.

11. For the following presentation, see Hellmut Brunner, "Abstammung," *LÄ* 1:13–18.

12. See Karl Jansen-Winkeln, "Die Entwicklung der genealogischen Informationen nach dem Neuen Reich," in Fitzenreiter, *Genealogie*, 138.

13. See Erika Feucht, "Mutter," *LÄ* 6:256.

14. On this, see the depiction of all the mayors of Meir on Uchhotep's (III) rock-cut tomb, which represents as many as fifty-nine ancestors, or predecessors of this office (with their wives). This depiction probably has the political function of strengthening and legitimizing the possibly unstable position of Uchhotep in Meir and putting before the eyes of the long-established families that the one who ordered this tomb "belongs to them." On this topic, see Wolfram Grajetzki, "Zwei Fallbeispiele für Genealogien im Mittleren Reich," in Fitzenreiter, *Genealogie*, 57–60; Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists*, 158–59.

cast of a male lineage has died out, the dynasty ends. In the Old Kingdom, the link to the next dynasty is guaranteed through the feminine lineage, "the husband or son of the last king's daughter ascending to the throne."[15] Similarly, this does not constitute a "matrilineage" (see above); rather, it is a tentative means to maintain the continuity of the royal family.

(3) A third reason for the genealogical indication aims at elevating the reputation of the implicated person. In tombs, open to the public and where the memory of the buried dead is kept alive, the indication of long lists of ancestors may have served to draw attention to one's own "good name" and stress the tradition-consciousness of the family.[16] In later times, the lists use fictional names, especially when the number of the ancestors is great and extends back over several centuries. Precisely in the case of priests, the lineage has a significant role, since the consideration of the position is particularly pronounced. Such longer genealogies are documented notably from the Twenty-Second Dynasty (ca. 965–750 B.C.E.)[17] to the Hellenistic period; they legitimize the claims of priests and their families to positions and power.[18] The genealogies from the Twenty-Second Dynasty are perhaps not purely invented but rather represent the literary transcription of lists of descent first,

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15. Feucht, "Mutter," 257. The older thesis that the right to the royal throne is transmitted through the feminine lineage of the royal family, i.e., implying that each king must legitimize himself by marrying the daughter of the preceding king, is rightly refuted by, among others, Gay Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press, 1993), 26–27. Hence, for example, the wives of Thutmose III, Amenophis II, and Amenophis III would not be of royal descent.

16. See Grajetzki, "Zwei Fallbeispiele für Genealogien," 60–62; Jansen-Winkeln, "Die Entwicklung der genealogischen Informationen," 139; for the "family stelas," also see Martin Fitzenreiter, "Überlegungen zum Kontext der ‚Familienstelen' und ähnlicher Objekte," in Fitzenreiter, *Genealogie*, 69–96. Fitzenreiter considers the essential function of the family stelas to the documentation of a sacralization of relations between groups (85). The kinship, or genealogical bonds, do not necessarily constitute rapports of descent but rather regulate the dynamic of the contacts between social groups and individuals (92).

17. See Jansen-Winkeln, "Die Entwicklung der genealogischen Informationen," 137. He calculates that the use of longer genealogies began between the Twenty-First Dynasty and the end of the Third Intermediate Period (ca. tenth century B.C.E.) and that these longer genealogies reached an apogee from the Twenty-Second Dynasty to the Twenty-Sixth. The longest genealogy, with sixty generations, is found on the relief of a tomb from Saqqara. This predominantly concerns priestly genealogies, but this may depend on the sites of discoveries (temples) and be explained by the fact that there was practically no civil government during the Third Intermediate Period. See also Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists*, 62–64.

18. See Robert R. Wilson, *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World* (YNER 7; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 127; Fitzenreiter, "Überlegungen zum Kontext," 82; Jansen-Winkeln, "Die Entwicklung der genealogischen Informationen," 139.

transmitted orally over a long period of time (or better, of previous stages of transmission not conserved in writing).

The royal and priestly genealogies suggest that, in these cases, almost only men are mentioned.[19] In fact, women hardly appear in the primary literature on the history of ancient Egypt. The main reason for this lies in the fundamental and scarcely changing social structure, which is dominated by a king and the exclusively masculine priesthood and officialdom. There actually are priestesses in particular cultic forms. Thus, women belonging to the upper class can be called "priestesses of Hathor." The wife of the king Ahmose I, Ahmose-Nefertari (ca. 1575–1505), bears the title "God's Wife of Amun in Karnak." To fulfill the cultic obligations as "God's Spouse," she founds a community of priestesses. In the mythical vision of the world and of society, represented in the cult, as the human partner of the god Amun-Re, she looks after the royal descent of the king. However, it becomes clear that this was an exceptional role for a woman.

In the global review of her results, Gay Robins observes, in the introduction of her book *Women in Ancient Egypt*, "Thus women scarcely get a mention in political histories of Egypt."[20] Starting at creation, according to the vision of the world, male gods rule the land of Egypt, and in the course of history they are replaced by the male kings of the human race. These kings choose wives for themselves not exclusively from the royal families (in part, incestuous relationships) but also from the common classes. Often diplomatic reasons are involved. The fate of the women married in this way with the Egyptian court is uncertain and depends on the relations and the influence of their homeland in Egypt. Gay Robins summarizes:

> In fact, such women were little more than commodities to be traded for peace and alliance. They had no say in their fate, and yet they became important cogs in the workings of the international diplomatic system: while the system was run by men, the women were needed to make it work.[21]

When a child is born as a result of the relationship of the king with a woman, the child's gender determines his or her future: sons are potential successors to the throne, whereas daughters do not have such expectations. The normal path of the succession to the throne runs through the male line. In myths

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19. See Jansen-Winkeln, "Die Entwicklung der genealogischen Informationen," 138: the fatherly lineage is predominant. The mother is named only when an important position is inherited through the motherly lineage or if the mother comes from a royal family.

20. Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, 11. For the following presentation, 21.

21. Ibid., 36.

parallel to the concrete political world, this is represented by Horus (the living successor to the throne), who succeeds Osiris (the defunct predecessor) to the throne as king. According to this myth, there is no room for an official accession of women to the throne.[22]

When, nevertheless, women acceded to the royal throne, these constituted very exceptional cases that could occur if the king's mother[23] or his wife was able to impose her interests in the determination of the inheritance in a legitimate or conspiring way.[24] If the last male successor to the throne was still very young, the king's mother could effectively assume the government (including the cultic duties). This is illustrated by Ahhotep II, the mother of the founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty Ahmose, or his wife Ahmose-Nefertari (sixteenth century B.C.E.).

Probably the best-known example is that of Hatshepsut, the wife of Thutmose II (Eighteenth Dynasty). The latter had a son with his concubine, who officially reigned as Thutmose III from circa 1467 to 1413 B.C.E. During the first years of his reign, Hatshepsut assumed the government and adopted the royal iconography, which was constructed in accordance with the royal titles (for example, "Lady of Both Lands" [Upper and Lower Egypt]). She also presented offerings to the gods, an action usually reserved for kings. Toward the seventh year of the reign of Thutmose III, Hatshepsut renounced the title of queen, which had barely any political relevance, and instead used the five-part pharaonic title. On the commemorative monuments, she appears clothed as a king; she also has her divine descent represented in her mortuary temple in Thebes: the union of the god Amun-Re with her mother, Queen Ahmose, is followed by the birth of "King Hatshepsut." In documentation of her crowning, she legitimizes herself both by stating that Thutmose I chose her to succeed him and with a divine oracle. Scholars are not entirely certain how Hatshepsut was able to surmount tradition and how she was, as a woman, able to become "king"—with the acceptance of the male officialdom. Her strong

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22. However, an integration of a queen may occur though Isis, the sister-wife of Osiris and mother of Horus. This is found under the Ptolemies, who include the queens as mothers of kings in the genealogies and also establish a place for the defunct sovereigns in the cult of the dead; on this, see Friederike Herklotz, "Der Ahnenkult bei den Ptolemäern," in Fitzenreiter, *Genealogie*, 161–62.

23. On the role of the king's mother and of the wives at the royal court in ancient Egypt, and especially on their influence over the politics in the New Kingdom, see the works of Silke Roth, *Die Königsmütter des alten Ägypten von der Frühzeit bis zum Ende der 12. Dynastie* (ÄAT 46; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001); and eadem, *"Gebieterin aller Länder": Die Rolle der königlichen Frauen in der fiktiven und realen Außenpolitik des ägyptischen Neuen Reiches* (OBO 185; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 2002).

24. See Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, 38, 42.

personality, along with her clever choice of officials who remained loyal to her, was surely decisive. From the twenty-second year on, Thutmose III reigned alone; Hatshepsut's end remains obscure. Even if, from time to time, women reigned for short periods at the end of dynasties,[25] the length of Hatshepsut's reign, which lasted twenty-two years, is indeed highly exceptional. As regent, she not only represented the real king but also assumed the actual male gender role in such a way that there were, in fact, two kings. This "jolt" to tradition had long-lasting consequences, and, after her death, while Thutmose III was still reigning, an attempt was made to reestablish "order" [ma'at], and her name was erased from the monuments.

Another equally exceptional, powerful, and apparently important woman was Nefertiti, the wife of Akhenaten, king of Amarna (ca. 1340–1324 B.C.E.). In depictions of her, she is wearing the crown, like the king. Her husband Akhenaten is assimilated with Shu, the son of the creator-god; Nefertiti assumes the role of Tefnut (daughter of the creator-god). Together with Aten, the unique god, they constitute the so-called "Triad of Amarna." The names of "King Hatshepsut," of Akhenaten king of Amarna, as well as those of his successors Smenkhkare, Tutankhamen, and Aye, are effaced in the Egyptian king lists.[26]

The normal roles of the royal wives was not as "occupants of the throne" but as representatives of the feminine principle of the universe through which the kingdom could renew itself; in practice, this means that they brought the successor to the throne into the world. All other forms of influence exercised by women constituted deviations from ideology and tradition.

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25. Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, 50–51, mentions three names, indicating that among there were only four women among the two to three hundred Egyptian kings.

26. Thus, for example, in the king list of the Eighteenth Dynasty (*TUAT* 1:541–44). Important enumerations of Egyptian kings are represented in the king lists from Abydos (First to Nineteenth Dynasty: Seti I), the Palermo stone (Predynastic Period to the Fifth Dynasty), the king list from Karnak (an inventory of the statues of kings that Thutmose III cleared away when the temple was built), the king list from Saqqara (a list of fifty-seven kings—approximately fifty names are conserved—revered by Ramesses II), and Turin King List (a fragmentary list from the time of Ramesses II). On the king lists, see Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists*, 1–64. He emphasizes that these lists (with the exception of the Turin King List) did not have a "historical" or "historiographical" purpose but rather concerned cultic functions, for example, veneration of the ancestors (18).

2.2. The Ancient Near East

Ancient Mesopotamia, like ancient Egypt,[27] had great interest in the past. This manifested itself notably in king lists, chronicles, and annals as well as in the archiving of letters and books in the cuneiform libraries.[28] In spite of these "historiographical" genres, the reports are not neutral or "objective" but rather present particular perspectives, as in cases where the documents are not frankly partisan and so reveal the interests of each ruler.[29] The form in which history was represented in the genealogies plays only a minor role in this essay. Robert R. Wilson, in his study *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World*, notes that, prior to his work, there were no systematic studies of genealogies in the ancient Near East.[30] His work still constitutes an approach and a starting point for questions on this subject. Wilson consecrates his second chapter to the study of ancient Near Eastern genealogies[31] and discusses the findings of the Sumerian and Akkadian documents, as well as those of other Western Semitic areas such as Ugarit.

First of all, he establishes a basic distinction between the royal and non-royal genealogies. The genealogies in the royal inscriptions are all linear; that is, each genealogical line runs through only one ancestor on to the next generation (grandfather, father, son, grandson). Such genealogies are mostly found in the introduction of the inscriptions that connect royal titles and epithets. As a rule, the genealogies go through three generations, sometimes four. When they go further, the genealogies are no longer constructed with the usual formulas ("X son of Y son of Z"); instead, they have a very particular form. If several genealogies contain the same circle of people, then the phenomenon of "fluidity" (Wilson) appears between the different genealogies, that is, discrepancies between genealogies that should actually be identical or other variants of the father-son model. Among these variants, one finds what

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27. The ancient historiographers (Herodotus, Theophrastus, and others) attest to the interest of the ancient Egyptians for the past with reference to well-known annals and lists; see Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists*, 65.

28. See Ephraim A. Speiser, "Geschichtswissenschaft," *RlA* 3:217.

29. This is also true for the "Geschichtswissenschaft/Geschichtsschreibung" (study of history/historiography) in Hatti; see Heinrich Otten, "Geschichtswissenschaft in Hatti," *RlA* 3:220–21.

30. See Wilson, *Genealogy and History*, 56.

31. On this subject, see also Robert R. Wilson, "Between 'Azel' and 'Azel': Interpreting the Biblical Genealogies," *BA* 42 (1979): 13–18; then the short notices in Walter E. Aufrecht, "Genealogy and History in Ancient Israel," in *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie* (ed. Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor; JSOTSup 67; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 206–11.

Wilson calls "telescoping." Thus, for example, in one genealogy of Esarhaddon, the names of the father and the grandfather are followed by the names of the founders of the dynasty (son and father), whereas the Assyrian king list indicates that, between them, at least sixty-two kings are left out. Hence the genealogy is collapsed through telescoping, and a direct relationship is established between the current ruler, via his father and grandfather, and the first ancestors of the dynastic foundation.[32] The function of such genealogies is not historiography, nor the simple recording of names, but the legitimization of the ruler who is governing at the moment of the redaction and of his lineage. Precisely at times of political instability and crisis-like changes, the genealogies become longer: in the face of unfaithful vassals and pretenders to the throne, the direct legitimacy of the present ruler must be explicitly emphasized. The genealogy is, however, not an element that need necessarily exist. It is not needed, for example, if the ruler derives his legitimacy directly from a deity or if the immediate predecessor is sufficiently legitimized so that, for the present king, a simple filiation (attestation of the father) suffices. If he is the son of a king genealogically attached to the tradition, his domination is also declared legitimate. Accordingly, genealogies do not appear with all kings, and they do not play an essential role in tradition: "the rulers were not interested in using royal genealogies, and for this reason it is unlikely that detailed genealogical information was preserved at all."[33] The Mesopotamian king lists are perhaps in the background of the genealogical information. These lists of kings—for example, the Sumerian king list, the list of the rulers of Lagash[34] or the Assyrian king list—only rarely contain genealogical indicators. They are not interested in transmitting concrete genealogies.

For instance, the Sumerian King List presents a succession of, in part, contemporary dynasties in different cities and formally describes how the monarchy passes from one city to another.[35] The last city mentioned is Isin, so that the political function of this list becomes clear: it legitimates the seat of the monarchy in the city of Isin. For this reason, the small number of genealogical aspects does not play a significant role. They are incidental and were

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32. See Wilson, *Genealogy and History*, 64–65.

33. Ibid., 72.

34. On this subject, see, however, *TUAT* 1:329; and Edmond Sollberger, "The Rulers of Lagaš," *JCS* 21 (1967): 279–91. See also The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, online at: http://www-etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk; Van Seters, *Prologue to History*, 64–66.

35. See *ANET*, 265–66; The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.2.1.1#); Van Seters, *Prologue to History*, 35–36, 62–64; Nihan, "L'écrit sacerdotal," 172–76.

left incomplete when no genealogical information was available. It is likely that independent genealogies never existed in this context.

The Assyrian King List contains, in its second part, a linear genealogy; whereas parts 1 and 3 are simple lists (without a genealogical indicator),[36] part 4 is a linear genealogy extended by the specification of the length of the reigns. In a comparison of the Assyrian king list with the corresponding inscriptions of the named kings, differences appear that must be attributed to the so-called phenomenon of "fluidity." These variations are motivated by the different functions: while the genealogies in the inscriptions support the legitimacy of the redacting king and thus represent the succession to the throne, which sometimes also passes from an older to a younger brother, the king list follows the regular succession from father to son and perhaps even establishes it when it does not correspond. This creates differences and rejections, which leads to the recognition that the main aim of the genealogical information is not exact historical descent but rather political organization. For the pursuit of this aim, genealogical successions are consciously modified or names are left out. Only in later times, when the genealogies had lost their direct political purpose, were "historical" chronicles written and transmitted as such.

The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty reveals another function of the genealogies: it first concerns a simple list of names, later placed into a sequence of epochal names and groups of persons.[37] In the end, it becomes clear that a series of invocations is presented: the redactor of the list or genealogy, the Babylonian king Ammisaduqa, wants to use it solely to accomplish the rite of offerings for the dead *(kispu[m])*[38] pertaining to all of his ancestors, in order to keep their memory alive and appease the spirits of the dead. For this, it is important to name *all* of them and not forget anyone—this explains the global epochs and the naming of groups. The detailed genealogical information is, therefore, unimportant, and for this same reason the genealogical indicators of relationships are largely left out.

In Mesopotamia, there are also records of nonroyal genealogies. They are primarily found in the form of information relative to the descent of the authors, which they insert with their names in the colophons of important texts. Alongside the normal filiation, as a part of the name, there are also genealogies featuring more generations in which the name can also indicate the tribe, that is, the forefather who founded the family. Wilson also explains the

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36. See *ANET*, 564–66.

37. See Jacob J. Finkelstein, "The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty," *JCS* 20 (1966): 95–118.

38. On this, see also Alexander A. Fischer, *Tod und Jenseits im Alten Orient und Alten Testament* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2005), 52–54.

exclusion of intermediary generations as an example of "telescoping."[39] In that case, it is also perhaps better to speak not of genealogies but of personal names presented in a genealogical form. Then the "forefather" can represent a particular guild (especially the author's trade)—instead of the family—along with its excellent reputation that the carrier of the name hence claims for himself. Long genealogies, especially of priests, serve to enhance the reputation and the influence of those concerned.

Genealogies play practically no role in Ugarit.[40] The function of Phoenician genealogies was apparently to identify groups of people; in the case of kings and priests, they also had a legitimizing purpose. Whereas Phoenician genealogies contain up to seven names, the related Punic genealogies were extended as far as the seventeenth generation. Hebrew, Moabite, and Aramaic inscriptions show concise genealogical information in the form of personal names with filiation (two generations) alone.

To sum up Wilson's observations, genealogies do not primarily serve historiography; rather, they have a "sociological" function. They are parts of personal names; they legitimize, in the political domain, the claim to the monarchy or an office; and they are a part of the cult of ancestors.[41] When, in the process of transmission, the genealogies lose their original function, they are interpreted as representations of historical information. This is also true when the genealogical details partially contradict the royal inscriptions with the same names in a different order. For later generations, the original function of genealogical information was no longer available. Therefore the genealogies were considered to be exact historical sources. From today's viewpoint, it is clear that the redaction of genealogies often shows great "fluidity." In these cases, the deviations have a political function, such as excluding a particular group of people or a "line" that does not fit into the political calculations.

The formal insertion of genealogical information into larger "narrative contexts" (royal inscriptions or king lists) shows that genealogies never serve to connect smaller narrative elements or constitute the structure of a story. Rather, genealogies seem to have been added to existing texts. Genealogical information is furnished only when it serves the purpose of the text's redaction. In the material analyzed by Wilson, no women are named. In view of this background, it is indeed remarkable that the figures of women play an important role in the *biblical* representation of history and also in the genealogical system of the Torah, as will be shown. Women appear, clearly profiled,

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39. See Wilson, *Genealogy and History*, 115.
40. See ibid., 120. One Ugarit king list has been conserved (see *TUAT* 1:496–97).
41. See Wilson, *Genealogy and History*, 132.

in the foreground, as in the historical representations of ancient Egypt and the ancient Near East.

2.3. Greece

Paula Philippson, in her study of the Greek myths, formulates a basic and very useful definition of genealogy as a historical representation:

> The original form in which the relation between the past, the present, and the future can be experienced as a unity in an obvious way is the generation (γένος). It represents simultaneously the tie of the ancestors with the living and future descendants and the connection, in the present, of mutually related living members. Hence, the *genos* assembles into *one unity* the multitude of the members in both the length and width of a temporal succession. This unity is determined by *one fact*—from the viewpoint of the recognizing subject: *conception*, which belongs to the original notion of *genos*, that the first ancestor continues to live in all the descendants. The original being that inhabits the ancestor is in itself timeless; it does not expire at the death of the ancestor but presents itself in his descendants, through the succession of time, in constantly new modifications. The form in which the *genos* comes to be represented is *genealogy*.[42]

This statement is made first in respect to Hesiod's *Theogony*, but it can certainly be generalized. This is what leads Wolfgang Speyer to write in his article "Genealogie" in *RAC*:

In all the peoples of the Mediterranean region, genealogy was first the report of succeeding generations of humans, gods, or divine beings proceeding from a holy original power. Given this, the conception of the genealogy is most closely related to the "mythical idea of origin." … Hence, genealogy may possibly represent the first attempt to create a scientific and systematic naming structure. With the help of genealogy, people understood themselves and the visible world as products of an endless number of generations and thus referred the multiplicity of things and beings back to the divine One, the source of generation.[43]

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42. Paula Philippson, *Untersuchungen über den griechischen Mythos* (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1944), 7.

43. Wolfgang Speyer, "Genealogie," *RAC* 9:1146, 1148. For a summarizing global view of the phenomenon "genealogy," above all in the Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman cultures, see especially Jonathan M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); with special consideration of Homer and Hesiod, see, among others, Deborah Rae Davies, "Genealogy and Catalogue: Thematic Relevance and Nar-

The interest in these genealogies was probably immense in ancient Greece.[44]

The *Catalogue of Women* (Γυναικῶν Κατάλογος), an anonymous continuation of the *Theogony* by Hesiod of Ascra (ca. 700 B.C.E.), should be mentioned as a concrete example of a genealogical representation of history.[45] According to Martina Hirschberger, this work was probably written between 630 and 590 B.C.E.[46] The catalogue contains comprehensive genealogies that cover the entire heroic age and are interspersed by numerous narrative episodes and comments.[47]

> The *Catalogue of Women* offers … a synthesis of genealogies of various regions, divided into five family trees that cover the entire heroic age, from Prometheus and the flood to the fall of the heroic race and the separation of the gods and the humans.[48]

The genealogies and narratives are incorporated into this frame, along with the further elaboration of totally independent epic cycles. The beginning already presents a clear connection with the *Theogony*: "The connection the catalogue establishes between goddesses and mortals in the *Theogony* (963–1018) concludes with the connection of gods with moral women, that is, of the

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rative Elaboration in Homer and Hesiod" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1992). For a series of other examples from the Greco-Roman cultural milieu, in relation with Jesus' genealogies, see Rodney T. Hood, "The Genealogies of Jesus," in *Early Christian Origins: Studies in Honor of Harold R. Willoughby* (ed. Allen Wikgren; Chicago: Quadrangle, 1961), 1–15. On examples from the Greek, Egyptian, and Persian cultures, in relation with the genealogies in 1 Chronicles, see Manfred Oeming, *Das wahre Israel: Die "genealogische Vorhalle" 1 Chronik 1–9* (BWANT 128; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1990), 23–36.

44. Examples are found in Martina Hirschberger, *Gynaikōn Katalogos und Megalai Ēhoiai: Ein Kommentar zu den Fragmenten zweier hesiodeischer Epen* (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 198; München: Saur, 2004), 63–70.

45. See Van Seters, *Prologue to History*, 177. Likewise, see the new study by Hirschberger, *Gynaikōn Katalogos*, as well as Richard Hunter, ed., *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Constructions and Reconstructions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

46. See Hirschberger, *Gynaikōn Katalogos*, 49.

47. See Martin L. West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Its Nature, Structure, and Origin* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 3. West also provides many sketches of stemmata (genealogical tables) that systemize the relationships of descent (173–82). For the discussion concerning the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, see Richard S. Hess, "The Genealogies of Genesis 1–11 and Comparative Literature," *Bib* 70 (1989): 251–53.

48. Hirschberger, *Gynaikōn Katalogos*, 67–68. For the contents, see the summary at 32–38.

Gynaikōn Katalogos.[49] This also explains the title and the subject of this work: its intention is to praise τὸ γυναικῶν φῦλον, "the race of women."[50] The women referred to are the most "outstanding" (ἄρισται), whose status is comparable to that of the heroes.[51] Thus, the catalogue can be called *heroogonia* in continuation of the *Theogony*.

The first fragment of the catalogue deals with "prehistory": Prometheus, as a son of the Titan Iapetos, constitutes the bond with Hesiod's *Theogony* and his *Erga*. With the story of the theft of fire, Prometheus represents the separation of the gods and the humans;[52] Deucalion, who survived the flood, belongs to this context. He has two daughters, Thyia and Pandora, as well as a son, Hellen. An entire collection of genealogies and stories starts with the son of Hellen, Aeolus, who has five daughters and seven sons. Complex connections of descent are mentioned, and the relationships between the daughters of humans and the gods, and also the apotheoses of women, are described. Alongside the Aeolians, the following four (shorter) family trees are named: the Inachus (i.e., the descendants of Io); the descendants of Callisto or Arcadians; the Atlanteans or "Children of the Pleiades"; and the Asopides. The end of the catalogue is most likely constituted by the wedding proposal to Helena and Zeus's plan: Tyndareus gives Helena in marriage to Menelaus; she gives birth to their daughter Hermione. After this, the epoch is broken off because Zeus puts an end to the heroic age and the sexual relationships between the gods and the humans.

The form of the representation with its two parts, the genealogy and the geography—that is, the portrayal of the lineage and of the local origin of the described people as the key to their identity—casts the style for early Greek historiography.[53] The genealogies are mostly segmented, grouped according to the lineage of siblings. The particular lineages are unimportant, since the catalogue is not intended to legitimate a dynastic line. Moreover, the gene-

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49. Ibid., 164.

50. In this context, the Greek term φῦλον shows a remarkable similarity, in respect to the spectrum of meanings, with the Hebrew term *toledot* (תולדות, see below).

51. See Hirschberger, *Gynaikōn Katalogos*, 165.

52. According to other traditions, Prometheus formed the humans from clay (e.g., Ovid, *Metam.* 1.82–87).

53. See Van Seters, *Prologue to History*, 90. Other examples for the genealogical epic are given in Hirschberger, *Gynaikōn Katalogos*, 51–63. On this subject, see also her special study of the influence of the *Gynaikōn Katalogos* on Hecataeus's work and on the Ionic *Historíē* in Martina Hirschberger, "Genealogie und Geographie: Der hesiodeische Gynaikōn Katalogos als Vorläufer von Hekataios und der ionischen *Historíē*," *Antike Naturwissenschaft und ihre Rezeption* 14 (2004): 7–24. For a text edition, see Robert L. Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), vol. 1.

alogies run through persons of both sexes, so that there are patrilineages as well as matrilineages. The endogamy between second- or third-degree relatives is quite frequent. From a formal point of view, expressions saying that the husband takes his wife home with horses and wagon point to virilocality (the woman lives in her father's house or in that of her husband). Uxorilocal marriages (where the man moves into the woman's home) are rare. When a child is born, normally both parents are mentioned, but from time to time there are purely patrilineal formulations (which, on the other hand, are very common in the Bible) such as "descending from him" or "he engendered." The choice of representing the patrilineal or matrilineal descent probably depends on considerations relative to narrative techniques. A clear insistence on the masculine lineage, as in the ancient Near Eastern and ancient Egyptian genealogical representations of history (king lists, etc.) is not found here. In spite of the stereotyped roles common in antiquity, the emphasis is evenly distributed; women are far more often clearly identified by their names; their contribution to the progression of the events is considerably more substantial and active. Furthermore, this concerns the heroic women of mythological prehistory; it is therefore impossible to draw conclusions about actual social facts and the concrete life of women in society, religion, and politics of Greek antiquity.

The epic genealogical representation is not intended to describe or legitimize the present situation but rather to depict the accomplishment of Zeus's plan in mythical prehistory.[54] Still, the *Gynaikōn Katalogos* also has a supertemporal message, which M. Hirschberger recapitulates: "In it genealogies and stories of mutually related landscapes are found and placed in the context of the heroic age. Through these ties between different local traditions, the *Catalogue* shows a Pan-Hellenic organization.[55] Thus, for example, in the meandering paths of the descendants of Io, who fled to Egypt due to Heras's jealously, two lineages lead back to Greece: from Io descend Phoenix, the eponym of the Phoenicians (and the father of Europa), as well as Danaus, the eponym of the Greeks, and Aegyptus, the eponym of the Egyptians. This serves simultaneously to refute the pretension of the Egyptians, who claim to be the first existing humans (Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.2.1), and to make the Egyptians, with their fascinating ancient culture, into a people of brothers of the Greeks. Hence, this shows a contemporary function, which probably also had political motives, of the genealogical form of historical representation. At the same time, this is an etiological construction of mythical prehistory. Through the proximity and the relationship between the gods and the humans during

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54. See Hirschberger, *Gynaikōn Katalogos*, 65–67.
55. Ibid., 69.

the heroic age, the world is organized: after Zeus puts an end to this age, the world is as it is.

A similar combination of narratives and genealogical lists is found in the *Megalai Ēhoiai*, a work also attributed to Hesiod (ca. sixth century). The title is explained by the formula that serves to introduce a story or a genealogy, which also appears in the *Catalogue*: ἠ οἵη, "or a (woman) like…." Originally the formula made it possible, probably in the improvised oral epics, to pass from one story about women to the next.[56] This formula is the structuring principle of the *Megalai Ēhoiai*, which uses it to connect otherwise very dissimilar stories. In the *Catalogue*, on the contrary, the genealogies, not the formula, constitute the organizing and structuring element. The epics of the *Megalai Ēhoiai* transmit, among other things, genealogies of place eponyms, that is, the lineages of historical heroic founding figures of places and cities (e.g., Mycenae or Epidaurus).[57] Both works have only been preserved in a very fragmentary form.

The explanation of the world through the narration of the beginning—the organization of the universe through the elucidation of origins and sociopolitical relations in the form of intelligible genealogical relations—contains key notions that allow us to understand the functions of the genealogical representation of history. Essentially, these aspects also apply to the biblical representation of history expressed in the form of genealogies. This will now be considered more closely with regard to the Torah.

3. Genealogy as Means of Representation of History in the Torah

3.1. Preliminary Remarks concerning Content and Methodology

In the Torah, roughly three areas of historical representation can be distinguished. (1) The genealogical form of presentation constitutes the basic structure of Genesis in its final form and shapes the paradigm of the family history. The contacts and relationships are represented as family relations and descent lines. (2) The narratives concerning the experiences of the people of Israel, beginning with the departure from Egypt until the arrival in the steppes of Moab (Exodus to Numbers) are represented under the paradigm of proximity and distance relative to its God, YHWH, in which the gift of divine instruction and its accomplishment by the people are the main categories. (3) In Moses' discourses, as recapitulations of history and of divine instruction

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56. Ibid., 30.
57. Ibid., 81–86.

(Deuteronomy), the narrated time is contracted on the last day of Moses' life, the contents are stylized as Moses' farewell discourses, and, with the account of his death, the conclusion of the revelation of divine instruction (Torah) is documented and sealed.

Given this, a study of genealogy as a means of representing history in the Torah can be limited essentially to Genesis. Another restriction can be made regarding the question of the diachronic analysis of the text: the underlying genealogical structure of Genesis is closely connected to the formation of the book (*Buchwerdung*) through the elaborated material. In the words of Naomi Steinberg, it can be said that "Genesis is a book whose plot is genealogy."[58] According to a large consensus, the different cycles concerning the main figures were long transmitted independently from one another. This can also be recognized in the fact that the stories can be understood and told separately. The different traditions and cycles are connected by means of a genealogical system that thus assembled them into a single book. So, the genealogical representation of history is a phenomenon at the level of the final text and is best recognized from the reader's viewpoint. Even if there is clearly a conscious conception behind the genealogical system, it would be impossible (in any reasonable scientific attempt) to describe the personalities of the authors and their intentions without resorting to speculation. To further the understanding of the phenomenon of the genealogical representation of history, it has proven fruitful to adopt a reader-oriented and text-centered approach.[59]

Readings of Genesis from the viewpoint of the genealogies show that the first book of the Bible is a firmly structured and solidly built literary work that can be read as a whole. The genealogical information constructs systems—the *toledot* system and the genealogical system—that form the supporting backbone of the book. Alongside formal descriptions of the linguistic means of representation, our intention is to grasp the interconnection of the genealogical and narrative passages, as well as the development of the systems.

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58. Naomi Steinberg, "The Genealogical Framework of the Family Stories in Genesis," *Semeia* 46 (1989): 41.

59. The attempt to come close to historical figures in the texts of Genesis is an absolutely hopeless endeavor. As Irmtraud Fischer indicates, the texts "are not to be misunderstood as biographies of persons who lived at that time; rather, the narratives seek to present a theologically interpreted history of the beginnings of the people of Israel" ("Sara als Gründerin des Volkes Israel: Zur Befreiung einer aus männlichem Blick gezeichneten Erzählfigur aus dem Korsett des gender-bias in der Exegese," in *Sara lacht: Eine Erzmutter und ihre Geschichte* [ed. Rainer Kampling; Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004], 12).

3.2. The Formal Structuring of the Genealogical Information

A fundamental distinction exists between the segmented and linear genealogies. In the linear genealogies, each genealogical line runs through only one ancestor to the next generation (grandfather, father, son, grandson). In the segmented genealogies, there is one ancestor with several descendants and thus more than one genealogical line (father, several sons, who in turn have several sons).[60]

The existing material relative to the genealogical information in Genesis can be systemized into four elementary types:[61]

Abbreviation	Hebrew	Translation	Remark
toledot-type	תולדות	"succession of generations"	
yalad-type	ילד active	"bear, engender"	differentiated according to the verb formation, the verbal root (G/H), and the gender
	ילד passive + ־ל	" X was born to Y"	differentiated according to the verb formation and verbal root (N/D pass)
ben-type	אב/אם (+ היה)	"father, mother"	*ben/em*- or *ben/ab*-type
	בן/בת (+ היה)	"son, daughter"	*ben/bat*- or *ben*-type
sibling-type	אח/אחות	"brother, sister"	

The important aspect here is how the genealogical relation is indicated.

(1) In the *toledot*-type, the Hebrew word *toledot* is used, which the NRSV usually translates as "the descendants of." However, this word has a wide range of meanings. Among other things, *toledot*, in the formula *toledot* NN, can also

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60. See Thomas Hieke, "Genealogien," www.WiBiLex.de (2007); online: http://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/nc/wibilex/das-bibellexikon/details/quelle/WIBI/zeichen/g/referenz/19244/cache/b943f966470254a017db643207e3368f/; section 1.3.

61. See Thomas Hieke, *Die Genealogien der Genesis* (Herders Biblische Studien 39; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2003), 28–34.

signify the history of NN's descendants. Behind this word lies the root *yld* (*yalad*), which can mean, depending on the subject's gender, not only "engender" but also "bear."

(2) The second type, named in respect to this root the *yalad*-type, is characterized by the use of the verb *yalad*: the genealogical relation is hence expressed verbally in such a way that a man has *engendered* (grammatical masculine = *yalad*-type masc.) someone (most often his son, more rarely his daughter), whereas a woman has *born* (grammatical feminine = *yalad*-type fem.) someone (her son, her daughter). There is also a passive form used for men: X *was born* to Y.

(3) Unlike the second type, the third type is constructed *nominally*, that is, not with the verb *yalad* but with the nouns "father, mother, son, daughter." Most frequently the so-called filiation is featured; in other words, someone is presented as "the son of NN." This can be used to construct long chains. "Son" in Hebrew is *ben*, so this type is designated the *ben*-type.
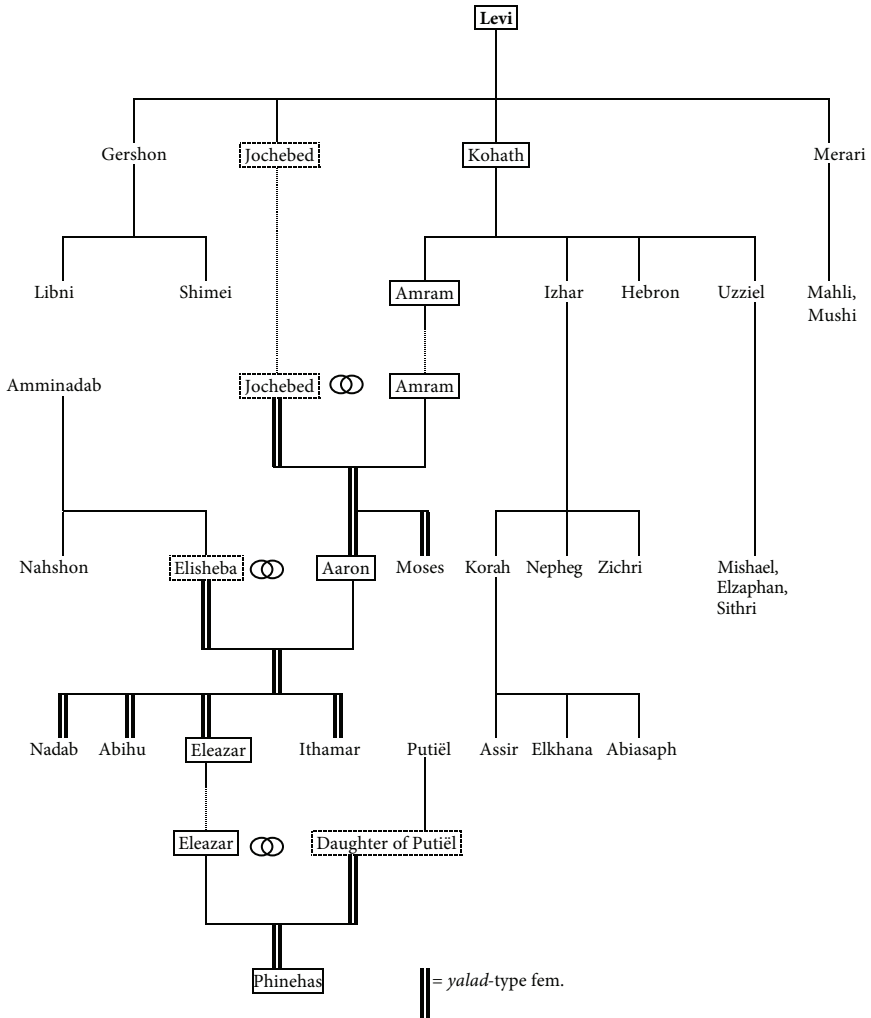
(4) Type 4 is also constructed nominally, but here the relationships are not between generations, as in the *ben*-type, but within a same generation, between brothers and sisters. Hence the designation sibling-type.

An analysis of the *ben*-type and the *yalad*-type leads to the following observation: the *ben*-type is the more general indication and is thus used in a less specific way than the *yalad*-type. The verbal *yalad*-type is introduced in order to focus further on the genealogical system: in a text that combines segmented and linear genealogies, the *yalad*-type most often characterizes the *continuous* genealogical line. An example of such a complex text is found, for instance, in Exod 6:16–25. The genealogy of Levi is, first of all, segmented into three sons and one daughter, then the lines converge again. The *yalad*-type is used to mark the line that carries the focus. Both the use of the *yalad*-type fem. and the intensifying indication of the names of wives mark the most significant line: precisely the line leading to Aaron and Phinehas (as cipher for the priesthood).[62]

The elementary types mark and identify the genealogical information. Thus, it becomes possible to emphasize bonds and to connect the texts with one another. In the process of the reading, the genealogical system of Genesis, which determines its coherence, becomes visible. At the same time, the elementary types make it possible to prolong the genealogical system beyond the book of Genesis; the most important passages are Exod 6:14–25 and Num 3:1–4, as well as Ruth 4:18–22. Furthermore, in these continuations of the

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62. See ibid., 216.

system, yet another focus and precision arise: through Exod 6 and Num 3 to the Aaronic priesthood, and through Ruth 4 to the Davidic monarchy.[63]

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                              ┌──────┐
                              │ Levi │
                              └──────┘
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    ┌──────────────┬─────────────┴─────────────┬────────────────────┐
 Gershon      ┌·········┐                   ┌────────┐            Merari
              ┊Jochebed ┊                   │ Kohath │
              └·········┘                   └────────┘
    ┌─────────┴──────┐     ┌────────────┬────┴────┬─────────┬──────────┐
  Libni          Shimei   ┌───────┐   Izhar    Hebron    Uzziel    Mahli,
                          │ Amram │                                 Mushi
                          └───────┘
              ┌·········┐             ┌───────┐
 Amminadab    ┊Jochebed ┊  ⬭⬭        │ Amram │
              └·········┘             └───────┘
    │              ‖                    │       ‖
    │          ┌·········┐  ┌───────┐  Moses  Korah  Nepheg  Zichri    Mishael,
 Nahshon       ┊Elisheba ┊ ⬭⬭ │ Aaron │                                Elzaphan,
               └·········┘    └───────┘                                Sithri
                 ‖                ‖
   ┌────┬─────┬──┴────┬──────────┐
   ‖    ‖     ‖       ‖
 Nadab Abihu ┌───────┐ Ithamar  Putiël   Assir  Elkhana  Abiasaph
             │Eleazar│
             └───────┘
              ┌───────┐         ┌·················┐
              │Eleazar│  ⬭⬭    ┊Daughter of Putiël┊
              └───────┘         └·················┘
                 │        ‖
              ┌────────┐
              │Phinehas│    ‖ = yalad-type fem.
              └────────┘
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3.3. The Interconnections of the Narrative Passages with the Genealogical System

The genealogical system is the chain from which the pearls of the narratives

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63. See ibid., 338.

are suspended.[64] Often these narratives are also "pearls" in the metaphorical sense, since they can be understood as complete, independent units.[65] The actual connection of these units is provided *only* by the chief protagonists, especially through the dominant "fathers." Its coherence, in turn, is constituted *only* by the genealogical system.

The importance of the linguistic form of the genealogical system shows itself with the figure of Isaac: he does not belong to any genealogy in the strict sense; that is, he does not appear in any of the lists or enumerations in Genesis. His genealogical bonding occurs "only" through a genealogical narrative (Gen 21:1–8). Nevertheless, Isaac constitutes an important element in the *toledot*-system. Therefore, at the beginning of his *toledot*, the expression "Abraham engendered [הוֹלִיד] Isaac" is analogously repeated (Gen 25:19). With the particular *yalad*-type conjunction suffix masculine *hiphil* used here, a formal analogy with the genealogies in Gen 5 and 11 [וַיּוֹלֶד,וַיֹּהוֹלִיד], and notably with 11:27, "Terah engendered [הוֹלִיד] Abra(ha)m, Nahor, and Haran," occurs that introduces Isaac into the main line. The expression in Gen 25:19, which at first sight gives the impression of being a redundant gloss, is actually a necessary element in the chain for the construction of the genealogical system through the linguistic form of the elementary types.

If the true narrative coherence between each of the protagonists is thus provided by the family relationship, in the form of succeeding generations, this genealogical system is the decisive carrier of the aspects essential for the story and the theological message it transmits: the *blessing* and the *promises* of offspring and of a land.[66] The blessing and the promises are briefly expressed in Gen 12:1–3 and later reappear in diverse forms—tightly intertwined with the genealogical system. In this context, the blessing is always the same blessing that God gave at the creation. On the one hand, this is genealogically transmitted since the beginning (Gen 5:1–3) and is passed from one generation to another; on the other hand, however, it constantly needs God's intervention in order to be actualized and prolonged. In this, God shows that he

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64. For the following presentation, see ibid., 339–43.

65. From the diachronic approach, this observation is used in particular in the so-called "hypothesis of narrative cycles," which departs from original thematically separated narrative cycles, and above all those relative to the main figures of the Pentateuch (Abraham, Jacob), each of which has its own history of development.

66. The *blessing* is a particular feature with respect to the promises of offspring and of a land. This also manifests itself in the fact that the blessing is present since the beginning of the creation (Gen 1). The fact that the blessing is not a part of the promises is shown by, among others, Rolf Rendtorff, *Das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977), 56.

is not moved by human facts and statutes (right of the firstborn) but rather proves—precisely in the numerous elections of sons born later (Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim…)—to act as a God who freely and autonomously bestows his gifts. The *transmission* of the blessing, which God *actualizes*, is rooted in genealogy: first in the human lineage reaching from Adam to Noah and Terah, then accorded again personally to Abraham and his offspring (Gen 12). It is then transmitted, from Abraham's offspring, within the family until the twelve sons of Jacob/ Israel and finally directed to Levi, Aaron, and the priests, who in Num 6:22–27 receive the function of transmitting the blessing and whose existence is once again established on a genealogical basis.

The transmission of the numerous *offspring* through the genealogical system seems banal, yet precisely the concrete accomplishment of the promise of offspring entails considerable difficulties. Before the background of the regularly proceeding genealogies in Gen 5 and 11, the childlessness of Abraham and Sarah[67] is experienced as far more critical and dangerous: just when the progeny is promised, there is no male descendant (as yet). Along with sterility and childlessness, the early death of male descendants (Er and Onan, in Gen 38) or the deathly danger menacing male offspring (Ishmael in Gen 21; Isaac in Gen 22; Jacob's sons in Gen 42–43) further jeopardize the continuation of the genealogical system. It is God's continuous free, autonomous, unmerited intervention, which cannot be manipulated, that saves the chain of the generations. Thus, it is shown, through the perils and salvation of the genealogical system, that children are a promise made by God, who grants them as a gift. This idea is formulated with precision from a theological point of view in the short quarrel between Jacob and Rachel (Gen 30:1–2). God is the one who denies the fruit of the womb or opens the mother's womb (Gen 29:31)—this is the text's message. Finally, the genealogical system indeed does continue, in such a way that the promise of numerous offspring and of a great people is fulfilled in the transition from Genesis to Exodus, where Exod 1:7 suggests the fulfillment of the promise.

The aspect still missing from the book of Exodus and the Pentateuch as a whole is the fulfillment of the promise of the *land*. However, this aspect is also connected, in Genesis, with the genealogical system. From Adam to Jacob, only *one* main line is emphasized; that is, in each generation *one* son bears the focus and, consequently, the blessing and the promises of offspring and of the land. Jacob's twelve sons are the first heirs with equal rights. Although

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67. Abraham and Sarah are first called Abram and Sarai; their names are changed in Gen 17:5, 15 by an act of God's sovereignty. For practical reasons, and with the exception of biblical quotations, the forms Abraham and Sarah will henceforth be used.

a higher or lower order is still indicated through the mothers and the for-
mulations of the blessings (Gen 49), no tribe is decisively excluded from the
promises. In fact, the lateral lines mentioned in the genealogical system of
Genesis are excluded. This separation of lateral lines simultaneously implies
that the Promised Land, where the ancestors still live as foreigners (e.g., Gen
26:3; 37:1), is free from inheritance claims. The text insists in several ways that
the collateral lines settle *outside* the land (Gen 13:1–13: Lot; 21:21: Ishmael;
25:6: the sons of Keturah; 36:6–7: Esau). In the conception of the genealogical
system, the land is therefore reserved for Jacob's descendants. This narrative
ideal is made for outside the Torah, in the equally idealistic conception of the
so-called "conquest" of the land.

   Although the names in the genealogies are virtually all masculine, this
does not mean that the *women* were invisible or insignificant. Indeed, the
genealogical system in Genesis manifests the eminently important role of the
women—even if, or precisely because, the system has a *patrilineal* structure.
It depends on the women, whether they bear the hoped-for masculine prog-
eny. Through this, their personal place is defined, but also, lastly, that of the
patriarch, who—or whose lineage—is endangered by the absence of offspring
(Abraham, Judah). When such a peril threatens a genealogical line, most
often the women solve the problems though their creative initiatives (Sarah,
Hagar, the daughters of Lot, Rebekah, Rachel, Tamar, Ruth). In these situa-
tions, it is not always easy to see clearly the role that God plays; sometimes his
approval is only recognized after the fact, when the male child who has been
born becomes the blessing-bearer (examples are Rebekah and Jacob, Tamar
and Perez). Another essential function of the women is the differentiation of
the descendants (e.g., Adah and Zillah in Gen 4:19–24). In Abraham's case,
Sarah is the chief wife who gives birth to the decisive offspring; in the case of
Jacob's sons, the birth mother and her position with respect to Jacob decides
the sons' order of rank. Finally, the origin of the women is also decisive for
the election, or rejection, of each descendant in the genealogical system. The
aim is an endogamous marriage within the same extended family group: the
patriarchs contract endogamous marriages (vast accounts with Isaac, Gen
24, and Jacob, Gen 27:46; 28:1, thematic; see also Tob 4:12–13). Exogamous
marital unions with "foreign" women (outside of one's own family, tribe, or
people) lead to rejection (explicit with Esau). It is hard not to notice that,
behind this recurrent theme, there is a pragmatic message in the text indicat-
ing that, in the choice of a marriage partner, one's own genealogical identity
must be kept. In this, the world of the postexilic period behind the text is
perceptible. This paradigmatic stylization of a historical image of the ideal
of the people's origin, as construed in Genesis, reveals the interweaving of
these texts with the sociohistorical context of a particular time. The strong

tendency in the postexilic community to protect its own identity by avoiding mixed marriages and to strengthen it through endogamous marital unions will be discussed later.

3.4. Interweaving and Precision of the Genealogical System in the Context of the Christian Bible

The appearance of specific elementary types in the genealogical system of Genesis outside of this book, on the one hand, creates a contextual incorporation in the Old Testament, or, better, of the entire Bible; on the other hand, it builds a bridge between the biblical genealogies, with the people and institutions they accentuate and the "origins"—in the widest sense—conceived in the book of Genesis.

The genealogical system has two kinds of furrows: the lineage passing through Judah, Perez, and the genealogy in Ruth 4:18–22 to David and, hence, into the dynastic *monarchy*; and the lineage running through Levi, Aaron, and the Levi-genealogy in Exod 6 (cf. Num 3) to Phinehas that founds the inherited Aaronic *priesthood*. The centering on "Judah" and "Levi" as ciphers for the monarchy and for the priesthood is confirmed in the reception of the genealogical system in 1 Chr 1–9, by the preeminent position afforded to Judah and the central place of Levi. The history of the extrabiblical reception (esp. in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and in the literature of Qumran) shows that these two lineages were prolonged in early Judaism and, for example, in Qumran, oriented toward two eschatological expectations: a royal and a priestly Messiah.[68] Christianity adopts this genealogical conception by using genealogies to introduce Jesus into the biblical system: Matt 1:1 with the expression Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ["Book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ"] constitutes a link precisely with Gen 2:4 LXX and Gen 5:1 and so to central points of the genealogical *toledot*-system,[69] adopting even the linguistic form (now in Greek).

The conceptual root of the priesthood (in early Judaism) and of the different notions of the Messiah, and also the biblical foundation of Christology, reach back to the book of Genesis. Consequently, they are implanted in the origins of the people of Israel, in the beginnings of humanity, and in the creation itself. Thus it becomes clear that the book of Genesis lays the foundation

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68. See Hieke, *Die Genealogien der Genesis*, 270-277.

69. See Thomas Hieke, "BIBLOS GENESEOS: Matthäus 1,1 vom Buch Genesis her gelesen," in *The Biblical Canons* (ed. Henk Jan de Jonge and Jean-Marie Auwers; BETL 163; Leuven: University Press, 2003), 635–49; Martin Stowasser, "Die Genealogien Jesu im Evangelium des Matthäus und des Lukas," in Fitzenreiter, *Genealogie*, 183–96.

stone—in the truest sense of the word "genesis"—of concepts that are essential for the entire Bible. From the genealogical viewpoint alone, in this respect, the priesthood, the monarchy, and the messianic hopes must be mentioned, as well as the religious and ethnic identity of Judaism and, for Christianity, Christology, without implying completeness. Hence, retrospectively, Genesis has considerable conceptual importance in the canonical perspective as *the first book of the Bible*.[70]

4. The Role of the Women in the Genealogical System

4.1. The Findings in the Book of Genesis and in Related Passages

The genealogical system of the book of Genesis appears, at first sight, to be a purely masculine affair. The genealogical line is extended from father to son. However, the patrilinearity must not keep us from seeing that, at crucial points and in crises, the women in Genesis and beyond the book play a decisive role.[71] Karin Friis Plum formulates this in the following manner: "It may be said that the women enter the stage whenever something special happens—as the decisive crossroads of those in which the social relations are reflected."[72] This observation is not new (although it is not particularly old either). For this reason, the personalities and the roles of the women will be analyzed more closely, above all with respect to the genealogical system and their function and tasks.

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70. On Genesis as the opening of the Torah, see Matthias Millard, *Die Genesis als Eröffnung der Tora: Kompositions- und auslegungsgeschichtliche Annäherungen an das erste Buch Mose* (WMANT 90; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2001).

71. Thanks to Irmtraud Fischer, who in numerous studies has time and again shown that, in a gender-fair interpretation of Genesis, it is not possible to speak only of stories of the fathers and exclusively consider the texts about men as high theology, while trivializing the texts concerning women as romantic. The women are the foundresses of Israel, just as the men are the founders; their actions, like those of the men, reflect the history of the People. See, among others, Irmtraud Fischer, *Die Erzeltern Israels: Feministisch-theologische Studien zu Genesis 12–36* (BZAW 222; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994); eadem, "Zu einer genderfairen Interpretation der Erzeltern-Erzählungen," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History* (ed. André Wénin; BETL 155; Leuven: University Press, 2001), 135–52; eadem, "Das Geschlecht als exegetisches Kriterium: Zu einer gender-fairen Interpretation der Erzeltern-Erzählungen," *CPB* 116 (2003): 2–9.

72. Karin Friis Plum, "Genealogy as Theology," *SJOT* 1 (1989): 73.

4.1.1. Mothers of the Cultural Achievements (Gen 4:17–24)

In Gen 4:17–24, Cain's wife remains unnamed, and likewise in the following linear genealogies only the names of men appear. The exception to this is the last member, Lamech, whose wives are both named: Adah and Zillah. They are the mothers of those who are presented as the founders of the human cultural achievements. This shows that the women had an essential function: they appear in places that require *differentiation*. The mention of women's names slows down the linear flow of the generations and indicates cultural progress and differentiation of humanity. Furthermore, a certain role model imposes itself in this passage: the women, with Eve as the prototype, are the mothers of all the living (Gen 3:20), who bring forth "life" in all its facets (and, hence, also mothers of all cultural achievements); the men, on the other hand, are associated with violence and death, just like Tubalcain, the armorer, and Lamech, who boastfully overflows with violent revenge. This violence necessitates a new beginning after the flood.

4.1.2 A New Beginning with Adam's Wife (Gen 4:25; 5:3)

In Gen 4:25, when Seth is born, Adam's wife is evoked without being named. This needs to be emphasized because, at the beginning of the strictly linear genealogy in Gen 5:3, no women are mentioned. Accordingly, Gen 4:25–26 also, in this sense, completes 5:1–3 (i.e., the content of 5:1–3 can suppose 4:25–26). The role of Adam's wife in 4:25 receives its significance only upon second consideration and with respect to the genealogical system: 4:25–26 (and then also 5:1-3) constitutes the new beginning of humanity after the fratricide and flight of Cain (and of his offspring). Likewise, 4:25–26 skips the facts related in 4:1–24 and refers back to the primeval history. However, according to both Gen 1 and 2, humanity's beginning always occurs through both a man *and* a woman. Therefore, it is important that Adam's wife be named when Seth is born—and Gen 5:3 also implies the presence of a woman. Since, in Gen 5, a patrilineal genealogy is presented, the woman in 5:3 is not named, due to the text's genre. However, this deficiency is made up for by the naming and functional incorporation of Adam's wife four verses earlier, in 4:25.

According to Gen 5:3, the patrilineal genealogy, typical of this genre, can be continued. In Gen 5; 10; and 11:10–26, no women are named, but with the expression "engendered sons *and daughters*," naturally, they are present. It is clear that the absolute namelessness of the women was already shocking for the book of Jubilees in its reception of Genesis; that is, it represented an open

question. This is why Jubilees develops the role of the women and, along with their names, also expounds their roles for the narrative.[73]

4.1.3. Endogamy and Sterility (Gen 11:27–32)

An important turning point in both the genealogical system and the whole of the construction of the book of Genesis is Gen 11:27–32. Here women appear who have already been named.[74] In contrast to Gen 20:12, the fact that it is not mentioned that Sarah is Terah's daughter in this passage leaves an unresolved problem that is not expressed in the case of Nahor, Abraham's brother: precisely the question of the "proper" (= legitimate) marital union. With respect to Nahor, it is made clear that he marries within the family (endogamy) by marrying his collateral cousin, Milcah, the daughter of his father's brother. Sarah's origin, on the other hand, remains unclear; her genealogical origin is revealed later, in Gen 20:12. Another, even more evident point of tension is Sarah's barrenness, which places the genealogical system before a decisive problem.

4.1.4. The Problem of the Barrenness of the Female Ancestors

Another important function of the women in the genealogical system appears when the line of the promise is in danger of ending due to their barrenness. They (the women) take the *initiative* when extraordinary circumstances demand extraordinary resolutions. This becomes clear in the cases of Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, Tamar, Ruth, and, naturally, also in the case of Lot's daughters in Gen 19:30–38, whose names are not known. The women take the initiative in order to avert the menacing extinction of the patrilineal (!) genealogical line[75] and simultaneously to reinforce their own position. This is more than evident in Rachel's dramatic exclamation to Jacob: "Give me children, or I shall

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73. See the more detailed study of Betsy Halpern Amaru, "The First Woman, Wives, and Mothers in Jubilees," *JBL* 113 (1994): 622.

74. In the preceding genealogy, Gen 11:10–26, in fact, only masculine names appear, although it is emphasized that each man "engendered sons *and daughters*." So, logically, Terah's genealogy names four men and three women: Abraham, Nahor, Haran, Lot and Sarah, Milcah, Iscah. See Irmtraud Fischer, "Genesis 12–50: Die Ursprungsgeschichte Israels als Frauengeschichte," in *Kompendium Feministische Bibelauslegung* (ed. Luise Schottroff and Marie-Theres Wacker; 2nd ed.; Gütersloh: Kaiser/Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1999), 13.

75. Another analogy is found in the initiative of Isis, who reconstitutes her dismembered brother Osiris, so that he and she can engender their son Horus and thus continue the masculine lineage (see above, on Egypt).

die!" (Gen 30:1). Within the patrilineal system, the women develop creative initiatives for self-assertion and the assurance of their social position.[76] The action of the women is a personal human initiative, not always in conformity with God's plan. Sarah's initiative with Hagar as the substitute mother, just as the behavior of Lot's daughters, is later rejected to a certain extent, in the course of the story: although Ishmael received the promises, he is expelled from the story. Moab and Benammi, ancestors of the peoples hostile to Israel, are discredited from the very beginning because of the incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughters. On the contrary, in the cases of Leah and Rachel, Tamar and Ruth, the central lineage of the promises continues, thanks to the initiative of these women, which is justified by a happy outcome.

4.1.5 But Bethuel Begat Rebekah (Gen 22:20–24; 24)

In Gen 22:20–24, the wives of Nahor, Abraham's brother, are explicitly named. Milcah and Iscah are, in the sense of a narrative equilibrium, the pendants of Sarah and Hagar. Functionally, these verses lead to Rebekah, Isaac's later wife, as well as to the number of sons: twelve, which Ishmael receives in the next generation. Only subsequently does this become the people of Israel in the third generation, with Jacob. This focus on Rebekah is clearly emphasized by a curious formulation: "But Bethuel begat Rebekah" (Gen 22:23). Irmtraud Fischer notes, "This is the only time in the story of the ancestors that it is said that a daughter was begat. Notices of procreation normally are only given for sons."[77] Thus, attention is called to Abraham and also to Rebekah, present in the preceding plotline, by the language of the genealogies.

Genesis 24 then relates in detail Isaac's search for a bride and Rebekah's courageous decision.[78] The chapter very subtly deals with the problematic of exogamous and endogamous marriages. Isaac's careful search for the right

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76. See Fischer, *Die Erzeltern Israels*, 35, 99; Melissa Jackson, "Lot's Daughters and Tamar as Tricksters and the Patriarchal Narratives as Feminist Theology," *JSOT* 98 (2002): 33–35. See a very positive evaluation of Tamar's action, for example, by Benno Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora: Genesis* (Berlin: Schocken, 1934), 722–23.

77. Irmtraud Fischer, *Gottesstreiterinnen: Biblische Erzählungen über die Anfänge Israels* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), 72; see also Fischer, *Die Erzeltern Israels*, 62.

78. On this, see Sharon P. Jeansonne, "Images of Rebekah: From Modern Interpretations to Biblical Portrayal," *BR* 34 (1989): 33, 46–47; then eadem, *The Women of Genesis: From Sarah to Potiphar's Wife* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990). For the reconstruction of the milieu of life behind Gen 24, see Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, "Von welcher sozialen Wirklichkeit erzählt Gen 24?" *Protokolle zur Bibel* 7 (1998): 17–27; likewise eadem, "The Woman of Their Dreams: The Image of Rebekah in Genesis 24," in *The World of Genesis: Persons, Places, Perspectives* (ed. Philip R. Davies and David J. A. Clines; JSOTSup 257;

wife within his own family even calls for God's intervention in the form of a sign (24:14). This shows just how important the marital union with the "right" woman (especially from the endogamous perspective) is for the text. Genesis 24 also represents the ideal case of matchmaking and marriage contraction in the perspective of the Torah. The chapter simultaneously describes Rebekah's active role in the accomplishment of the divine plan of salvation: her decision allows the lineage of Abraham and Sarah to continue. Later on in the story, thanks to her action, the blessing is transmitted to the offspring chosen by God. Ultimately, she is the one, not Isaac, who makes the story advance (see below).

4.1.6. Farewell to Descendants From History (Gen 25:1–6, 12–18)

Genesis 25:1–6 evokes Abraham's third wife, Keturah, and in doing so once again shows the function of *differentiation* within Abraham's lineage. Abraham has many sons (eight in total), but *the* son, that is, the carrier of the line of promise, is defined by the *mother*: he is the only son of Sarah. The sons of Keturah are quickly enumerated in a list and distanced from the text's field of vision (25:6).

Isaac's brother, Ishmael, is dealt with in the same way as Keturah's sons, in that his lineage is also summed up in the form of a genealogy. A closer differentiation is not necessary, nor is any human initiative in a crisis. As this does not concern the problem of endogamy or exogamy, there is no need to evoke the women. The text hastily indicates Ishmael's offspring and then makes them into a "collateral lineage."

4.1.7. Ranking Offspring (Gen 27)

In the following course of the text, the couple Isaac and Rebekah is presented in great analogy with the parental couple, Abraham and Sarah. Although Rebekah is childless, like Sarah, this problem is solved much faster and does not require any human initiative from Rebekah. Her initiative in the ranking of the offspring only comes later when she incites Jacob to "lie" and induces him as the second-born son to steal his father's blessing intended for the firstborn (Gen 27).[79] Her actions disrupt their family life for a long time and prompt Jacob to flee to Haran. Rebekah disguises this flight with the necessity

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Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1998), 90–101; eadem, "Genesis 24—ein Mosaik aus Texten," in Wénin, *Studies in the Book of Genesis*, 521–32.

79. See Fischer, "Genesis 12–50," 18.

of finding the "right" wife for Jacob, that is, to introduce an endogamous marriage. Sharon P. Jeansonne presents her view of Rebekah as follows:

> The representation of Rebekah shows that women in Israel were viewed as persons who could make crucial decisions about their futures, whose prayers were acknowledged, who might know better than men what God designed, and who could appropriately take the steps necessary to support God's plans for the community.[80]

The rest of the story then makes clear "what God designed." Jacob's way is God's way. However, Rebekah was the one who decided who would be the heir in this generation, in the same way that Sarah settled the succession in the first generation by sending Ishmael and Hagar away (Gen 21)![81]

The opposite of Jacob—who flees to the east but, officially, is searching for a wife—is Esau; at his own risk and ostensibly against his parents' will, he entered into exogamous marriages (Gen 26:34–35). The narrative here explicitly evaluates and disqualifies Esau's behavior. Concerning this, Naomi Steinberg explains:

> Esau continues his father's lineage—but from outside the Israelite lineage— because he marries the "wrong" woman. … Esau married a woman outside the appropriate kinship boundaries. His wife was from the line of Ishmael, whose mother was not from within the patrilineage of Terah. This is clear. What distinguishes Esau from Jacob is the character of their marriages. Rachel and Leah are correct wives for a son of the Abrahamic lineage because they are part of the collateral patrilineage of Nahor, as is Rebekah herself. But neither Mahalath, nor any of Esau's other wives (Gen 26.34; 28.9), is part of this descent line; thus, Esau's marriage choices render him illegible for inclusion in the Terahite patrilineage.[82]

Genesis 28:8–9 is a subsequent tentative approach made by Esau to regain his parent's benevolence through a third, endogamous marriage.

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80. Jeansonne, "Images of Rebekah," 47.

81. See Irmtraud Fischer, "Den Frauen der Kochtopf—den Männern die hohe Politik? Zum Klischee der Geschlechterrollen in der Bibelauslegung am Beispiel der Erzeltern-Erzählungen," *CPB* 108 (1995): 136.

82. Naomi Steinberg, "Alliance or Descent? The Function of Marriage in Genesis," *JSOT* 51 (1991): 50. For critique of Steinberg's position, see R. Christopher Heard, *Dynamics of Diselection: Ambiguity in Genesis 12–36 and Ethnic Boundaries in Post-exilic Judah* (SemeiaSt 39; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 119–26.

4.1.8. The Construction of Jacob's House by Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah (Gen 29:31–30:24)

In Gen 29:31–30:24, it is evident that the women play the dominant role here. Leah and Rachel compete for the appropriation of their husband Jacob, whom they try to win over with masculine offspring (see 29:32, etc.). Thomas Meurer believes that the story in Gen 29:31–30:24 concerns "the existential challenge of the problem of barrenness against the background of the relationship between humans and God in the case of two feminine figures with a paradigmatic psychogram, which should be represented in an almost symbolic way."[83] From a theological point of view, it is worth noting the insistence upon the inaccessibility of the God who either grants or refuses the fruit of the womb, whose logic of action in favor of humans is not always immediately apparent, and the continuous experience of human contingency.[84] However, this does not as yet resolve the story completely, for the correlation with the context and the genealogical system of Genesis shows that the primary concern here is underlining the dominant and decisive participation of Jacob's wives in the construction of the "house of Israel:" Jacob's four wives are, as Irmtraud Fischer appropriately observes, the "foundresses of Israel."[85]

The male human conception—Jacob prefers Rachel and relegates Leah to the background—is reversed by a *divine initiative*: "When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb; but Rachel was barren" (Gen 29:31). In the course of the continuing competition, the question of the differentiation of Jacob's children arises, and the rank of the sons is a result of the rank of the mothers (the beloved wife versus the unloved wife and their respective servants). The order of the subsequent lists with the names of Jacob's twelve sons is always constructed with respect to their respective mothers. The aim of the enumeration is later shown by the perspective relative to the genealogical system formulated in Ruth 4:11. The people at the gate witness the juridical act of redemption accomplished by Boaz as well as the marriage of Boaz and Ruth and the formulation of the words of the blessing: "May the Lord make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel." Through the competition between the two wives, Leah and Rachel, the house of Israel is "constructed" as a differentiated people, or, as Karin R. Andriolo puts it:

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83. See Thomas Meurer, "Der Gebärwettstreit zwischen Lea und Rahel," *BN* 107/108 (2001): 102.

84. See ibid., 106–8; quote, 106.

85. Fischer, "Genesis 12–50," 19.

male competition [= patrilineal descent, in which always only one son heads
the line; at the end Jacob vs. Esau] generates the Jewish *lineage* as opposed to
the peoples of the world, female competition [Leah vs. Rachel] generates the
Jewish *people*. As male competition generates uniqueness within the diver-
sity, female competition generates diversity within the uniqueness.[86]

These observations relating to Jacob's stories can be generalized to a certain
degree and extended to the genealogical system of Genesis and the functions
of men and women mentioned therein. Amongst the men, a decision must
always be made: only one of the sons leads the line of the promises. "Male
competition is exclusive, hence providing for homogeneity." As to the women,
they give birth to sons having basically the same rights. "Female competi-
tion is inclusive, hence providing for heterogeneity." Yet in the case of Abra-
ham and Isaac, a *differentiation* is necessary among the progeny, in the sense
of a decision relative to the son of the line of promise. This is accomplished
through the women: Sarah as chief wife predominates Hagar and Keturah;
Rebekah, through her own initiative, sees to the decision in favor of Jacob
as the carrier of the blessing of the firstborn. With Jacob's family, this kind of
decision is no longer made; all the sons construct the house of Israel. First-
birth no longer plays a role, and the rank of the mothers establishes the order
of the sons. From the viewpoint of the history of origins, the higher or lower
ranks within the people (dominance of Ephraim and Judah) are implied in
the changing relationships with the narratives. For the topic women in the
genealogical system of the book of Genesis, the principle aspect in the story
of the origins of the pople of Israel, when the twelve sons are born, is that the
women dominate and differentiate the progeny.

4.1.9. Women as Bridges Between Ethnic Groups (Gen 36)

In the chapter on Esau, Gen 36, a differentiation also occurs through the
naming of Esau's wives, yet there is no competition for rank among the women
or the sons (and grandsons) of Esau. The intention of this chapter is to fairly
briefly present Esau's progeny and thus, at the same time, conclude the nar-
rative concerning him. In this presentation, Esau's genealogy is described, up
until the generation of his grandsons, as the genealogy of his wives. Each of
the five named wives has her own genealogy; this emphasizes their integrative
function for Edom and shows the variety of lines of descent of this neighbor-
ing people related to Israel. Genesis 36:12 mentions Timna, the concubine of

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86. Karin R. Andriolo, "A Structural Analysis of Genealogy and Worldview in the Old
Testament," *AmA* 75 (1973):1657–1669; 1668 (also the next two quotes).

Eliphaz, Esau's son. She serves as a family tie between Esau's genealogy and Seir's genealogy.[87] This brings up the subject of the family bond between Esau, the son of Isaac, and the land's inhabitants (Canaanites): Eliphaz follows his father's example and contracts an exogamous marriage. It is significant that this exogamous marriage leads to Israel's hereditary enemy: Amalek. In the end, it is obvious that the text completely rejects exogamous marriages.

4.1.10. Tamar in the Right, Judah in the Wrong (Gen 38)

Genesis *38*, the family history of Judah,[88] confronts masculine and feminine initiatives for securing the progeny once more. The (personal) initiative of the man, Judah, for the progression of his genealogical line, which initially corresponds exactly to the linguistic formulas used up to this point to express genealogical information, fails: his son Er, for whom Judah took a wife named Tamar, dies childless. Likewise Onan, who according to the principle of the levirate marriage (Deut 25:5–10) should have engendered a male descendant for Er with Tamar, yet simply exploited her sexuality. Tamar's feminine initiative to save her own life, and thus ensure the continuation of Judah's genealogical line, succeeded with the twins she had with Judah: Perez and Zerah.[89] The fact that the history of Judah's family is told precisely within the *toledot* of Jacob (Gen 37–50) is naturally not fortuitous; it is introduced here because this branch of Jacob's descendants is the most extended one—as far as to the kings of Israel. The genealogy in the book of Ruth (Ruth 4:18–22) is its most decisive link; the intertextual narrative binding force is carried by the numerous points of contact between the story of Ruth and that of Tamar.[90]

The story of Judah's family in Gen 38 can be considered an implicit rejection of exogamous marriages. Exactly why Er, the firstborn of Judah's marriage with the Canaanite daughter of Shua, displeased the Lord to the extent that he then had to die is an open question in this story. Does this contain a warning and a disapproval of Judah's unauthorized action in the form of

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87. See Fischer, *Die Erzeltern Israels*, 61.

88. On this, see, among others, Eva Salm, *Juda und Tamar: Eine exegetische Studie zu Gen 38* (FB 76; Würzburg: Echter, 1996); Susan Niditch, "The Wronged Woman Righted: An Analysis of Genesis 38," *HTR* 72 (1979): 143–49.

89. The twins Perez and Zerah correspond to the sons Er and Onan, whom Judah had lost—a sign that Judah had been forgiven; see, for example, Judah Goldin, "The Youngest Son or Where Does Genesis 38 Belong," *JBL* 96 (1977): 30.

90. For details and more on the connection of Gen 38 with Ruth, see Harold Fisch, "Ruth and the Structure of Covenant History," *VT* 32 (1982): 430–31; Ramona Faye West, "Ruth: A Retelling of Genesis 38?" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1987); Irmtraud Fischer, *Rut* (HTKAT; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2001), 20, 246–47, etc.

an exogamous marriage? The relative success of this matter—in the end, the twins Perez and Zerah continue Judah's lineage—depends exclusively on the initiative of the wife named Tamar and on the divine approval of this plan.[91]

Tamar's origin is never explicitly thematized in the Bible: the extrabiblical tradition in the book of Jubilees and in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs continues weaving the narrative threads. The apocryphal texts also suppose that both Tamar (T. Jud 10:1) and her sister, Levi's wife, Milcah (Jub. 34:20; T. Levi 11:1), are descendants of Aram ben Kemuel ben Nahor ben Terah (Gen 22:21). This would guarantee the endogamous marriage, or ethnic relation, of the lineages of Levi and Judah, which were so important for the priesthood and the monarchy: "both tribes descended entirely from descendants of Abraham's father Terah."[92] Both the lineage of Judah, which led to the monarchy, and Levi's lineage, which led to the priesthood, would thus also be connected to Terah's descent *through the mother.* However, there is another Jewish tradition (among others, the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan on Gen 38:6) that asserts that Tamar was a pagan or a proselyte (according to Philo, *Virt.* 220–222). Philo describes Tamar's origin with the words ἀπὸ τῆς Παλαιστίνης Συρίας (from Syro-Palestine), "which is simply a contemporary way of saying that she was a Canaanite."[93]

4.1.11. Not Counted but Valued (Gen 46:8–27; Exod 6:15)

In Gen 46:8–27, it is noteworthy that here also the women take on the task of structuring, differentiating, and establishing the order of rank among Jacob's sons and grandsons. The function of differentiation according to the wives Leah, Zilpah, Rachel, and Bilhah extends here to the third and even the fourth generation (Jacob's grandsons and great-grandsons). In Gen 46:10 and Exod 6:15, "Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman," is evoked as Simeon's son—it must be supposed that the ethnical membership is indicated in the case of this wife of Simeon because this exogamous marriage is clearly the exception.

According to Gen 41:45, Asenath is the daughter of Potipheras, priest of On. Joseph's marriage with a non-Israelite, who is moreover the daughter of a priest "who serves the idols," is a fundamental problem that is solved in

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91. Here Thomas Krüger represents a somewhat different interpretation; see his "Genesis 38—ein 'Lehrstück' alttestamentlicher Ethik," in *Konsequente Traditionsgeschichte: Festschrift für Klaus Baltzer zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Rüdiger Bartelmus et al.; OBO 126; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 1993), 205–26.

92. Richard J. Bauckham, "Tamar's Ancestry and Rahab's Marriage: Two Problems in the Matthean Genealogy," *NovT* 37 (1995): 317.

93. Ibid.

various ways. In the apocryphal novel Joseph and Asenath/Aseneth,[94] Asenath becomes the model case of conversion to faith in the one and only God.

4.1.12. The Women Mark the Line (Exod 6:16–27)

The evocation of women's names in Levi's genealogy (Exod 6:16–27) has yet another function: in these few verses many names appear, beneath which the promise line leading to Aaron and Moses (or Phinehas!) is in danger of ending. This line is emphasized and characterized by the mention of the names of the wives of men evoked in the line reaching from Levi to Phinehas. The naming of the wives also appears at points where it is truly important for the continuation of the narrative and the genealogical concept.

4.1.13. The Masculine Lineage in the Book about Women (Ruth 4:18–22)

Ruth 4:18–22 does not mention any women; it is exclusively a "masculine lineage in the book about Women."[95] However, this is not a reason to consider the passage secondary to the rest of the book; the close connections between the texts of Genesis and the book of Ruth rather suggest reading Ruth in the context of Genesis and, hence, considering the genealogy at the end of Ruth as a continuation of Genesis's genealogies. In this context, Ruth 4:15–17 is noteworthy: for Naomi, her daughter-in-law Ruth is "better than seven sons"; the feminine solidarity is of greater value to Naomi than an abundance (seven as the symbolic number of perfection) of male progeny.[96]

4.2. The Decisive Roles of Women in the Genealogical System

This makes it possible to present the following *summary* of the roles and tasks of women in the genealogical system.

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94. On this, see, among others, Angela Standhartinger, "Joseph und Aseneth: Vollkommene Braut oder himmlische Prophetin," in Schottroff and Wacker, *Kompendium Feministische Bibelauslegung*, 459–64, with more bibliography.

95. See Irmtraud Fischer, "Der Männerstammbaum im Frauenbuch: Überlegungen zum Schluss des Rutbuches (4,18–22)," in *"Ihr Völker alle, klatscht in die Hände!": Festschrift für Erhard S. Gerstenberger zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Rainer Kessler, Kerstin Ulrich, and Milton Schwantes; Münster: LIT, 1997).

96. See Fischer, *Rut*, 254.

4.2.1. Differentiation

Women come into play when it is necessary to open an exclusively unilineal-masculine, patrilineal genealogy and to introduce a differentiation in the progeny. Adah and Zillah are mentioned at the moment of the distribution of the human cultural achievements. Among Abraham's eight sons, the son of the promise is defined through his mother, Sarah, Abraham's chief wife. With Leah and Rachel and their servants, the house of Israel is constructed in a differentiated way. The rank of the mothers determines the rank of the sons and the grandsons.

4.2.2. Initiative

The women take the initiative in moments of crisis and especially when the genealogical reproduction is gravely endangered. This happens, on the one hand, in opposition to the divine plan (Sarah and Hagar) or in contravention to the divine law (the incest of Lot's daughters). On the other hand, the feminine initiative meets with divine approval, or later tolerance, with Rebekah, Tamar, and Ruth.

4.2.3. Matrimonial Unions: Endogamy versus Exogamy

The genealogical line that runs to the people of Israel and then continues in two separate branches (through Levi and Phinehas for the priesthood and through Judah, Perez, and David for the monarchy) is exclusively defined through men. However, they are not automatically in the sphere of the blessing; rather, their fate is decided by a "correct," namely, endogamous, marriage.[97] This problem naturally appears only after the differentiation of humanity into peoples and their spread over the entire earth, that is, with Abraham.[98] In Abraham's case, the endogamous origin of his wife Sarah is only added in Gen

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97. See, among others, Terry J. Prewitt, "Kinship Structures and the Genesis Genealogies," *JNES* 40 (1981): 97; Robert A. Oden Jr., "Jacob as Father, Husband, and Nephew: Kinship Studies and the Patriarchal Narratives," *JBL* 102 (1983): 193.

98. His statement refers to the narrative course of the book of Genesis. From a historical point of view, this topic (key word "Mischehenproblematik"), of course, only appears particularly relevant in the postexilic period; see, among others, Gerhard von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose: Genesis* (ATD 2/4, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 246; Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "The Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9–10 and Nehemiah 13," in *Second Temple Studies: Temple Community in the Persian Period* (ed. Tamara C. Eskenazi and Kent H. Richards; JSOTSup 175; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

20:12 and related in the large and careful legendary idealized depiction in the story of his son Isaac (Gen 24). Esau excludes himself, in comparison to his brother Jacob, through his exogamous marriage. As to Jacob, he is sent to the other family branch, "in the east," the homeland of his mother Rebekah, in order to contract an endogamous union. Judah's exogamous marriage with the Canaanite Bat-Shua then at first remains without direct (masculine) offspring. The fate of the third son, Shelah, is not mentioned initially (later, cf. Num 26:20; 1 Chr 2:3). Only in the case of Shaul, Simeon's son, is it said that his mother was a Canaanite—this union of Simeon seems to be an exception.

4.2.4. Excursus: Endogamy and Exogamy in the Genesis and Tobit

The book of Tobit explicitly notes that the patriarchs contracted endogamous marriages.[99] For this reason, Tobit gives the following advice to his son Tobias:

> Beware, my son, of all types of prohibited sexual intercourse! First of all: take a wife from among the descendants of your fathers! Do not marry a foreign woman, who is not of your father's tribe; for we are the sons of the prophets. Remember, my son, that Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our fathers of old, all took wives from among their brethren, and they were blessed in their children; their posterity will inherit the land. So now, my son, love your brethren, and in your heart do not disdain your brethren and the sons and daughters of your people by refusing to take a wife for yourself from among them. (Tob 4:12–13)[100]

From a paradigmatic point of view, behind this insistence on endogamous marriage in Genesis there is an appeal to identify with the line of the blessing and the promises, to discover their source and identity in this genealogical system, and to reflect one's own marital union and carefully choose a partner in one's own ethnic group. Hence, in this sense Genesis is not only a simple narrative; it is Torah, instruction, for the practical conduct of life. Under the paradigm of source analysis, Philippe Guillaume says this about the Priestly texts:

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99. See Thomas Hieke, "Endogamy in the Book of Tobit, Genesis, and Ezra-Nehemiah," in *The Book of Tobit: Text, Tradition, Theology* (ed. Géza G. Xeravits and József Zsengellér; JSJSup 98; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 103–20. On the book of Tobit, see also the commentary by Helen Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit* (HTKAT; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2000).

100. On this passage, see, among others, Merten Rabenau, *Studien zum Buch Tobit* (BZAW 220; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), 46–48, with references to many other parallel passages in extracanonical literature.

P is not encouraging young Jewish boys freshly arrived from Babylonia to date Palestinian or Edomite girls. Jews should marry Golah cousins … Edomites should not intermarry with local Palestinians either. They should now keep to Ishmaelite women. Therefore, P is reorganising Yehoud as God separated a livable land out of an undifferentiated chaos. In so doing, Edomites are sent back to Edom where they belong in order to intermarry with their own Southern cousins. In doing so, they make room for the Aramaic wives and descendants of the returnees.[101]

The pragmatic background is therefore a particular tendency in the postexilic community to preserve their own (ethnical and religious) identity by avoiding mixed marriages.[102]

The same orientation as in the insistence on endogamy, or priestly control over appropriate or prohibited marriages, also steers the story about Phinehas's jealous action in Num 25:6–18. In this, Jan Jaynes Quesada sees evidence for the theological concept of people like Ezra—who, incidentally, is a descendant of Phinehas—and Nehemiah at the time of the Second Temple, who for the benefit of a closed identity of the community strictly forbade mixed marriages with non-Israelite women and vehemently supported endogamy.[103] Quesada reads the narrative in Numbers as a "validating narrative for their programme of endogamy."

In summary, Numbers 25 embodies a significant, empowering narrative within the Torah that validates the Second Temple program of endogamy. … The renunciation … of all things foreign (especially women) seems to have been a way for the Second Temple Judean community to ensure a clear identity, under the premise that ethnic purity is a precondition for religious fidelity.[104]

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101. Philippe Guillaume, " 'Beware of Foreskins': The Priestly Writer as Matchmaker in Genesis 27,46–28,8," in *Jacob: Commentaire à plusieurs voix de Gen 25–36: Mélanges offerts à Albert de Pury* (ed. Jean-Daniel Macchi and Thomas Römer; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2001), 76.

102. With William H. C. Propp, "Kinship in 2 Samuel 13," *CBQ* 55 (1993): 44: "however, for often ancestral legends feature forbidden relations, the better to establish the purity of a lineage." See also Fischer, "Sara als Gründerin," 16.

103. On Ezra 9:1–4, see Thomas Hieke, *Die Bücher Esra und Nehemia* (Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar/Altes Testament 9.2; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2005), 140–46; especially the excursus on the socioeconomical background; on this, see also Tamara C. Eskenazi, "Out from the Shadows: Biblical Women in the Postexilic Era," *JSOT* 54 (1992): 25–43.

104. Jan Jaynes Quesada, "Body Piercing: The Issue of Priestly Control over Acceptable Family Structure in the Book of Numbers," *BibInt* 10 (2002): 28, 35.

5. Conclusions

If we consider the form of the representation of history from the perspective of genealogical information and especially the question of the role of the women, the following picture appears: in ancient Egypt, the state and social order was dominated by male leaders, a situation that marked the myths as well as the inscriptions and visible testimonies. Women rarely occupied leading positions; when a woman did accede to the throne, she assumed the masculine stereotyped roles ("King Hatshepsut"). The genealogies played an important role for the dynastic principle, as well as for the legitimization of claims to a cultic or political office. Hence, the genealogy, as such, was considered less as a means of historiography. This was true for both Egypt and the ancient Near East: genealogies were to accomplish specific functions (legitimization, emphasis on dynastic ranking of the succession to the throne, veneration of the ancestors) and could for these purposes be modified ("fluidity") according to need. Only in later times did the tradition consider genealogical information to be a historical picture of bygone epochs. In ancient Greece, with the *Gynaikōn Katalogos*, a kind of genealogical representation of history appeared in which women were in the foreground. However, this concerned the great women of mythical prehistory, the heroines, and the narrative world revolved around relationships between gods and humans. This theme is briefly hinted at in Genesis, with Gen 6:1–4, but immediately rejected: Israel's origins do not lie in such myths but are rather related, in the strict context of the world, in the form of a family history of humans.

The biblical findings deviate, along with a series of other aspects, from the surrounding world of the ancient Near East and from antiquity. Precisely in the book of Genesis the genealogical representation of history occupies an unparalleled large amount of space. The genealogies, or the genealogical system, are the backbone and the structural principle of the book in its final form. Furthermore, women play a more important role here, especially in positions of leadership and decision-making, than they do in the testimonies from the world surrounding Israel. In the historical construction of the Torah, it becomes clear that women have a considerable share in the promise-line,[105] despite it running "nominally" through the men. With slight modification of a statement by Gay Robins quoted above, it could be said that, "while the system was run by men, the women were needed to make it work."[106] At essential points women give the story the right "twist." They take the initiative in crisis

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105. See Plum, "Genealogy as Theology," 78.
106. Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, 36.

situations; in accordance with their social position, the rank of the male prog-
eny is differentiated. The choice of the "right" wife (among one's own people,
i.e., endogamical) also determines the subsequent destiny of the man.[107] Once
again, we see that the book of Genesis does not speak exclusively about the
"patriarchs" but rather about the "first parents" who contributed, each in his
or her own way, to the construction of the people of Israel (cf. Ruth 4:11).[108]

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107. In ancient Egypt, kings not of royal descent who ascended to the throne after a
dynasty ended owing to no male offspring additionally tried to legitimate themselves by
marrying a princess from the royal family; see Brunner, "Abstammung," 14. On the other
hand, marrying a girl from a simple background and, on the contrary, rejecting the lin-
eage and tradition could also be an expression of unlimited royal power, as in the case of
Amenophis III and his wife Tiye (17).

108. See Fischer, *Rut*, 247–48; eadem, "Genesis 12–50," 24; eadem, "Sara als Grün-
derin," 26.