Introduction

**1. The Origin Story**

In the last one hundred and fifty years, comparative biblical research has examined countless literary findings from ancient Near Eastern cultures (Mesopotamia in particular) and compared their stories, genres, and motifs to those found in biblical texts. The cuneiform inscriptions discovered during these years have revealed the cultural and literary world on whose fringes the biblical literature emerged and developed and have thus provided us with information regarding the cultural and creative context in which the biblical writers lived and wrote. Rather surprisingly, however, no comprehensive structural parallel has been presented for the historical and genealogical sequence in the Pentateuchal sources or the Pentateuch as a whole.[[1]](#footnote-1) None of the literary remains from the ancient Near East contains any of the genealogical “origin stories” or histories that begin with the dawn of humanity and continue to the founding fathers, their settlement in certain territories, and their proliferation and transformation into a nation. Nor have these findings yielded any true parallels to the ethnic or national perspective exhibited by the biblical writers.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The absence of this kind of material in the great cultures of the ancient Near East (Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Hatti) accentuates its presence within the Greek genealogical and mythographic literature that originated at the turn of the archaic and classical periods (seventh to fifth centuries BCE). The recent discovery of papyri from the classical world and their publication in updated editions has significantly increased our knowledge of this genre within Greek literature. We now know that the parallel between this literature and the Pentateuchal sources is not merely typological, but includes many other substantive similarities in both form and content, such as the central role of the Flood protagonist as the forefather of the genealogical lineage, cultural heroes and first inventors, eponymous siblings struggling for the birthright in the womb, and the founding father’s settlement of the land. Despite the import role of ancient Greek literature in clarifying the literary genre, formation, and development of the Pentateuchal sources, a comprehensive comparative study has not yet been undertaken.[[3]](#footnote-3)

This book analyzes the unique parallels between the Greek genealogical-mythographic literature and the narrative threads embedded in Genesis. Although these narrative threads continue in other Pentateuchal books, the present discussion is confined to Genesis, a book which reveals the same striking blend of genealogical traditions about both human and national origins characteristic of Greek genealogical writing. While this genre continued to develop in the Greek world throughout the Hellenistic period, I will concentrate on the early Greek sources, so as to identify the early stages of the genre’s evolution and because of the chronological proximity of the archaic Greek and biblical texts. I will also examine examples of this genre in ancient Near Eastern literature, for the sake of contrast and to explore the ancient traditions from which the literatures of the first millennium BCE drew inspiration. Additional eastern Mediterranean sources from this period and the ancient traditions embedded in Philo of Byblos’ *Phoenician History* will also prove important for understanding the genealogical genre. From these comparative analyses, I will endeavour to explain the parallels between the Greek and biblical genealogical writings and reveal what they indicate about the unique genre to which the documents in Genesis belong, as well as the literary and cultural background in which the biblical sources and traditions evolved and were eventually compiled into their extant form.

## 2. A History of the Research

The essence of the origin story is its genealogical structure. Nonetheless, many scholars, including Abraham Malamat and Robert Wilson, who examined the biblical genealogical writing in light of extra-biblical sources, compared it primarily with the ancient Near Eastern king lists from Sumer, Egypt, Ebla, Assyria, Babylon, Ugarit, and Hatti.[[4]](#footnote-4) While these lists may well have influenced the development of the genealogical writing in Genesis and share with it several common features, as we shall see below, they nonetheless form a completely separate genre.[[5]](#footnote-5) The king lists are not genealogical in nature; they delineate rulers and royal dynasties. While a son sometimes succeeds his father, often the heir to the throne lacks any blood relation to his predecessor. In contrast, the genealogical material in the Pentateuch makes no mention of either kings or the years of their reigns. In addition, these sources are lateral, in that they include wives, siblings, and their offspring, in contrast to the overwhelmingly linear king lists that record one king per generation. Furthermore, while the genealogical material in Genesis is part of a historiographical work which relates human history from its inception to the formation of the nation, the king lists draw a continuous line of succession or legitimize a particular royal dynasty.[[6]](#footnote-6) Each genre is thus independent, possessing its own *Sitz im Leben*.[[7]](#footnote-7)

The king lists resemble only a few specific biblical texts, such as Genesis 4–5 and 11:10–27, and most studies have been devoted to these chapters. However, regarding the “Table of Nations” in Genesis 10, which also constitutes a proper genealogic list, several scholars have pointed in a different direction. Samuel Driver briefly noted the affinities between this biblical text and the Greek traditions regarding Hellen and his sons, whence sprang the Greek ethnic groups, the Dorians, Aeolians, Achaeans, and Ionians.[[8]](#footnote-8) He made no mention, however, of the Greek compositions relevant for comparison nor drew any further parallels. Edward Mayer and Hermann Gunkel similarly neglected to discuss the issue at length, possibly because classical studies of the Greek genealogical genre were still in their infancy during this period.[[9]](#footnote-9)

The discovery of new papyri that preserve parts of the *Catalogue of Women* ascribed to Hesiod, the most important Greek genealogical composition, and their publication in the updated edition of Martin West and Reinhold Markelbach significantly impacted this field of research.[[10]](#footnote-10) Martin West also published a comprehensive study of the *Catalogue of Women* and Greek genealogical literature in general in 1985, which was followed by a detailed analysis by Martina Hirschberger in 2004 and a new edition of the work by Glen Most in 2018. Various other scholars have shed new light on the *Catalogue of Women* and the Greek genealogical and mythographic literature in general.[[11]](#footnote-11) The new edition of Greek mythography by Robert Fowler (2000; 2013) is noteworthy in its treatment of prose genealogical writing.[[12]](#footnote-12) These recent studies enable a comprehensive new examination of the biblical genealogical texts in light of parallels in the ancient Greek world.

Although most early scholars focused their attention on Genesis 10, the accumulating body of data we possess today clearly indicates that the parallels with Greek genealogical writing are not confined to this chapter. In the wake of interest in ancient Near Eastern sources, the genealogical texts in the Pentateuch were initially regarded as a type of king list embedded within a plot sequence; this approach differentiated the genealogical lists from the historical narrative and stories.[[13]](#footnote-13) However, it is not always possible to distinguish between the genealogical data and the narrative in Genesis. The genealogical material in Genesis runs throughout the book, forming the primary basis of two of its principal narrative sequences and thus of the composition as a whole.[[14]](#footnote-14) It therefore constitutes the bedrock of the historiographical account of the ancient period of the nation’s history, forming an integral part of the narrative, in stark contrast to the ancient Near Eastern king lists. The Greek genealogical works also blend genealogical sequences with stories of the eponymous founding fathers and heroes, creating a complex historical composition. Of all extant literature of the ancient Near Eastern civilizations, only these two corpora, the biblical and the Greek, schematize historical, geographical, mythological, and ethnographical traditions into lineage lists and narratives based upon genealogical details. In both cases, ethnic groups or geographical units personified as human beings serve as the eponymous national fathers who engage in military, marital, and family relations with each other. Both literatures exhibit a strong ethnographical orientation and interest in the people’s development from its early ancestors and tribes.

In a series of articles published in the 1980s, Moshe Weinfeld examined the distinctive parallels between biblical and Greek “foundation (κτίσις) stories” and the interest in ethnicity evident in both literatures.[[15]](#footnote-15) He astutely noted that the literary genre of the national origin and settlement narrative, as reflected in the patriarch stories, the Exodus, and the conquest of the Land, has no parallel in the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, or Hittite literature, but can be found in Greek and Roman literature. However, in seeking primarily to identify the characteristics of the foundation story genre, he too ignored the broader and more significant analogies with the Greek genealogical genre, which exhibits affinities not only with the foundation stories but also with the genealogical narrative progressing from the dawn of humanity to the heroes and eponymous forefathers who founded the cities and ethnic groups of the Greek world. A proper analysis of this material requires the examination of Greek and biblical sources not examined by Weinfeld.

In his study of the *Catalogue of Women*, Martin West discussed numerous examples from ancient genealogical literature and oral genealogical traditions collected in recent generations by anthropologists and sociologists and concluded that biblical literature forms the closest parallel to the Greek genealogical epics. However, given the subject of his research, he did not analyze the biblical literature in depth.[[16]](#footnote-16) The first biblical scholars to examine the biblical sources, in the wake of West’s work, were Ronald Hendel, in his article on the story of the sons of God and daughters of men (Gen 6), and John Van Seters, in a brief study published in 1988, as well as a book published in 1992, in which he argued that the Yahwistic document in the Pentateuch constitutes a historical composition along the lines of Greek historiographical texts.[[17]](#footnote-17) Although he adduced various substantive affinities between the *Catalogue of Women* and some of the chapters in the Yahwistic narrative, Van Seters made insufficient reference to either additional Greek works or the Priestly narrative in the Pentateuch.[[18]](#footnote-18) According to Van Seters, the Pentateuchal Yahwistic composition (which he dated to the exilic period, towards the end of the sixth century BCE) was heavily influenced by two external sources, Mesopotamia in the East and traditions similar to those in the *Catalogue of Women* in the West.[[19]](#footnote-19) Although he did not explicitly propound a direct Greek imprint on the biblical texts, he has been understood to make this argument. Most scholars dispute his claims, rejecting any Greek influence upon the Pentateuch and in the process also denying any need for comprehensive comparative research.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Van Seters’ use of the Greek material has also been criticized because the fragmented state of the *Catalogue of Women*, despite textual reconstruction, cannot provide a satisfactory basis for an analytical comparison with biblical sources.[[21]](#footnote-21) However, the *Catalogue of Women* is but one of several examples of epic and prose genealogical writing. The discovery of the papyri of the *Catalogue of Women* in recent decades demonstrates that the *Bibliotheca* attributed to Apollodorus, for example, was comprised largely of sixth to fifth century genealogical works that determined both its order and content. The present study is thus based not only on the fragments of early Greek genealogical and mythographic writings but also on relatively later works based on ancient traditions that to date have not been used by biblical scholars.[[22]](#footnote-22) A broader survey of the Greek genealogical sources and their comparison with the traditions and narrative threads in Genesis will allow new conclusions to be drawn regarding the genre, formation and development of the various traditions contained within the first book of the Pentateuch.

3. Eastern Mediterranean Genealogical Works

In Greek literature, the genealogical genre appears in independent sources, rather than within a complex composite such as biblical literature. I will therefore begin my survey with these independent works, before proceeding to an outline of the genealogical infrastructure that lies at the basis of Genesis. The work of Philo of Byblos is an important source for our subject matter. While his *Phoenician History* dates to a later period, it preserves echoes of earlier compositions from the Phoenician world that exhibit close affinities with the Greek and biblical genealogical narratives. While other sources from the ancient Near East that have been discussed in relation to the genealogical genre, such as the Sumerian King List, the Lagash King List (BM 23103), the Dynastic Chronicle (ABC 18), and the king list of the Western Semitic (Amorite) dynasties from the days of Shamshi-Adad and Hammurabi of Assyria and Babylon, do not belong to the genre under discussion, I shall refer to them below because of their significance to the genre’s development.[[23]](#footnote-23)

*3.1 Origin Stories and Greek Epic and Prose Genealogical Works*

The popularity of genealogical traditions in ancient Greece is attested by Plato in his *Hippias Major*; when Socrates asks what the Greeks most enjoy listening to, the sophist replies, “They are very fond of hearing about the genealogies of heroes and men … and the foundations of cities in ancient times” (285d).[[24]](#footnote-24) Genealogical lists of heroes appear as early as Homer, although not as autonomous works, and in a relatively limited scope (cf. *Il*. 6.150–211; 20.213–241; *Od*. 11.235–265; 15.223–259).[[25]](#footnote-25) Genealogy first began to serve as an organizational structure for cohesive independent compositions in the Hesiodic corpus. While *Theogony* constitutes the paradigm of the genealogical text, it is devoted primarily to the history of the gods. I will therefore refer to this work only occasionally, principally to those parts dedicated to early human history, such as the story of Pandora, the first woman.[[26]](#footnote-26)

The most significant genealogical text ascribed to Hesiod, the *Catalogue of Women*, focuses primarily on humans, heroes, and the Greek eponymous forefathers. It is also known as the *Ehoiai* because of the word *ἢοἵη* (“or such as”) that opens each section, after which the author describes the lineage of another woman and her offspring. The five-volume work, apparently written during the sixth century BCE, almost a century after Hesiod is believed to have lived, surveys the history of the heroes and Greek eponymous forefathers from the days of Deucalion, the Greek Flood hero, to the Trojan War or slightly thereafter.[[27]](#footnote-27) Its name derives from its subject matter, the famous women of Greek mythology, who, after mating with gods, gave birth to heroes and the Greek eponymous forefathers.

Although the *Catalogue of Women* remained one of the most popular works ascribed to Hesiod during the first centuries of the common era, no complete extant text has survived. Several fragments, quotations, or paraphrases cited by later writers have nonetheless been preserved. Also, in recent decades, numerous papyrus fragments that contain significant parts of the document have been published. This body of evidence provides us with a relatively comprehensive knowledge of its original contents and structure. The newly found fragments provide further indications that the later genealogical and mythographic writings, such as Apollodorus’ *Bibliotheca,* preserve ancient traditions, allowing us to reconstruct the structure of the *Catalogue of Women* and the contents of most of the genealogical traditions. From time to time, the *Catalogue of Women* also interweaves various plotlines that stray from the genealogical sequence, for example, the account of Iphimede’s (Iphigeneia) rescue (F 23a M-W), the story of Herakles’ death and transformation into a god (F 25 M-W), or the story of Helene’s suitors (FF 196–204). The fragments demonstrate that most of the Greek myths known during the classical period appear in the *Catalogue of Women,* even if only in a concise format.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Besides the *Catalogue of Women*, there existed other genealogical works, such as the *Megalai Ehoiai*, also attributed to Hesiod.[[29]](#footnote-29) This work was cited less frequently than the *Catalogue of Women*, which indicates that it was less popular in the ancient world. Although the paucity of surviving fragments precludes a clear understanding of its contents or structure, it appears to belong to the genre of genealogical epics. Poets other than Hesiod wrote genealogical works of more limited scope, focusing primarily on one region or city. Some of the genealogical texts originally linked to Eumelus, who, according to Greek tradition, lived and worked in the second half of the eighth century BCE, are today dated to the sixth century, or, at the earliest, the end of the seventh century BCE.[[30]](#footnote-30) One of the most famous of these, the *Europia*, recounts Europa’s abduction by Zeus, disguised as an ox, and the history of her offspring, Minos, [Rhadamanthys](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhadamanthus" \o "Rhadamanthus), and [Sarpedon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarpedon" \o "Sarpedon). The composition apparently included the story of the foundation of Thebes, as one of the fragments mentions Amphion and Zethos, who constructed Thebes’ wall. Another work associated with Eumelus, the *Corinthiaca*, deals primarily with the history of Corinth and its kings.

Other genealogical poets include Asius of Samos and Cinaethon of Sparta.[[31]](#footnote-31) Although their dates are uncertain, the fact that they are cited by fifth century BCE authors indicates that, at the latest, they were active near the beginning of the fifth century. A citation of Asius preserved by Pausanias (7.4.1 = F 7 *PEG*) indicates that Asius’ primary interest lay in the genealogy of the inhabitants of Samos, his birthplace. According to Asius, Samos, the eponymous founding father of the island, was the son of the eponymous nymph Samia, daughter of the mainland river Maiandros. Cinaethon of Sparta, on the other hand, devoted his attention principally to the Peloponnese and Crete.

The names of the authors of other epic genealogies composed during this period have not been preserved. One of the most famous of these genealogies, the *Phoronis*, relates the Argive genealogy, beginning with Phoroneus, the first Argive (F 1 *PEG*).[[32]](#footnote-32) The word πρῶτος, which occurs in half of the six surviving fragments of this work, suggests that the author’s primary interest lay in the traditions relating to the beginnings of humanity and the first inventors (FF 1, 2, 4 *PEG*). Another epic genealogy, the *Danais*, which also focuses on Argive genealogy, recounts the history of the family of Danaus and their return from Egypt to Argos.[[33]](#footnote-33) In contrast to Homer and other epics, these compositions, rather than following a single central storyline, delineate the genealogy of the first and founding families.

From the end of the sixth century BCE onwards, genealogical works also began to be written in prose by authors known as logographers or mythographers, in other words, storytellers.[[34]](#footnote-34) The earliest of these appears to have been Hecataeus of Miletus (*FGrH* 1).[[35]](#footnote-35) These works in general, and those of Hecataeus in particular, were created in the context of the spiritual and intellectual ferment from the end of the seventh century BCE and throughout the sixth century, within the Ionian culture in Asia Minor, and especially in Miletus, a scientific and philosophic centre at the time. The new emphasis on rationality and reason prompted the development of new skills and writing methods necessary for organizing the genealogical and mythological traditions circulating in the Greek world.[[36]](#footnote-36) Scholars emphasize Hecataeus’ rational approach, expressed in his well-known dictum at the opening of his *Genealogies*, “I write as it appears to me to be true; for the *logoi* of the Greeks seems to me to be many and laughable” (*FGrH* 1.1a). Nonetheless, he did not reject the myths or tales of the gods’ exploits.[[37]](#footnote-37) At the most, he sought to impose order and consistency upon conflicting genealogical traditions and introduce a measure of rationality when possible, for example, when he disputes the number of daughters in the ancient myth of the flight of Danaus’ daughters from Aegyptus’ sons.[[38]](#footnote-38) Hecataeus also preserved the genealogical pattern that appears in the *Catalogue of Women*, apparently opening his own work with Deucalion, the Greek Flood hero (FF 13–16) and then proceeding to the history of the first heroes and eponymous founding fathers, up to the Trojan War and perhaps further.[[39]](#footnote-39)

The logographers who succeeded Hecataeus followed the same genealogical paradigm, although each altered certain details and differed from his predecessors in specific aspects, according to his particular worldview and the traditions at his disposal. Acusilaus of Argos’ *Genealogies* recounts the history of the Greek gods and heroes, beginning with the gods, according to the Hesiodic pattern, and ending with legends associated with the heroes of the Trojan War. Following the Argive traditions, the book opens with Phoroneus, the first Argive (*FGrH* 2 F 23a), and his sons Myceneus, the eponymous father of Mycenae, and Argos himself, the eponymous father of Argos (FF 25–26). In contrast to the *Catalogue of Women*, which opens with Deucalion, this book begins with the Argive traditions. It recounts that Phoroneus lived at the time of the Flood (*FGrH* 2 F 23a, b), thereby preserving the connection between the beginning of human history and the Flood.[[40]](#footnote-40) A similar outlook is mentioned in *Solon*, by Plato, who places Phoroneus and Deucalion in close proximity, in the first generations of humanity. According to Plato, Solon, wishing to tell the Egyptian priests “about the most ancient things in our part of the world,” spoke to them about “Phoroneus, who is called ‘the first man,’ and about Niobe; and in the period after the Flood, of the survival of Deucalion and Pyrrha” (*Tim*. 22a), and then proceeded to give an account of their offspring.[[41]](#footnote-41) This genealogical sequence, beginning with Phoroneus and Deucalion, appears to have become established gradually during the fifth century BCE.

In the mid-fifth century BCE, Pherecydes of Athens (*FGrH* 3), known as a “writer of genealogies” (γενεαλόγος, cf. *FGrH* 3 TT 4, 7), or a “writer of history” (ἱστορικός, cf. *FGrH* 3 T 3), employed the same genre. Broader in scope than its predecessors, his ten-volume genealogical work covers the history of the Greek heroes and eponymous forefathers in a blend of narrative and myth structured on a genealogical base, reaching down in time to the aristocratic clans of his own family.[[42]](#footnote-42) Pherecydes delineated several family trees, the descendants of Inachus, Deucalion, and Atlas, and devoted several books to each. In keeping with his personal origin, he emphasized the Athenian traditions in the first volume and placed the traditions about Deucalion at the heart of the composition, following the Argive traditions pertaining to Inachus’ descendants.

Hellanicus of Lesbos, active in the last third of the fifth century BCE, was Hecataeus’ direct literary successor in genealogical and mythographic writing.[[43]](#footnote-43) He wrote a wide variety of works, including a series of genealogical or mythographic monographs devoted to the offspring of the major Greek families: the *Phoronis*, on Phoroneus’ descendants, the *Deucalioneia*, on Deucalion’s offspring, as well as three other genealogies, *Atlantis*, *Asopis*, and *Troica*, on the descendants of Atlas and Asopus, focusing on the generation of the Trojan heroes. Although each volume contains several books, some scholars maintain that the separate tomes formed sections of a single lengthy composition originally intended to serve as an overarching chronological genealogy beginning with Phoroneus and Deucalion.[[44]](#footnote-44) Apart from genealogical compositions, Hellanicus was also the author of *Atthis*, a national history of Athens, or Attica, from the reign of the kings to Hellanicus’ own time. Hellanicus appears to be the first to compose such a history, based on a collection of early traditions about the city, presented in an orderly chronological sequence. He was followed by a long list of “Atthidographers” in subsequent generations who employed his model in writing their own histories of the city.[[45]](#footnote-45)

Greek genealogical literature consists for the most part of stories about the mythological heroes and forefathers, from the first generations of human history to the founders of cities and the various Greek ethnic groups. The origin stories and genealogical writing were thus shaped by an ethnic perspective and intended to recount the history of the aristocratic clans and the heroes of the Greek cities and groups and preserve traditions about the past. They also occasionally refer to eponymous forefathers of non-Greek ethnic groups, to demonstrate their links to the Greek groups. Although a critical tone began to appear in Hecataeus and was developed by Herodotus, it was not common to all the prose genealogical mythographers, and certainly not characteristic of the authors of genealogical collections such as the *Catalogue of Women*, the *Phoronis*, or the *Danais*.[[46]](#footnote-46) Both this and the first-person language of the historian employed by Hecataeus, for example, are absent from biblical literature.[[47]](#footnote-47)

*3.2 Origin stories and the Genealogical Material in Genesis*

Did sequential genealogical compositions of the Greek type exist in ancient Israel? There is no doubt that, as a whole, the historical narrative section of the Pentateuch, or at least Genesis and Exodus, form a continuous Israelite origin story based on a genealogical structure. Just as we must trace the earlier genealogical or mythographic sources in later collections such as Apollodorus’ *Library,* so too must we use philological-historical tools to identify the early sources embedded in the Pentateuch. The following summary of the most prevalent current approaches in biblical research will help to identify these sources.[[48]](#footnote-48)

In its classic formulation, the Documentary Hypothesis, which dominated biblical studies during the end of the nineteenth and a considerable part of the twentieth century, posited that the Pentateuch contains four literary documents, J, E, P, and D, each of which constitutes an independent narrative, disparate in both style and language. In recent decades, this theory has fallen into disfavour, and many scholars have adopted alternative methodologies, such as the history of traditions or form criticism. Nevertheless, two of the pillars of the Documentary Hypothesis still serve as the basis for the new methods, the distinction within the Pentateuch between P and non-P materials, and the identification of the primary stratum of Deuteronomy as a separate, independent composition (D). Ideas relating to the nature, formation, and dating of the other Pentateuchal documents and other premises of the classical theory have been significant reformulated.

As early as the 1930s, Paul Volz and Wilhelm Rudolph argued that the sections attributed to E actually form part of J or a late Deuteronomistic stratum.[[49]](#footnote-49) In fact, Many scholars before Volz and Rudolph, including Wellhausen, contended that the folk sources constituted a single entity (JE or non-P), and regarded the attempt to identify two separate, autonomous documents as unnecessary and pointless.[[50]](#footnote-50)

By the mid-twentieth century, similar questions had arisen concerning P. The brevity of this document in the narrative sections of the Pentateuch in general and Genesis in particular, together with its late date, have led many scholars to deny that it existed, at any point, as a complete, independent composition. According to this approach, the texts previously identified as P constitute a series of editorial strata and supplementary material. P thus represents the editorial hand that gathered the non-P material and compiled it into a single text.[[51]](#footnote-51)

Once E had been discounted and P reduced to an editorial layer, focus then shifted to J, now understood as an unorganized and diverse literary entity containing all the non-Priestly material in the Pentateuch. At this juncture, deciphering the evolution of this literary composite became the basis for both understanding the composition of the Pentateuch itself and the consolidation of new research methods. From the inception of classical Pentateuchal scholarship, many scholars had questioned the argument that J was a coherent document originally intended to constitute a comprehensive account of Israelite history. The most prominent Documentary Hypothesis scholars of the early twentieth century, such as Hermann Gunkel and Martin Noth, first challenged this thesis. Gunkel described J and E as collections of legends and stories, resembling those of the Grimm brothers. Although they did not reject the classic documentary theory, describing the documents as anthologies precluded the need to define them as coherent compositions or their compilers as authors.[[52]](#footnote-52)

This approach was developed further by Gerhard von Rad and Martin Noth. While not rejecting the documentary theory, they posited the existence of blocks of oral traditions at the heart of the biblical texts which formed the basis of the Yahwistic source. Von Rad identified three major blocks, the Genesis story, the patriarchal narratives, and the giving of the law on Sinai, which were melded into a basic core framework, similar to that reflected in the Declaration of the First Fruits in Deut 26:5–9. Noth identified five blocks of oral traditions: the promise to the patriarchs, the Exodus, the giving of the law on Sinai, the wanderings in the wilderness, and the entry into the Promised Land.[[53]](#footnote-53) This approach paved the way for the development of the history of traditions theory that culminated in the research of Noth and Von Rad’s followers. One of them, Rolf Rendtorff, in the late 1970s, argued that the classic Documentary Hypothesis should be rejected and replaced by a system based on clusters or blocks of stories.[[54]](#footnote-54) Although he accepted the distinction between Priestly and non-Priestly material in the Pentateuch, Rendtorff did not regard the existing strata as two continuous narrative sources. Within the non-Priestly texts, he identified six blocks of separate, independent narratives that only came to form a single literary composition when joined to the Priestly material during the final stages of the formation of the Pentateuch: the primaeval history (Gen 1–11), the patriarchal narratives (Gen 12–50), the Exodus account (Exod 1–15), the wanderings in the wilderness (Exod 16–18; Num 11–20), the events at Sinai (Exod 19–24), and the conquest of the land (the earliest layer of Joshua). In his view, the non-Priestly material was the foundation, which the Priestly material, an editorial layer, filled in, corrected, and reconstructed by additions and supplements.

Several scholars, particularly those active in Europe in the 1980s onwards, developed this thesis, reducing the number of non-Priestly blocks to three: the Genesis cycle (including the non-Priestly material in Gen 1–11), the patriarchal cycle (including the non-Priestly material in Gen 12–50), and the Exodus cycle (including the non-Priestly material in Exodus and Numbers).[[55]](#footnote-55) According to this school of thought, each of the blocks existed independently, and the patriarchal cycles (Gen 12–50) and Exodus cycles (Exodus and Numbers) rivalled each other as Israelite origin stories. These scholars maintained that the amalgamation of these materials was a product of the final editing of the Pentateuch in the middle of the fifth century BCE, after the encounter with the Priestly material. Erhard Blum, however, posited that the blocks had already been combined before the final editing of the Pentateuch by a Deuteronomistic redactor or someone influenced by the Deuteronomistic outlook, during or after the exile (which he referred to as KD).[[56]](#footnote-56)

This new approach is not without its own problems. The division into blocks imposes new limitations on the text by identifying all references to the patriarchs in Exodus and Numbers, as well as all references to the Exodus in Genesis, as editorial additions. Editorial units are frequently determined arbitrarily by a predetermined division of blocks, without sufficient evidence. In fact, in some ways, this theory does not differ substantially from its predecessor. If we acknowledge the possibility that certain blocks amalgamated independently at an early stage, before the encounter with the Priestly material and the final editing of the Pentateuch, the resulting block is not dissimilar, in certain aspects, to Wellhausen’s “Jehovist” (a blending of the J and E documents), or Noth’s J/E sources in their oral stages. According to both theories, the extant non-Priestly material was compiled from various traditions in its early stages.[[57]](#footnote-57)

At the same time, some of the criticism the history of traditions theory levelled at its predecessor was largely justified. Many disparities undoubtedly exist between the non-Priestly materials in the various sections. Those in the Genesis cycle block are not identical to those in the Exodus cycle block in Exodus and Numbers.[[58]](#footnote-58) Even within the non-Priestly material in the patriarchal cycle, stages of development and complexity are discernible. It must thus be granted that certain units within the non-P material developed independently, while a later hand attempted to transform these materials into a unified and continuous literary narrative. The traces of narrative unity suggest that part of the non-Priestly material in Genesis was compiled from several units over a long period of time. In its entirety, however, it is an independent narrative thread that gives a genealogically framed account of Israelite origins from the dawn of humanity, and therefore can accurately be called “Yahwistic.”[[59]](#footnote-59)

The Priestly stratum appears to have been formed in a similar fashion. While it includes several distinct blocks, it too constitutes a coherent composition compiled by a distinct scribal school. Some scholars who adopt the history of traditions approach, which maintains that the non-Priestly material was not consolidated before the encounter with P, prefer to regard P as an editorial layer. The evidence for this claim is tenuous, however. Even those scholars such as Carr, Otto, and de Pury who follow Rendtorff and Blum in distinguishing between the Genesis and Exodus-Numbers cycles, acknowledge that the Priestly material in the Pentateuch essentially comprises a coherent, cohesive document covering the period from the creation to Moses.[[60]](#footnote-60) At the same time, apart from the Priestly composition, additional editorial layers penned by scribes who were influenced by or emerged from the Priestly schools can be clearly discerned.

Because of its concise nature and genealogical data, the Priestly material was frequently used by the Pentateuchal author as the framework for his plot or as bridging units that create the impression of an editorial layer. However, its author was not responsible for editing the Pentateuch. When this material is removed and gathered together, it comprises a relatively complete and coherent narrative sequence. However, if the same process is applied to the editorial layers in the Deuteronomistic or the Chronistic works, a coherent narrative does not emerge. We must therefore assume that the Priestly material in the Pentateuch was originally an independent source containing a sequential, protracted story. Nonetheless, this conclusion does not preclude the possibility that P was familiar with non-Priestly traditions that circulated in Israel and reworked them or polemicized with them.

While the nature of the Pentateuchal sources and their compilation must be determined on the basis of philological or literary and historical factors, the textual counterparts adduced in the present study can illuminate it from the exterior. Just as ancient Near Eastern sources have provided analogues for the short texts and concise genres that may have been available to the Pentateuchal authors and incorporated by them into larger works, so the ancient Greek genealogical and mythographic compositions can now be recognized as analogues for the complex historical narratives based on comprehensive lineages. The Greek genealogies commence with the first men, Phoroneus, and Deucalion the Flood hero and continue with the Greek heroes, eponymous forefathers, and city founders. Similar sequences occur in various strata of Genesis.[[61]](#footnote-61)

*3.2.1 The Genealogical Sequence in P*

The genealogical nature of the Genesis sources is most prominent in the Priestly narrative sequence. The phrase “These are the generations of …” (אלה תולדות) that runs throughout P constitutes the Hebrew parallel of the Greek term *genealogy* (γενεαλογία).[[62]](#footnote-62) This appears at the opening of each unit of human and family history, as the following examples demonstrate:

“These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created” (Gen 2:4)

“This is the book of the generations of Adam” (Gen 5:1)

“These are the generations of Noah” (Gen 6:9)

“These are the generations of the sons of Noah—Shem, Ham, and Japhet” (Gen 10:1)

“And these are the generations of Shem” (Gen 11:10)

“And these are the generations of Terah” (Gen 11:27)

“And these are the generations of Ishmael the son of Abraham” (Gen 25:12)

“And these are the generations of Isaac the son of Abraham” (Gen 25:19)

“And these are the generations of Esau—Edom” (Gen 36:1, 9)

“These are the generations of Jacob” (Gen 37:2)

“These are the names of the sons of Levi in their generations” )Exod 6:16, 19)

“And these are the generations of Aaron and Moses” (Num 3:1)

Humanity is introduced by the formula: “This is the book of the generations of Adam” (Gen 5:1). This is followed by a list of the first ten generations of humankind from Adam, Seth, and Enosh to the Flood hero, Noah (Genesis 5). Thereafter, it is replaced by the heading “These are the generations of …” before almost every generation.[[63]](#footnote-63) This formula serves as an organizing element in the sequence of the Priestly narrative, and even the creation account was included within this framework, through the concluding words “these are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created” (Gen 2: 4a). The term תולדות in these closing words may be secondary, as it appears at the end of the section instead of its more customary place at the beginning and its meaning here is unusual. Normally signifying the “branching out of the offspring of x,” here it denotes “the story of the development” or “the history of heaven and earth.”[[64]](#footnote-64) The Priestly author (or one of the final compilers) appears to have created this formula to bring the story of the creation into line with the overall genealogical framework.[[65]](#footnote-65)

The final occasion on which the formula appears is Num 3:1, “And these are the generations of Aaron and Moses” (cf. Exod 6:16, 19), where it is immediately followed by a list of the priestly and Levitical clans. The end of the genealogical sequence clearly identifies the environment from which the composition emerged, as the Priestly writer sought, among other things, to present a comprehensive outline of the extensive and authenticated line from Adam to the first priestly and Levitical descendants of Aaron and Moses. The genealogy was not penned by a single hand and the numerous literary traditions incorporated within it were consolidated over time. However, the unit as a whole constitutes a relatively homogeneous, chronologically oriented genealogy spanning from the creation of the world to the rise of the priestly and Levitical clans in Israel.

The stories integrated into the genealogies are concise, containing primarily genealogical data relating to the number of sons, the women that gave birth to them, the lifespan of the main protagonists, and reports of their deaths. In some cases, the Priestly author added narrative details, such as in the account of the Flood, Abraham’s covenant with God in Canaan (Genesis 17), and his purchase of the Cave of Machpelah (Genesis 23).[[66]](#footnote-66) After the description of Aaron, Moses, and the emergence of the priestly and Levitical clans, no further need exists for the “these are the generations of …” framework, and the priestly author turned his attention to other, larger events, and incorporated longer, preexisting literary units, such as the cultic ordinances given to Moses in the Tabernacle (Leviticus 1–27) and the various legal sections in Numbers. At the end of the Priestly thread, however, he turned once again to the patriarchal stories, ending with an account of Moses’ death to conclude the history of that generation (Deut 34:1a1, 7\*, 8–10).

*3.2.2. The Genealogical Sequences in the non-Priestly Material*

At least one independent narrative thread relating to the beginnings of humanity and the patriarchs, whose author sought to homogenize the various traditions available to him, can be identified in the non-Priestly materials. This is the Yahwistic sequence. Although more complex in character than the Priestly thread, consisting of diverse traditions and early internal clusters, it is not a “collection of traditions” as Gunkel posits.[[67]](#footnote-67) The non-Priestly materials in Genesis contain remnants of another literary sequence, the Elohistic narrative. Given the limited scope and fragmentary nature of this thread in Genesis and the absence of E passages in the account of humanity’s origins (Genesis 1–11), in this study, I will refer only briefly to this material, primarily in relation to the patriarchal narratives.[[68]](#footnote-68)

In contrast to P, the Yahwistic sequence contains no organized framework and the genealogy forms an integral part of the narrative. The genealogical data thus cannot be distinguished from the narrative. Nonetheless, within the genealogical items, this narrative sequence exhibits recurring patterns and a consistent style which indicate coherence. In Genesis, the genealogy forms the basis for the whole Yahwistic account, with the primaeval history (Genesis 1–11) inseparably linked to the patriarchal cycle (Genesis 12–50).[[69]](#footnote-69) A similar genealogical style occurs both in the primaeval history section (Genesis 1–11), in the Yahwistic “Table of Nations” (Gen 10:8–19, 21, 24–30), for example, and in the patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12–50), such as in the stories of the births of Ammon and Moab (Gen 19:37–38), Nahor and his descendants (Gen 22:20–24), and Keturah’s sons (Gen 25:1–4). Thus, for example, sections, Gen 1–11 and Gen 12–50 both employ the same birth formulae:

*Genesis 1–11*:

“Canaan begot (יָלַד אֶת) Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth […]” (Gen 10:15)

“Joktan begot (יָלַד אֶת) Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah […]” (Gen 10:26–29)

*Genesis 12–50:*

“Jokshan begot (יָלַד אֶת) Sheba and Dedan.” (Gen 25:3)

The Yahwist preferred the formula “x begat יָלַד]] y and z” in the *qal*, while the Priestly writer favoured the *hiphil* [[הוליד (cf. ויולד את-אנוש [Gen 5:6])[[70]](#footnote-70) and listed names:

“And these are the generations of Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth […] The descendants of Japheth: Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras” (Gen 10:1–2).

“And these are the names of Ishmael’s sons, by their names in order of birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael, and Kedar, and Abdeel, and Mibsam […]” (Gen 25:13).

“And Jacob’s sons were twelve. Leah’s sons: Reuben, Jacob’s firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Issachar, and Zebulun” (Gen 35: 22–23).

While the Priestly author primarily lists the patriarchs and their descendants, the Yahwist frequently mentions the mothers and their pregnancies. This style is found in both the primaeval history (Genesis 1–11) and patriarchal cycles (Genesis 12–50):

*Genesis 1–11*:

“and she [Eve] conceived and bore Cain” (Gen 4:1).

“and she [Cain’s wife] conceived and bore Enoch” (Gen 4:17).

“Adah bore Jabal […] and the name of his brother was Jubal […] And Zillah bore Tubal-cain […]” (Gen 4:20–22).

*Genesis 12–50:*

“The older one bore a son and named him Moab […] And the younger also bore a son, and called him Ben-ammi […]” (Gen 19:37–38).

“Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age” (Gen 21:2a).

“She conceived and bore a son and he [Judah] named him Er” (Gen 38:3).

The uniformity between the two sections is also evident in the references to the hero’s profession:

*Genesis 1–11*:

“Abel became a keeper of sheep, and Cain became a tiller of the soil” (Gen 4:1–2).

“[…] Jabal was the ancestor of those who dwell in tents and amidst herds. And the name of his brother was Jubal; he was the ancestor of all who play the lyre and the pipe […] Tubal-cain who made all kinds of bronze and iron tools” (Gen 4:21–22).

*Genesis 12–50*:

“Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the outdoors and Jacob was a mild man who stayed in the camp” (Gen 25:27).[[71]](#footnote-71)

As these examples, and those to be adduced, demonstrate, it is difficult to differentiate stylistically between the genealogical data in the non-Priestly primaeval history section (Gen 1–11) and their counterparts in the non-Priestly patriarchal narratives (Gen 12–50). Regarding content, the two divisions do not appear to be separate entities that developed independently. The existence of a genealogical composition that delineated the first generations from Adam to Terah (or the descendants of Eber) without leading up to the central element, the nation’s forefathers, is dubious. Even if these two sections contain material that consolidated separately, it is evident that they are integrally linked by deliberate design via the genealogical sequence.

The Yahwistic material in Genesis can thus be identified as a continuous sequence based upon a genealogical framework running from the beginning of humanity to the fathers of the nations. In contrast to the Priestly thread, this contains no account of the creation of the world (which also appears to be secondary in P). The first story in the Yahwistic thread, the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2–3), is devoted primarily to the creation of the first man and woman and an explanation of the suffering and toil in human life. Further along in the genealogy, in the description of the first generations in the world before the Flood, the author recounts the first murder, the beginnings of human culture, and the first inventors (Genesis 4). This original sequence also includes the story of Noah planting the first vineyard and discovering wine (Gen 9:20–27), the Flood, and its addendum, the union between the “sons of God” and the daughters of men (Gen 6:1–4), which preserves a remnant of an early Flood account (see below, Chapter 4).[[72]](#footnote-72)

The Yahwistic genealogical thread follows the Flood with the history of the nations and their geographical and linguistic dispersal. The author lists the principal eponymous forefathers of the world known to him, as well as the forefathers of the Israelites (see Chapter 1). The story of the tower of Babel (Gen 11:1–9) reflects a variant tradition of the scattering of the nations, yet it integrates well with those Yahwistic primaeval accounts of Yahweh repeatedly thwarting man’s efforts to approach divinity. [[73]](#footnote-73) Following the reference to Peleg, Joktan, and their descendants (Gen 10:25–30), the Yahwistic genealogy resumes with the names of Abram’s and Nahor’s wives, Sarai and Milcah (Gen 11:29–30).[[74]](#footnote-74) These family relations and their history are reviewed again in the Yahwistic account of Nahor’s sons by Milcah, the eponymous fathers of the Arameans, and those of his concubine Reumah (Gen 22:20–24). Similar data are also given about Abraham’s descendants from Keturah, the eponymous fathers of the southern Arabian region (Gen 25:1–6).

The patriarch stories that follow are also connected to the family matters that underlie the genealogy. Numerous stories describe the promise of multiple descendants given to the patriarchs (Gen 13:16; 16:10; 26:3–4; 28:14). Some deal with the lives of the barren matriarchs (for example, the story of the birth of Isaac, Gen 18:9–15; 21:1–2) or with the difficulties of rearing a maidservant’s son (the birth of Ishmael, Gen 16:1–2, 4–14) and pregnancy (the birth of Jacob, Gen 25:21–26a). Like its Greek counterpart, biblical genealogical writing emphasizes national or ethnic, rather than antiquarian themes.[[75]](#footnote-75) Genealogical writing does not emerge from the need to collect literary antiquities or preserve early family traditions for the purpose of investigation or collection, but rather from the desire to teach the history of peoples or cities, recount family lineages, and strengthen the identity of the author’s ethnic group. On the whole, the Greek and biblical genealogical writings reflect issues relating to the authors’ current identity, not their interest in the past. They consequently include not only the lineage of the eponymous fathers of the city or ethnic group (in a broad or narrow sense), but also the foundation stories of the forefathers and origin of the nation.

*3.3 Origin Stories and Genealogical Writing in Philo of Byblos and Eastern Mediterranean Sources*

While ancient Near Eastern texts serve as a basis for comparison in tracing the development and changes that occurred in the biblical and Greek genealogical genre during the first millennium BCE, the literary sources of the ancient eastern Mediterranean, especially Phoenician traditions, are particularly useful for textual comparison and the definition of a common genre. Despite the paucity of texts that have survived from this region and period, in recent decades, several multilingual inscriptions from the early first millennium BCE from Cilicia, where the official languages were Phoenician and the local Luwian, have been discovered and published. I will discuss these sources in chapter 7, which examines the settlement traditions of these kingdoms.

The most important source for Levantine origin traditions and genealogical writing, however, is Philo of Byblos’ *Phoenician History*. This relatively late work, which has only reached us through other sources, exhibits close affinities to some of the genealogical models and ideas in the biblical and Greek texts and is cited frequently in the following discussion. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, some scholars regarded the work as a “Hellenistic potpourri” of concepts that Philo collected from diverse late sources. However, the Ugarit discoveries and the findings from the Hurro-Hittite region have thoroughly refuted this view. The parallels between the traditions cited by Philo and literary artefacts from the second millennium BCE has even led some scholars, including Otto Eissfeldt, to the conclusion that Philo accurately preserved a composition from the second millennium BCE.[[76]](#footnote-76) This conclusion corresponds to Philo’s own claim that he had preserved a Phoenician document composed by Sanchuniathon of Beirut who lived, according to Philo’s testimony, “even before the Trojan War” (*FGrH* 790 F 1 = Euseb. *PE* 1.9.20). While it is clear today that Philo’s work was created within the Graeco-Roman world, it nonetheless contains ancient traditions that reflect an ancient Phoenician narrative structure. Comparing the epigraphical findings from the Levant, the Hurro-Hittite region, and biblical literature, while filtering out the later strata that characterize other ethnographical histories from the Hellenistic-Roman world, such as those of Berosus and Manetho,[[77]](#footnote-77) reveals the earlier Phoenician traditions in Philo’s work.

According to the extant fragments, the genealogy in the *Phoenician History* exhibits various parallels to the first chapters of Genesis. It opens with two cosmogonic traditions describing the creation of the world, immediately followed by the enumeration of the first human generations, who were also the first inventors. The first generation is said to have discovered the eating of fruit from trees, while their offspring were the first to worship the lord of heaven (see chapter 5 below). Their progeny discovered the production of fire; Hypsouranios discovered the art of building huts from reeds and bulrushes, and his brother, the hunter Ousoos, used the skins of the animals he hunted for clothing and was the first to enter the water (see chapter 6 below). Like the Greek and biblical genealogies, this work focuses on the nation and explains the origins of the Phoenician groups or cities.[[78]](#footnote-78) Philo recounts that the first generations, Genos and Genea, founded Phoenicia, and Hypsouranios founded Tyre. Philo’s genealogical sequence thus includes cosmogony, technogony (the beginning of civilization and first inventors), and stories of the settlement of Phoenicia, a close parallel to both Genesis and the Greek genealogical traditions.

Although the early traditions preserved by Philo constitute only a small portion of a much larger Phoenician literary output that has been lost,[[79]](#footnote-79) those traditions that he did preserve are a fascinating testimony to a genealogical and historical genre very close to the Pentateuchal sources in time, geography, and language. The evidence from this work, together with the parallels between the Greek and biblical genealogical literature to be discussed below, clearly indicate that this genre, absent from the literary oeuvre of Mesopotamia and the other great ancient Near Eastern civilizations, was prevalent in the eastern Mediterranean basin during the first millennium BCE.

**4. Research Methodology**

Biblical scholars have made use of the comparative method since the first discoveries from the ancient Near Eastern cultures more than 150 years ago. The guiding premise of many of the studies that have adopted this method is that the biblical literature was not created in a vacuum but developed and grew out of earlier literary works penned in the same geographical area and was influenced by the literary activity in its environs, particularly Mesopotamian literature. This premise, or at least the assumption of shared ideas and common texts, has become so prevalent that few scholars now feel the need to anchor their conclusions within a solid methodology.[[80]](#footnote-80) Although documents from the ancient world have frequently helped explain and elucidate difficult and obscure biblical passages or words, on more than one occasion the quest has turned into “parallelomania.”[[81]](#footnote-81)

To formulate proper methodological principles to guide comparative studies, we may turn to those propounded by the historical-geographical school within the field of comparative folklore literature. This approach seeks to collect diverse versions of a single literary work that found their way into different cultures and languages to identify the work’s original form and provenance. Various rules have been proposed for identifying different versions of the same composition and reconstructing its geographical dissemination and assimilation.[[82]](#footnote-82) These may also be employed to trace a common genre or creative encounter in the ancient eastern Mediterranean.

The fundamental principle when comparing similar stories from different cultures is that a single motif found in several literatures might be either coincidental or the result of similar thought patterns amongst different peoples. If a cluster of particular motifs is found in various cultures, however, the possibility of coincidence diminishes drastically. A string of motifs attests to a singular work that could not have emerged simultaneously and independently in several places at once without contact or influence of some sort. The only explanation for such a circumstance is that the composition found its way to other storytellers. In this context, Dov Noy’s comments are particularly instructive, and, as it happens, relate to a motif that is crucial to the present study:

Field studies and research based on them have demonstrated that the complex tales, lengthy narratives that contain numerous motifs, are monogenetic [derive from one source] […] In the case of isolated motifs, universal similarity of thought is likely to lead to the creation of single motifs and even single motif anecdotes (such as jokes, etc.) in divergent places. This is not the case with complex tales.

Thus, for example, the motif of the Flood, whose meaning is the wiping out of humanity in the wake of constant rain and torrents, is a single motif that could have been created in diverse parallels possessing no direct genetic relationship. Parallels of this type are likely to emerge in divergent cultural spaces because when seeing rain, man, wherever he may be, could imagine that it might never stop and that the sinister waters will drown him. However, when tales that combine this motif with the miraculous escape of a small family of three via a wooden vessel that floats on the surface of the water (a boat or an ark), who then create a new beginning and a pretext for a new division of humanity into clans and races, the similarities in the details cannot be coincidental. When a tale is composed of many identical elements, we must accept the monogenetic theory.[[83]](#footnote-83)

In this passage Noy refers to the biblical Flood narrative, appearing to hint at the Mesopotamian origin of the tale, in its well-known version. However, it is important to note that the specific motifs that he mentions are paralleled in the Greek rather than the Mesopotamian version. I will review these briefly to demonstrate the methodology that I will use throughout this study.

The idea of a three-member family that issues from the loins of the Flood protagonist and gives rise to the eponymous fathers of three ethnic groups does not occur in any of the various versions of the Mesopotamian Flood story. In the Mesopotamian versions, after the waters recede, rather than becoming the forefather of the human race, the Flood hero goes to live among the gods.[[84]](#footnote-84) This motif does appear, however, in biblical and Greek genealogical literature. Just as Noah was the father of Shem, Ham, and Japhet, whence derived all the families of the earth, so Deucalion, the Greek Flood protagonist, was the father of Hellen, the forefather of the Greeks, who had three sons, Dorus, Aeolus, and Xuthus (the latter begetting Achaeus and Ion), who are the eponymous ancestors of the Greek ethnic groups.[[85]](#footnote-85) The floating vessels that Noy mentions also correspond more closely to the Israelite and Greek traditions than the Mesopotamian traditions. In the Mesopotamian versions, the Flood hero’s vessel is described as a “(large) boat” (ĝišmá gur4-gur4 in Sumerian, ĝiš*eleppu* in Akkadian) and the term employed is the standard Akkadian term for a sea vessel, although the *Gilgamesh Epic* depicts it as a sealed container. In contrast, the Hebrew term used to describe the vessel is תיבה, and the Greek version employs the precise equivalent (λάρναξ). These Hebrew and Greek terms do not ordinarily denote a sailing vessel but rather a storage receptacle, or a box or chest, usually translated as “ark”.[[86]](#footnote-86) The choice of this word signifies the vessel’s special purpose and sealed nature.[[87]](#footnote-87) Cultures in the Mediterranean basin thus appear to have defined the vessels associated with the Flood heroes in a manner slightly different from the Mesopotamian traditions (or focused on a different aspect of them).

The unique parallels between the flood traditions in the Greek and Hebrew cultures make it difficult to believe that the stories are unconnected. This is especially true given that the story of the Flood itself entered Greek literature at a relatively late stage, never gaining as central place as it held in Eastern literature.[[88]](#footnote-88) While it is generally accepted that the Greeks received the Flood story from the ancient Near East, the additional details unique to the Greek and biblical Flood myths appear to derive from a common Eastern source that reworked the older Mesopotamian version, most probably a Phoenician or northern Syrian intermediate.[[89]](#footnote-89)

According to the principle outlined above, to prove a relationship between parallel traditions in different cultures a series of unique motifs must be adduced. Expanding the sources of comparison and including “flood/cataclysm stories” from more remote cultures that contain fewer traces of similar motifs may serve in psychological, anthropological, and other studies to indicate the nature of human beings, the way they think, and their varied customs. However, such a process cannot reveal the history of a story that is unique to a certain place or its dissemination across a defined geographical and cultural space.[[90]](#footnote-90)

This principle outlined above relates to the permanent features of a work, its literary motifs, story types, plot templates, content elements, and the style and form that underlie it. In addition to these, a comparative study must also address the variable features that emerge when a tale, or, in fact, any phenomenon, custom or idea, is assimilated into a new context.[[91]](#footnote-91) In such cases, all sorts of changes begin to take place due to the new spiritual and cultural climate. At times, these stories absorb features of a new ethnic identity, historical context, and geographical conditions of their new home. Carl Wilhelm von Sydow coined the term *ecotype,* borrowed from the botanical world, to denote the processes of development that folktales undergo in this respect. He and his followers compared the absorption of literary artefacts into new cultures to the adaptation of migratory plants to new climates and geophysical milieu.[[92]](#footnote-92) This includes the replacement of original “foreign” ideas and motifs with local ones, a change of norms, to make the story more appealing to local audiences, accommodation to local canonical texts, and general changes deriving from the unique style and ability of each individual author. It is clear therefore that no two works being compared will ever exhibit precisely the same features.

This process is of great significance in tracing sources of influence or literary borrowing. It takes time for foreign literary works, like foreign ideas, to become assimilated into their new surroundings,[[93]](#footnote-93) and elements that still have not been “eccotyped” can frequently be identified, standing out as foreign within the local milieu and pointing to their original setting. While this principle is especially evident in literary or artistic borrowing, it holds true for any cultural idea. For example, the similarity between the majority of the letters in the Hebrew and Greek alphabets, their order, and names, indicates that they did not develop in two cultures independently of one another.[[94]](#footnote-94) It is well known that the Greek alphabet with which we are familiar was developed by the Phoenicians, then spread to other cultures. It was absorbed by the Greeks and continued to develop in its new environs where several further letters were added, appropriate to the Greek language, and others came to represent vowels as well as consonants. This process represents the Greek oicotypification of the alphabet.

At the same time, however, other elements remained unchanged in the new setting, such as the names of the letters. The fact that these have no meaning in Greek but are completely intelligible to speakers of West-Semitic languages demonstrates both the borrowing itself and its source within the Phoenician world. Given their cultural similarity and geographical proximity, Hebrew speakers assimilated the Phoenician alphabet without any difficulty. Here too, however, a foreign element can still be discerned: at least one alphabetic sign that denotes two consonants—*š*(*in*) and *ś*(*in*).[[95]](#footnote-95) The inhabitants of the Levant who invented the alphabet did not pronounce the consonant *ś* and thus had no need for a letter to represent it. Such indications of foreignness, deriving from incompletely acculturated elements, point to the source from which they were borrowed.

All comparative research rests on the two principles of invariability and variability. A significant presence of invariable features in stories from two cultures could demonstrate true contact between the cultures. The existence of variables, especially in cases in which certain elements were not fully assimilated into the new setting, can similarly help identify the source of influence or borrowing.

**5. A New Mediterranean Genre: The Thesis Propounded in this Book**

I will begin the current study by presenting some of the unique parallels between the Genesis narratives, Greek genealogical works and other eastern Mediterranean stories. Given the centrality of the Flood hero in the Greek and biblical genealogies, the first section will be devoted to a comparative study of the parallels in the stories about the Flood hero and the nations that emerged from him. In light of the clear affinities between the literatures of these two cultures in their use of this motif, its link to ancient Near Eastern literature, and the importance of the genealogical lineage ensuing from the Flood hero, I will concentrate first on the period immediately following the Flood. Chapter 1 discusses the “Table of Nations” model and the motif of the races issuing from the offspring of the Flood hero in both biblical lists (Genesis 10) and Greek genealogical traditions. Chapter 2 deals with the motif of the planting of the first vineyard after the Flood in Gen 9:20–27 and the Greek genealogical traditions, then proceeds to examine the motifs relating to the antediluvian generation. Chapter 3 examines the genealogical traditions embedded in Genesis 2–3 and Greek literature that integrates the creation of the first woman and the origin of evil. Chapter 4 traces the parallels between the coupling of the “sons of God” and the daughters of men (Gen 6:1–4) and the scene in the *Catalogue of Women* in which Zeus attempts to wipe out the generation of the heroes and all of humanity.

The remaining chapters are dedicated to unique biblical and eastern Mediterranean parallels regarding the beginning of humankind and the nation, motifs absent from Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Hatti. These form part of the building blocks of the origin story genre and genealogical writing, attesting to the genre’s central focus upon ethnic identity and the development of humanity and human culture. Chapter 5 discusses the “first inventors” in the Yahwistic composition and Greek genealogical texts. Chapter 6 surveys one of the literary patterns that serve as a framework in the genealogical writings—stories about two siblings, each of whom represents a clan, tribe, city, state, or broader ethnic group. The narrative of the births of the siblings and the struggle between them reflects the relations between the actual ethnic groups or cities. This type of story constitutes a recurrent motif in the Pentateuchal sources and Greek genealogical traditions, especially in the Argive lineage. Chapter 7 deals with the stories of the settlement of the founding father in the genealogical genre. A fundamental paradigm in Israel, in some parts of the Greek world, and apparently in other eastern Mediterranean cultures, this forms the framework in which the origin of the nation or city’s inhabitants is depicted, from the migration of the early forefather to a new place where he lives as a foreigner, assimilates into the environment, and finally becomes the founder of a people.

Two principal conclusions may be drawn from the parallels between the origin stories and genealogical traditions in biblical sources and ancient Greek literature:

The analogies are not coincidental or merely typological. While no direct contact between the Greek and Israelite worlds during the first millennium BCE can be demonstrated, both cultures formed part of an ancient eastern Mediterranean continuum that shared traditions and ideas. This cultural sphere, although it imbibed much from Mesopotamian culture, as evinced by the examples from the Flood story cited above, remained culturally distinct.

Contact between the Aegean world and the Near East in general, and the Levant in particular, before the Persian period, occurred during two principal periods. The first was at the end of the Bronze Age. Documents from this epoch and epigraphical and archaeological findings, such as the discovery of documents in Ugarit written in the Cypro-Minoan script, attest to the existence of strong commercial and diplomatic ties, as well as conflicts and struggles, between the Mycenaean and Aegean worlds, Hatti, and the kingdoms of the Levant and the northern Syrian coast. These led scholars such as Cyrus Gordon and others to depict this world of the mid-second millennium BCE as an eastern Mediterranean *koine* (cultural collective).[[96]](#footnote-96) The second period of contact between the Aegean region and the Levant occurred approximately between the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. At this juncture, a sharp and abrupt change is evident in Greek art, which shifted from a geometric style to one resembling the ancient Near Eastern art of the period. This era is therefore known as the “Orientalizing period.”[[97]](#footnote-97) At the beginning of this period, the Greek world absorbed, not only artistic influences but also the alphabet and literary influences[[98]](#footnote-98) In contrast to previous studies that attributed the affinities between the literature of the classical world and that of the ancient Near East to the *koine* period of the mid-second millennium BCE, Walter Burkert, Martin West and others argued that in many cases this influence should be dated to the second era of contact, at the beginning of the Archaic period or end of the Greek Dark Age, that is, the Orientalizing period. This time span also better fits the dates of the classical and biblical sources, without requiring any speculative reconstruction of a literary artefact of the Mycenaean world.[[99]](#footnote-99)

These arguments are strengthened by those cases in which parallels exist between the literature of the classical world and ancient Israel in motifs that do not appear in earlier regional literatures, created, for the most part, during the first millennium BCE. While they preserve ancient traditions, the ideas and genres that began to be committed to writing during the second quarter of the first millennium BCE differ substantially from the thought and creative world of the second millennium BCE in content, form, and script. The parallels between Greek and Hebrew literature may reflect the contemporary Levantine literature during the Orientalizing period in the Greek world (from the end of the eighth to the beginning of the sixth century BCE). This was the time of the golden age of the Assyrian Empire, its fall, and the rise of the Babylonian Empire, as well as the termination of the First Temple period and the exilic period in Israelite history.

The artistic influences and adoption of the Phoenician alphabet also indicate the cultural focus that dominated the Greek sphere. During the Archaic period, and perhaps as far back as the Greek Dark Age, its inhabitants adopted artistic, conceptual, and cultural ideas from the Levant. Almost no significant cultural influence can be discerned in the opposite direction during this period, however. While findings from the Aegean world have been discovered at first millennium BCE trading posts in the Levant, such as Al-Mina in northern Syria, no significant signs of Aegean culture are evident.[[100]](#footnote-100) This may explain the affinities to which I alluded above, and which I will discuss below in relation to the genealogical patterns associated with the Flood hero and the line issuing from him. This cultural borrowing, together with additional evidence that I shall present in this study, suggests that the Greek genealogical tradition, and Greek literary expression in particular (as reflected in the *Catalogue of Women* and the works that followed in its wake), exhibits an awareness of Syro-Phoenician models.

The origin story emerged in the Eastern Mediterranean during the second quarter of the first millennium BCE as a new genre consisting of a genealogically structured narrative that gives a historical account extending from the first human beings until the nation’s forefathers. Although each clan, tribe, and people had its own lineage and family history, these traditions and the literary frameworks associated with them appear not to have been written down in the ancient Near Eastern kingdoms, including Mesopotamia, Egypt, or Hatti, until the first millennium BCE. The evidence suggests that the genre only began to flourish at the beginning of the first millennium BCE, apparently developing first in the Levant and Syria. Both the Pentateuchal documents, in their formative period, and the Greek genealogical writings, drew heavily upon these new literary patterns.

With the fall of the great kingdoms in the region, Hatti, Mycenae, and Egypt, toward the end of the second millennium BCE, the *koine* sphere disappeared and the ethnic identity of the regional cultures began to change. During the first third of the first millennium BCE, however, closer ties began to develop once again, in certain ways even expanding and growing stronger. At this juncture, the cultural sphere was shared by all the societies that had adopted the Phoenician alphabet in the first third of the first millennium BCE, including the young nations that had arisen in Syria, the kingdoms of Asia Minor that had adopted Phoenician as an official script alongside the local Luwian, and the Greek cultures, who, more than others, adapted the Phoenician alphabet to their needs.[[101]](#footnote-101)

The literary evidence presented below attests that the small kingdoms that sprang up in this sphere, such as Israel, Judah, and the Greek city-states, began to ask questions about their ethnic and national identity that had never before been addressed in the literature of the great ancient Near Eastern cultures. These lay at the basis of the genealogical traditions in these two cultures. The social and political changes that occurred in the “young” states and the rise of new royal dynasties and forms of political organization may have contributed to the establishment of this genre. An additional factor may have been the adoption of the Phoenician alphabet, more accessible than the Akkadian and Mycenean hieroglyphics, which expanded literacy beyond the skilled scribes who served at court and in the temple to wider segments of the social elite.[[102]](#footnote-102) In any case, the traditions about the beginnings of the human race in the Hebrew Bible and the Greek world clearly gave a central place to the genealogies of the most important clans and elites, as tribal and city relations replaced the royal succession of the king lists. Over time, these became comprehensive origin stories from which the history of the people or city-states could be learned.

As I will demonstrate below, the collection and examination of the affinities between the Greek genealogical literature, biblical texts and remnants of additional eastern Mediterranean sources reveal the patterns and models that marked this new genre of writing, enabling us to clearly define it and understand the literary and cultural context in which the Pentateuchal sources as a whole, and those of Genesis, in particular, were composed.

1. For a survey of the Pentateuchal sources, see below section 3.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For general discussions of the various forms of the origin story in world literature, see Eliade (1963:21–38); Dowden (1992:74–92); Csapo (2005:143–154). Anthony Smith has analyzed the use of foundation myths among ethnic groups and races in the fields of anthropology and political science. See Smith (1986: esp. 190–191); Smith (2003:88–94); Smith (2011: esp. 206–208) and the bibliography cited therein. In his latest work, Smith correctly observes that many of the ethnic and national origin stories found across the globe in the modern world are in fact dependent on biblical ideas disseminated by Christian missionaries in the last few centuries. See also Wright (2004: esp. 3–23). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See the survey in the following section. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See Speiser (1964:41–42); Malamat (1967:9–28); Malamat (1968:163–173); Wilson (1975:169–189); Wilson (1977:137–195); Wilson (1992:929–932); Hartman (1972:25–32); Hasel (1978:361–374); Bryan (1987:180–188); Hess (1994:58–69). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Hasel (1978:368–374); Averbeck (2003:131–132); cf. Röllig (1969:266–273). In light of these disparities, Hess (1994:59) correctly argues that none of the ancient Near Eastern examples adduced by scholars form a close parallel to the genealogical material in Genesis 1–11. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See, for example, Michalowski (1983); Aufrecht (1988:209, 215–216). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Several indicators suggest that many of the king lists, such as those from Syrian Ebla and Ugarit and the West-Semitic (Amorite) Hammurabi dynasty, served some form of ancestor worship. See, for example, Michalowski (1983:245), and below (chapter 1, note 27). On the “king list” from Ebla, see Archi (2001:1–13). On *KTU3* 1.113 from Ugarit, see Kitchen (1977:131–142); Lewis (1989: 47–52); Pardee (1996:276); Schmidt (1994:67–71); Wyatt (1998:399–403); Lawson Younger (2011). On *KTU3* 1.161 from Ugarit, see Wyatt (1998:430–441); Levine, de Tarragon, and Robertson (2011) and the bibliography cited therein. On *CTH* 661, regarded as a type of king list from the Hittite world, see Otten (1951); Otten (1968:122–126); Kitchen (1977:52–55); Haas and Wäfler (1977:107–113); and the bibliography cited in Forlanini (2010:117–121). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See Driver (1905:112), cited by Skinner (1930:190 note \*). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Mayer (1906); Gunkel (1997:87). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Although the third edition, produced by Merkelbach and West in 1990, is based on the first edition of 1967, it contains new fragments discovered after that date. On the newly found fragments, see, for example, Renner (1978:277–293); West (1983:27–30); West (1985b:1–7); Renehan (1986:221–222); Mastronarde (2010:192–194). See also Bastianini and Casanova (2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. On the *Catalogue of Women*, see Solmsen (1981:353–358); Janko (1982:27–28, 85–87, 221–225); Cohen (1986:127–142); March (1987); Finkelberg (1988:31–41); Rutherford (2000:81–96); Hunter (2005); Doherty (2006:297–325); Thomas (2007:15–23). For further bibliography, see Hirschberger (2004:9–20); Bastianini and Casanova (2008). On the Greek genealogical literature, see, for example, Broadbent (1968); Graf (1987:125–131); Calame (1987:153–186); Thomas (1989:173–195); Davies (1992); Fowler (1988:1–19); Malkin (1994:19–22); Hall (1997:67–97); Hall (2002:1–89); Alden (2000:153–178). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See also the new, expanding electronic edition of *Brill’s New Jacoby*. On prose genealogical writing, see also section 3.1 below. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. See Liver (1965:666); Malamat (1967:9–28); Malamat (1968:163–173); Wilson (1975:169–189); Wilson (1977:137–195). For studies of the biblical genealogical writing in general and the Pentateuch in particular, from the last three decades, see Crüsemann (2002:57–76); Thomas (2011a:83–104) and the bibliography cited there. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. While many scholars have observed this fact, they have not examined its implications for understanding the genre of the Pentateuchal sources. See, for example, Westermann (1984:6–18); Prewitt (1981:87–98); Robinson (1986:595–608); Steinberg (1989:41–50); Renaud (1990:5–30); Alexander (1993:255–270); Thomas (2011a). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See Weinfeld (1988a:353–369, esp. 353–354); Weinfeld (1988b:270–283); Weinfeld (1988c:324–332). These are collected together in Weinfeld (1993). Cf. Licht (1980:98–128, esp. 109–116). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. West (1985a:11–30, esp. 13). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See Hendel (1987), and chapter 4 below; Van Seters (1988: esp. 1); Van Seters (1992: esp. 78–103). Despite his familiarity with West’s 1985a contribution, Van Seters seems not to have made use of Merkelbach and West’s 1967 or 1990 editions, his isolated references to the *Catalogue of Women* being to the out-of-date Evelyn-White edition (1914). Elsewhere (1988:8, 19), he relies on unsupported reconstructions that have been rejected in the new editions. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Fowler (1995:617) similarly criticizes him: “Unfortunately, other than a brief comment (p. 89) where he classifies the *Catalogue* as epic poetry (is this the same as didactic poetry?) in the same style as *Theogony*, the genre of the *Catalogue of Women* is not adequately discussed nor is its probable oral origin […] A careful study of the *Catalogue* from the perspective of biblical studies would be quite helpful in establishing its usefulness”. Crüsemann (1996:63–64 n. 23) also draws attention to the need for modern comparative study of the biblical and Greek genealogical material. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. “I have argued that the Yahwist had access to both eastern and western antiquarian traditions” (Van Seters, 1992:330 and passim). His student Kenton Sparks (1998:56–57) asserts that Israelite ethnic identity may have been influenced more by the West than the East, mediated by the Phoenicians (cf. Van Seters, 1988:1). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See, for example, Hess (1994:69–71). This aspect of his work has garnered the most criticism. See Nicholson (1991:16–18); Nicholson (1994:135–150); Nicholson (1998:146–153); Emerton (2006:28–29); Holloway (1997:150 n. 8) who asks how the Hebrew-speaking biblical author could have come into contact with Greek sources while in exile in Babylon in the sixth century BCE. Some, however, have accepted Van Seters’ conclusions, thus preferring to date the biblical text to the end of the Persian period or the Hellenistic period. See Garbini (1988); Lemche (1993:163–193); Thompson (1999); Nielsen (1997); Grabbe (2001); Wesselius (2002); Gmirkin (2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Hess (1994:69–71). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. On Ps. Apollodorus, see, for example, Finkelberg, 2005:28. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. This list does not include writings composed after the biblical period, such as the early Arabian *nasab* literature. Despite their similarities to the genealogical genre, due to the typological parallelism between the Middle Eastern tribal societies and their familiarity with the Jewish and Christian traditions, they do not contribute to our understanding of the sources of the biblical genealogical texts. See Caskel (1966:19–47); Goldhizer (1967: 1:164–190); Kister and Plessner (1976:48–68); Duri (1983:146–147); Khalidi (1994:49–61); Szombathy (2003:71–82). The oral genealogical traditions from tribal societies collected by anthropologists in recent decades may also be excluded as they do not contain sufficient evidence of genealogy as a form of historiography. For a discussion of the anthropological materials and their relation to genealogical writing, see Henige (1974); Malamat (1973:126–136); Wilson (1977:11–55); Averbeck (2003:133–134); Deysel (2009:564–579). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Περὶ τῶν γενῶν … τῶν τε ἡρώων καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ τῶν κατοικίσεων, ὡς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἐκτίσθησαν αἱ πόλεις [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. See, for example, West (1985a:5); Davies (1992:11–81); Alden (2000:153–178). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. The final section in the *Theogony* also deals with human beings, addressing the Greek heroes born via the intercourse between men and immortal women (ll. 900–1022). On this passage, which appears to represent a late stage based on the genealogical model exemplified by the *Catalogue of Women*, see West (1966:48–49, 397–399); Alden (2000:153–178). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Although most scholars date the *Catalogue of Women* to the sixth century BCE (following West, 1985a:168–171), some—such as Janko (1982:85–87, 198), argue on linguistic and stylistic grounds that it was not composed much later than Hesiod himself, in the seventh century BCE. For a summary of the various views, see Hirschberger (2004:42–51); Hunter (2005:2–3). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. West (1985a:29–30, 137–171). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Some scholars however argue that this is merely another name for the *Catalogue of Women*. See West (1985a:3); Cohen (1986:127–142). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. On Eumelus, see Dunbabin (1948:66–69); Huxley (1969:60–84); West (2002:109–133); West (2003:26–31); Fowler (2013:656–657). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Bowra (1957:391–401); Huxley (1969:85–98); West (1985a:4). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Huxley (1969:31–38); West (2003:33–34); Tsagalis (2017:403–432). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Huxley (1969:34–38); West (2003:33–34); Tsagalis (2017:277–293). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. For a general survey of these logographers and prose genealogical writing, see Bury (1909:1–35); Pearson (1939:1–24); von Fritz (1967:48–103, 476–522, index vol.: 337–347); Fornara (1983:4–12); Fowler (2001:95–115); Asheri (2004:29–40). On changes in the use of the term “logographer” in scholarly literature, see Pearson (1939:5–9); Grethlein (2010:207–209). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. See Jacoby (1912); Pearson (1939:25–108); Fowler (1996:62–87). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. See von Fritz (1967:23–47); Gorman (2001:72–85); Asheri (2004:27–28). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. τάδε γράφω, ὥς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι· οἱ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων λόγοι πολλοί τε καὶ γελοῖοι, ὡς ἐμοὶ φαίνονται, εἰσίν. See Pearson (1939:97–98); Fornara (1983:5–6); Fowler (2001:95–115); Asheri (2004:30–31). Herodotus adopted this style from Hecataeus (cf. Hdt. 2.45; 2.2). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. According to the *Catalogue of Women*, Danaus had fifty daughters. According to Hecataeus, however, “there were not even twenty” (*FGrH* 1 F 19 = schol.Eur. *Or*. 872). Compare also his retelling of the story of Heracles and Eurystheus, in which he claims that Heracles’ “hound of Hades” was in fact a poisonous snake that dwelt at the opening of a cave at Taenarum on the south coast of the Peloponnese (*FGrH* 1 FF 23–30), which Heracles captured and brought to Eurystheus (F 27). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. This is revealed especially in the fragments explicitly attributed to the first book of the *Genealogies*, which refer to places along the Thessalian region customarily associated with Deucalion (FF 2, 5). See, for example, Pearson (1939:96–97) and the bibliography cited there. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Finkelberg (2005:35). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Φορωνέως τε τοῦ πρώτου λεχθέντος καὶ Νιόβης, καὶ μετὰ τὸν κατακλυσμὸν αὖ περὶ Δευκαλίωνος καὶ Πύρρας ὡς διεγένοντο μυθολογεῖν [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. See Jacoby (1947:13–64); Fowler (2001:114); Morison (2012) and the bibliography cited therein. On the role genealogies played in establishing aristocratic lineage in the Greek world, see Thomas (1989:155–195); Thomas (2011b:72–99); Fowler (1998:4). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See Jacoby (1912:104–151); Pearson (1939:152–235). [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Pearson (1939:170–171). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See Pearson (1942); Jacoby (1949); Harding (2008) and the bibliography cited there. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. See, especially, Jacoby (1947:39) on the mythographical style of Acusilaus and Pherecydes, in contrast to Hecataeus’ critical stance. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. See Fowler (2001:104–105, 114) on Acusilaus and Pherecydes. On the historian’s first-person style, see Fowler (1996:69–76); Thraede (2007:341–348). Nicholson (1994:135–150) and Blum (2007:28–31) both contend that no similarity exists between the Greek historiography and the Pentatechal sources. Cf. Van Seters (2002:3–9); Halpern (2005:101–127). The biblical scholars cited here ignored the genealogical material that constitutes a specific branch of Greek historical writing. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. For other surveys of recent research, see Nicholson (1998); Dozeman and Schmid (2006); Römer (2006:9–27); Ska (2006:96–126); Albertz (2010:5–38); Dozeman, Schmid, and Schwartz (2011: esp. 3–122); Gertz *et al*. (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Volz and Rudolph (1933); Rudolph (1938). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Wellhausen (1963:35). Some scholars continue to argue for the independent existence of E. See Jenks (1977); Coote (1991); Baden (2009); Yoreh (2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. As early as 1880, two years after the publication of the first edition of Wellhausen’s *Geschichte Israels*, Maybaum (1880:107–120) proposed that P was an editorial stratum penned by one of Ezekiel’s disciples. The twentieth-century scholars who held this view include Volz (1933:135–142), Cross (1973:293–325), Van Seters (1975:279–295), Rendtorff (1990:136–170), and Blum (1990:219–332). For a survey of the research relating to this question, see, for example, Nicholson (1998:46–48, 206–221). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Gunkel (1910:lxiv and passim). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Noth (1972: esp. 42–145). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Rendtorff (1985: 131–164); Rendtorff (1990). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. See Gertz (1999: esp. 380–388); Gertz (2006:73–87); Otto (2000); Otto (2007:171–184); Blum (2005:13–32, esp. 31–32); Schmid (2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Blum (1984: esp. 362–419); Blum (1990:7–207). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Compare Otto (2007:173). For a comparison of Blum and Noth’s methods, see Wynn-Williams (1997). The principal difference between these approaches lies in the fact that earlier scholars spoke of the amalgamation of oral traditions, while later scholars refer to written sources. Although the dating of the texts is also disputed, this issue is irrelevant to the way in which the documents were incorporated and thus lies outside the scope of the present discussion. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Rendtorff (1990:55–100 and passim), for example, suggests that while the blessings and promises of the land and numerous descendants are interspersed throughout the patriarchal unit (Genesis), they do not occur in the Exodus cycle (Exodus and Numbers). See also Dozeman and Schmid (2006:3). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. The protracted formation period theory is espoused by those who, while accepting some of the criticism levelled against the Documentary Hypothesis, hold that the Yahwistic document was compiled prior to the incorporation of the Priestly materials. Some stress the various stages of the amalgamation of the sources, describing the Yahwist as a redactor. See Schmid (1976); Levine (1993); Levine (2007:209–230). Others perceive the Yahwist as an author. See Van Seters (1992); Van Seters (1994), following von Rad (1966a:50–67). The view that the Yahwistic stratum was a composition created by design can be also found amongst those who, remaining loyal to the classical theory, portray E as a separate composition. See, for instance, Campbell and O’Brien (1993); Seebass (1996); Nicholson (1998:222–248); Friedman (2003); Schwartz (2011). Others regard the non-Priestly stratum (or part of it, the Genesis cycle in particular) as a later, post-Priestly, editorial layer that reworks and adds to the Priestly material, rather than an independent composition. See Blekinsopp (1995:1–15); Witte (1998); Wenham (1999:240–258); Arneth (2007); Ska (2009a:1–22). [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Carr (1996:43–140); Otto (2000:234–275); Otto (2007:172); de Pury (2006). For a discussion on this matter, see Emerton (1988); Nicholson (1988:196–221); Kratz (2005:229–247) and the bibliography cited in all these studies. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. An examination of the link between the non-Priestly material in Genesis and that in Exodus lies beyond the scope of the current discussion. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. On the title “genealogies” given to Greek compositions, see, for example, Jacoby (1947:45–47). The formula “these are the generations of …” in P has been discussed extensively. Although its importance is unanimously acknowledged, its source and function remain hotly debated. Some scholars contend that the genealogical material that immediately follows existed originally as an independent source or book that served as a basis for the Priestly composition. *Inter alia*, this argument is based on an understanding of the verse “This is the book of the generations of Adam” (Gen 5:1), as the title of the work or source. See von Rad (1934:33–40); Weimar (1974:84–87). Others argue that the Priestly author created this formula as way of structuring his text. See Eissfeldt (1958:31–40). Those who posit that P is not a document but an editorial hand responsible for the final editing of the Pentateuch suggest that these formalae functioned as the framework for the formation of the entire Pentateuch. See Cross (1973:301–307); Tengström (1981: esp. 19–28). For a summary of opinions on this issue, see, most recently, Thomas (2011a: esp. 25–31). [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. The Priestly stratum in the story of Joseph (Gen 37:2a; 41:45–46; 46:6–27; 47:5 [LXX], 6a, 7–11, 27–28; 48:3–7, 20; 49:1a, 28–33; 50:12–13) has been the subject of much recent research, as, according to the block approach, the absence of any P sequence indicates that this layer was editorial in nature and an attempt to connect the patriarchal and Exodus cycles. See Schmid (2006:32–35); Römer (2015), and the bibliography cited there. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. See BDB, 410a. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. This half-verse (Gen 2:4a) has merited extensive discussion. It does not appear to serve as an opening for the following material, as these verses do not refer in any way to the “generations of the heaven and earth”. See Blenkinsopp (1995:7); Seebass (1996:90). For other views, and further literature, see Witte (1998:55); Thomas (2011a:42–43). Westermann (1984:8, 16) suggested that the Priestly author preserved here traces of mythological traditions that describe the heaven and earth as giving birth to the whole world. If so, however, the word בְּהִבָּרְאָם has a polemical function—the heavens and the earth were created (just like the rest of the creation) and did not gave birth themselves, as related in early cosmogonic or theogonic traditions. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. For identification of the Priestly thread in Gen 6:9–9:17, see Addis (1892: 1:10–14); Addis (1898:201–205); Carpenter (1902:9–14); Skinner (1930:147–181); Driver (1905:85–108); Speiser (1964:47–56). [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. See note 53 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. The time and manner in which the E material was integrated within the non-Priestly material in the Pentateuch are still debated. For current attempts to demonstrate the independent character of E, see note 51 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. *Contra* Crüsemann (1981:11–29); Rendtorff (1989:83–894), Blum (1990:278–285), and Carr (2011:458) argue for the independence of the non-Priestly unit in Genesis 1–11, in contrast to the remainder of the non-Priestly material in Genesis. Cf. Rendtorff (1983:134). For a critique of this view, see Hendel (2011:181–205). [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Gen 5:3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28, 30, 32; 6:10; 11:10–27; 17:20; 25:19; 48:6; Lev 25:45; Num 26:29, 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. See below, chapter 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. It is not surprising that the Flood account appears to be a secondary layer within the sequence, because in virtually all the ancient historiographical-genealogical compositions, even the Sumerian king list, the story appears within an pre-existing genealogical unit into which it has been clumsily inserted. See chapters 1–4 below. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. For example, the Garden of Eden story, in which Adam seeks to acquire the knowledge of good and evil possessed by God, and the threat arises that he might gain eternal life (Genesis 2–3), and the story of the sons of God and daughters of men, where there is concern that their union will produce “men of renown” who might live forever (Gen 6:1–4). The same is true regarding the story of the tower of Babel, where men attempt to “make a name” for themselves, meaning that “nothing they may propose to do will be out of their reach” (Gen 11:1–9). See chapter 4 below. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Given the parallels between the Priestly and Yahwistic threads with respect to the first generations prior to the Flood, a similar parallelism with respect to the enumeration of the post-Flood generations might have been expected. However, the Yahwistic genealogical thread breaks off with Eber’s descendants, Joktan and Peleg. Although the author states that Joktan’s descendants dwelt in southern Arabia, Peleg’s are not mentioned, and the genealogy of the forefathers from Peleg to Abram in the Yahwistic thread were apparently deleted from the final version by the Pentateuchal compiler. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Van Seters’ definition of the genre in Genesis as “antiquarian historiography” is erroneous (1988:22); Van Seters (1992 passim). See also Noth (1981:11, 84); von Rad (1966b:166–167); Kofoed (2005:227–235) for the literary genre of the Former Prophets. Momigliano’s (1950:286–288) treatment of the Greek genealogical writing has also been criticized in recent decades. It is more appropriate to understand these compositions from the Greek world and ancient Israel as the Greeks themselves regarded them: genealogies or histories (investigations). [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. See Eissfeldt (1952:70); Eissfeldt (1960:510). For a summary of the diverse views regarding Philo of Byblos see, for example, Barr (1974:17–68); Ebach (1979:1–21); Baumgarten (1981:1–6); Attridge and Oden (1981:2–9). Edwards (1991:213–220), however, questions Philo’s reliability in transmitting ancient Phoenician traditions. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. For a comparison of these works, see, for example, Oden (1978:115–126). [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. It should be emphasized, however, that this study is not concerned with the identity of the different Phoenician groups, but rather with the unique historiographical genre which reveals the various concepts of identity and ethnicity within diverse groups. For the question of “Phoenician” identity, compare Quinn (2018: esp. 48–49). [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. For a different approach, see Quinn (2018:61–62). [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Malul (1990: esp. 112–113) was one of the most prominent scholars to address methodological questions in this matter. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. See Zakovitch (1995:11); Singer (2004:13). On the term “parallelomania” (in another context), see Sandmel (1962:1–13). [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. See Krohn (1971); Taylor (1927–1928:481–491); Thompson (1946); Dorson (1963:93–112); Ben-Amos (1975:1). [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Noy (1970:20–21). On this methodological principle, see also Dundes (1999:42). [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. According to Hallo (1970:62 and esp. 74), the Flood in the Mesopotamian myth was meant to reduce human population rather than wipe out humanity, and thus there was no reason to assume that its protagonist was the forefather of a new human race. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. [Hes.] *Cat.* FF 2, 3, 4, 9, 10a M-W and the genealogical traditions dependent on it. See, for example, Gantz (1993:167–197) and chapter 1 below. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. BDB, s.v. תבה; LSJ, s.v. λάρναξ 1, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. The Greek sources are not dependent upon the LXX, the latter employing the term κιβωτός for Noah’s vessel. Both the Hebrew and Greek terms signify the container in which children were abandoned to the waves. Moses was saved by virtue of the תיבה in which his mother placed him in the Nile (Exod 2:3, 5) just as Perseus and other Greek heroes were placed in a λάρναξ ([Hes.] *Cat*. F 135.3 M-W; Pherecydes, *FGrH* 3 F 10). See LSJ, s.v. λάρναξ 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. See Kirk (1974:261–264, 269–272); Caduff (1986); West (1997:489–493); Bremmer (1998:39–55); and chapters 1–4 below. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. While some scholars have noted this fact, they did not cite the reasons brought here. See Kirk (1974:263–264); Bremmer (1998:46); Graf (1993:95–96). [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. For a summary of other approaches to the study of myths and folktales, see Csapo (2005:80–315) and the bibliography cited there (pages 320–322). [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. For an illuminating discussion of this issue in folklore, see Hasan-Rokem (1982). See also Honko (1981) and the bibliography cited there. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Von Sydow (1948:44–59). [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Von Sydlow (1948: 52–59); Honko (1981: 151). [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Among the updated summaries of the views regarding the relationship between the Greek and Canaanite alphabets, see, for example, Sass (2005); Janko (2015); Papadopoulos (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. The Greek transliterations in the LXX also indicate that throughout the first centuries CE, Hebrew and Aramaic speakers preserved their pronunciation of other consonants not found in Phoenician, such as ġ, represented in Hebrew and Aramaic as ע and as γ in Greek transliterations, and the original velar ḫ, represented by ח in Hebrew and Aramaic but normally as χ in the Greek transliterations (in order to distinguish it from the original pharyngeal ḥ that was only marked as a vowel in Greek). See Steiner (2005:229–267). On the history and transmission of the Canaanite script, see, for instance, Sass (2005); Sanders (2009). Cf. Naveh (1979) and the bibliography in the previous footnote. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Gordon (1955:43–108); Gordon (1966); Webster (1958:27–63); Astour (1965) Astour (1973:17–27); Laroche (1973:xix–xvii); Bouzek (1985); Crowley (1989); Lambrou-Philipson (1990); Morris (1992: esp. 101–124); Morris (2003:3–15). [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. See Hurwit (1985:125–135); Burkert (1992:1–25); Markoe (1996:47–67); Cook (1997:41–153); Boardman (1998:83–151); Whitley (2001:102–133). [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. This fact is being increasingly recognized by scholars. See Burkert (1992); West (1997); López-Ruiz (2010) and the bibliography cited there; cf. Louden (2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. See Burkert (1987:13–14); Burkert (1992:5–8); West (1997:1:624–630 and passim); López-Ruiz (2010: esp. 1–47). West (ibid, 626) posits that the well-known “Song of Kumarbi” familiar to us from the Hurro-Hittite literature, which certainly influenced Hesiod’s *Theogony*, did not reach the Greek world from the Hittites in the second millennium BCE but penetrated from the Hurrian world, apparently via West-Semitic mediation and the Cypriot world, and was assimilated in Greece at the beginning of the first millennium BCE. The presence of the Cypriot Aphrodite in the Greek myth may support this claim. Morris (1992:124–149) and Dickinson (2006:196–218) maintain, on archaeological grounds, that though contacts between the cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean basin during the transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age declined, they continued to exist. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. According to many scholars, it was from these locations that Eastern culture was transmitted to the Greek world. See Boardman (1990:169–190); Waldbaum (1997:1–17); Luke (2003). The important data adduced by Finkelberg (2006:105–121) does not alter the picture with respect to the Archaic period. Cf. López-Ruiz (2009:498); López-Ruiz (2010:43). [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. On the use of the Phoenician alphabet in Asia Minor at the beginning of the first millennium BCE, see Röllig (1992:93–102). For the bilingual (Luwian-Phoenician) inscriptions discovered in recent decades that shed light on inter-cultural relations in the Mediterranean basin in the first third of the first millennium BCE, see chapter 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Goody and Watt, among the most prominent scholars of the classical world, argue that many of the new ideas characteristic of the classical world, such as rationality, individuality, democracy, and historiography, arose in the wake of the introduction of literacy into the Greek world. See Goody and Watt (1968:27–68); Goody (1977); Goody (1986); Goody (1987). For a more cautious approach, see Harris (1989). Cf. Thomas (1989:22–34); Thomas (2011b:72–99); Fowler (2001:95–115); Powell (2002); Yunis (2003). On the growth of literacy in the Levant during this era, see, for example, Rollston (2010:127-35); Schniedewind (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-102)